

INLAND SEAS[®]



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Articles, letters, pictures, and books relating to the history, geography, transportation, industry, people, and lifestyles of the Great Lakes region are cordially considered. (No responsibility assumed for statements made by contributors.) Manuscripts of 8,000 words or less may be submitted in Microsoft® Word® format, which is preferred but not required. Physical photos/art carefully returned. Digital art may be submitted, 4" x 6", 300 dpi, TIF file. Submit to: Editor, *Inland Seas*®, 1701 Front Street, Toledo, Ohio 43605-1481. Send submissions to editor@nmgl.org.



Dear Members,

As summer arrives along the Maumee, there is so much to celebrate at the National Museum of the Great Lakes. This spring, we had the privilege of opening our second major temporary exhibit, *Currents of Change: The Living History of the Great Lakes*, presented by the John and Virginia Hankison Foundation. This powerful exhibit explores the evolving relationship between people and our freshwater—from the early beaver fur trade to modern environmental challenges. It reminds us that Great Lakes history is not only something we preserve, but something still unfolding around us every day.

In other exciting news, we were deeply honored to be recognized by the Ohio Museums Association with two major awards: **Institution of the Year** and **Best Exhibition** for *Dark Waters: True Crime and Mystery on the Great Lakes*. These awards reflect an extraordinary year of growth, including our Second Wave expansion, new programming, national partnerships, and our continued commitment to telling Great Lakes stories in bold and meaningful ways. And, thanks to your votes, we were also named the #2 Maritime Museum in the nation by USA Today 10Best. Now that is something we can all be proud of!

Even more encouraging, our first full year open without construction following the expansion is already exceeding expectations. Visitation is strong, school groups are filling our galleries, museum store sales are growing, and our new spaces are welcoming more rentals, programs, and community gatherings. The vision we shared for this expansion is becoming reality.

We are also thrilled to see cruise vessels returning to Toledo's waterfront. After helping welcome Victory Cruise Lines to Toledo last year, we look forward to continuing that partnership in 2026 and adding American Cruise Lines to the list, with 10 cruise stops already

planned. We are very proud to help bring new visitors, new energy, and new opportunity to our museum's hometown.

There has never been a better time to visit the National Museum of the Great Lakes. Whether you come for *Currents of Change*, our historic vessels, or simply to reconnect with the stories that shape this region, we are grateful for your support. ⚓

With deep appreciation,



Kate Fineske
Executive Director
Great Lakes Historical Society
National Museum of the Great Lakes



Duck Hunting in Minnesota. Image courtesy of Library of Congress.

Note from the Editor:

The cover image on the Spring 2026 issue of *Inland Seas* was mis-identified. Our apologies for any confusion. The correct caption is: The Robert S. Pierson is aided by two Great Lakes Towing tugs, as seen from the pilothouse of the Ontario. Photo by Paul C. LaMarre III.

WINDOWS IN TIME: THE GREAT LAKES MARITIME STEREOVIEWS OF CHARLES L. POND

By Brendon Baillod

Most of us interested in Great Lakes maritime history enjoy looking at photos of early Great Lakes steamers and schooners from the 1860s and 1870s. These rare, early photos give us a window in time through which we can see a real-life image of a moment in the life of a historic Great Lakes vessel.

Most of these early photos were produced by a small group of dedicated local photographers who were taking advantage of a new fad in photographic technology—the stereoview card. During the “golden age” of stereoviews (1865–1885), local photographers made hand-mounted cards with rare local views that were printed from glass plate negatives.

Stereoviews were the dominant photographic medium for outdoor scenery in the period 1865 – 1885. They were made with a stereo camera that had two lenses separated by the distance between human eyes. The camera took two simultaneous photos which were then pasted to cardstock, creating a true three-dimensional view when viewed through a stereopticon viewer.

During the 1860s and 1870s, the major ports around the Lakes had one or more photographers who made maritime stereoviews. Photographers of that time weren’t interested in photographing individual ships so much as capturing maritime scenery that average people would buy. As such, we have many early harbor views from the period showing amazing early scenery of Great Lakes ports, often containing early Lake vessels.

Many notable photographers have left us important early images from this period, including Arthur K. A. Liebitch of Cleveland; James Jenney of Detroit; B. F. Childs and Christian Brubaker of Marquette;

Caswell & Davy of Duluth; W. H. Sherman and H. H. Bennett of Milwaukee; F. W. Oliver and E. M. Collins of Oswego; and John Carbutt and Copelin & Melander of Chicago, to name only a few.

One of the most important and prolific photographers on the Lakes was based at what was arguably the Lakes' leading port at that time. Buffalo's Charles Lyman Pond produced one of the richest collections of Great Lakes nautical scenery known, but his body of Great Lakes work remains relatively obscure, often overshadowed by his later work photographing the American West.

Pond was born in 1832 in Sheldon, New York, and apprenticed under the early daguerreotype maker Russell O. Benton (1815–1900). Pond was working in Benton's studio as an assistant ambrotypist by 1860. He enlisted in the Union Army during the Civil War and began his own photography studio upon his return to Buffalo around 1865.

His earliest stereoviews appear to date from May 1867, when Pond took advantage of a Buffalo-area disaster to create some of his most important work. That year, a late thaw and spring storms drove miles of ice floes down Lake Erie into the Buffalo area. The ice trapped dozens of vessels for weeks. By mid-May, some crews had begun to starve, and several tugs braved the ice to bring food and attempt to free the stranded vessels. Pond brought his camera to the Buffalo pierheads and began to photograph the rescues, creating about fifty of the earliest views of Great Lakes vessels in distress. Among these views are many that capture the only known images of several important early Great Lakes vessels.

Pond continued to make views of Buffalo's harbor into the mid-1870s, but his best-known work is a large group of stereoscopic plates of the American West, particularly Yosemite, which he made between 1870 and 1872. Pond was among the first photographers to go west on the new Transcontinental Railroad, capturing views that supported him financially for the rest of his life. Upon returning to Buffalo in 1873, he resumed his maritime work and also produced several panoramic views of the city.

Pond appears to have switched media from stereoviews to cabinet cards (single photo cards normally used for portraits of people) around 1875, and he continued his photography business in Buffalo until 1885. After 1885, he began manufacturing seal presses for embossing. Pond died in Buffalo in June 1891. He had been married twice but left no descendants.

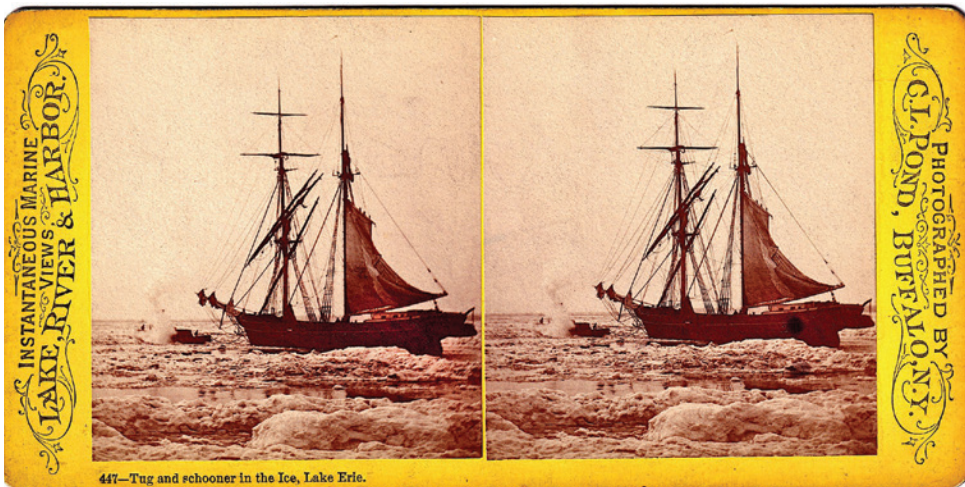
Today, Pond's views are quite collectible due to his skills in both composition and development. Most Pond views remain sharp after 150 years, and his Buffalo nautical and municipal views are among the best historical records of that city.

Approximately 200 Buffalo stereoviews by Pond are known. Most capture harbor and vessel views, with many now residing in museums and private collections. Despite their importance, new, previously unknown Pond stereoviews continue to surface. Buffalo historian Dale Rossi has compiled an impressive catalog of Pond views, and the Buffalo History Museum holds about fifty of Pond's original cards. The Buffalo Harbor Museum also has several of Pond's cards, as well as a small collection of Pond's original glass plate negatives that were rescued from destruction in the 1960s. My own collection contains approximately seventy original Pond stereoviews, most of which have been digitized.

Shown here are some of Pond's most important views, taken from original stereoview cards in my collection. ⚓



This is one of Pond's iconic May 1867 ice rescue views, showing the schooner *Curlew* being towed through the ice by the tugs *A.A. Eustaphie* and *C.W. Evans*. It is the only known photo of any of these three vessels.

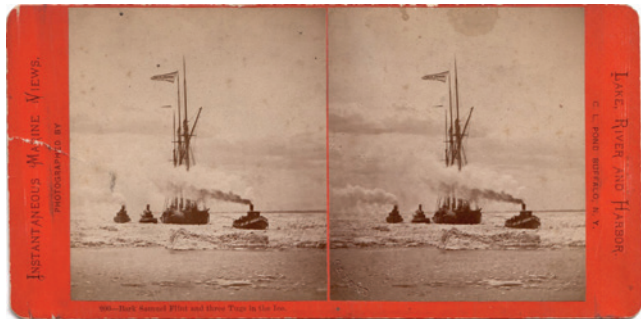


This is one of Pond's ice rescue stereoviews from May of 1867. It shows an unidentified tug rescuing the brig *Fashion* from the ice. Note the many square spars on the foremast, identifying the vessel as a brig. Very few photos exist of Great Lakes brigs because they were largely converted to schooner rig by the mid-1870s. This stereoview is on Pond's distinctive studio cardstock.



This is one of Pond's most important historical photos. It was also made during the May 1867 ice blockade and is the only known photo of the *Merchant*, the first iron-hulled package freighter on the Lakes. She is identifiable by her distinctive outline and absence of hogging arches, needed for wooden vessels of her size.

This Pond view shows the Bark *Sam Flint* with three tugs towing her through heavy ice into Buffalo Harbor in May of 1867.

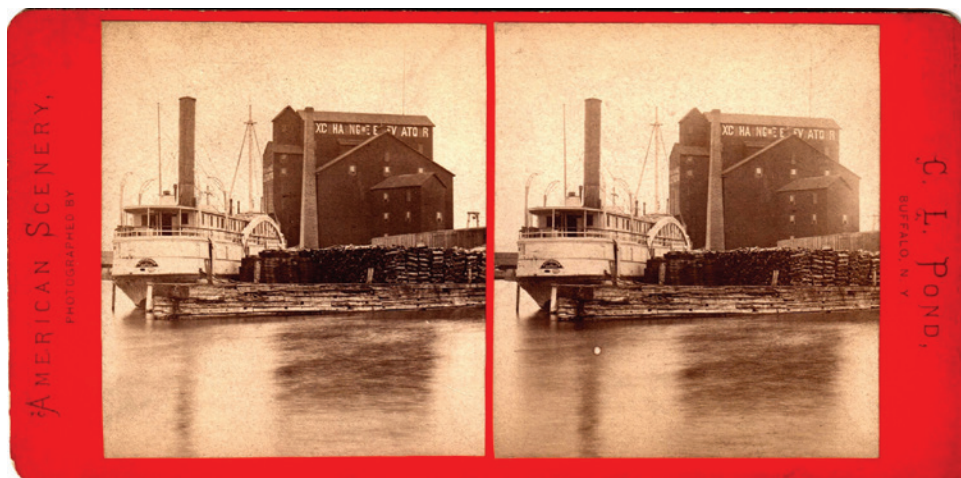


This well-composed view shows a large harbor tug assisting a two-masted schooner down the Buffalo River.





This is one of Pond's later cards made inside Buffalo Harbor. It is an extremely well-composed view showing the big harbor tug *G.W. Gardner*. She was owned by George W. Hand, whose distinctive hand logo is visible on her bow.



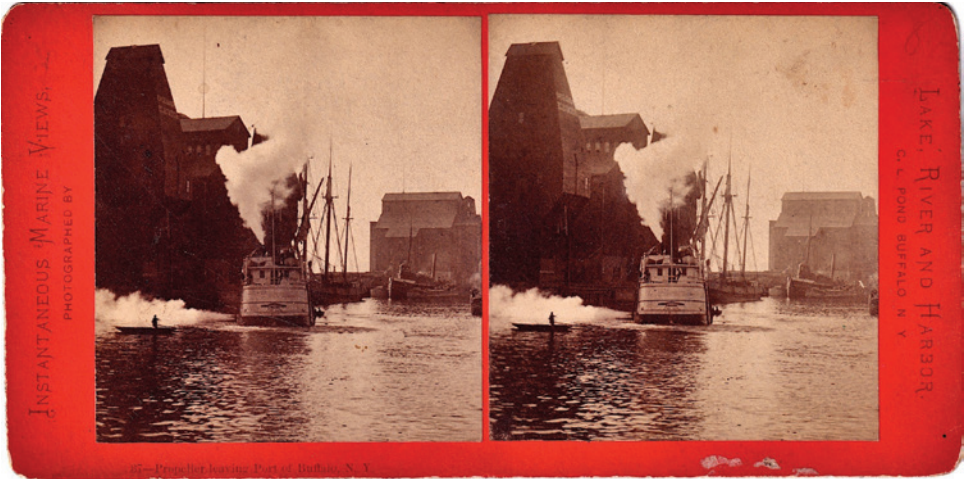
This exceptional Pond stereoview shows the early steamer *Pittsburgh* (1856) with her name clearly visible. It is one of only two known photos of her and the only one at close distance.



This amazing Pond stereoview from May of 1867 captures the first moments in the career of the package freighter *Colorado*, one of the first purpose-built package freighters on the Great Lakes. Pond’s annotation states it is the “first smoke from her funnels.”



This panoramic Pond stereoview from about 1872 is the earliest known view of the iconic early package freighter *Philadelphia*.



This rare Pond view shows the only known photographic image of the short-lived steamer *City of Detroit* (1867-1873). Note the steam discharging from her side vents.



This sharp Pond stereoview shows the steamer *Winslow* trapped in ice at Buffalo in May of 1867.



Charles L. Pond (1832-1891) – From a cabinet card owned by his descendants.

About the Author:

Brendon Baillod is a Great Lakes maritime historian based in Wisconsin. He is the current president of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association and a long-time collector of Great Lakes maritime antiquities. His collection includes thousands of early Great Lakes books, maps, photos, and ephemera items dating back to the 1600s.

THE PERSEVERANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SAIL IN THE GREAT LAKES COMMERCIAL TRADE DURING THE TRANSITION TO STEAM: A VIEWPOINT

By Edward S. Warner

Overview

The focus herein is that *sail persevered as significant during the transition to steam*, even though steam eventually triumphed.¹ It is quite evident that a substantial amount of canvas was spread on the Lakes even as steam propulsion was being developed and increasingly deployed in the Lakes commercial trade. That is, it should be recognized that sail did not “just go away” even as developments in steam propulsion were moving apace. Rather, sail both successfully competed with, and even contributed to, the attainments of steam transportation until the close of the 19th Century and a bit beyond. In addition to the status of independent or pure sail as the primary means of propulsion during much of what has been termed, albeit quite imprecisely, the “era of commercial sail” on the Lakes, sail was also employed as auxiliary propulsion for early passenger-freight steamboats, for later bulk cargo steamers, and was of particular consequence in both elective and planned towing arrangements.

Traditional independent sail continued to dominate lakes cargo transportation for a long while after the introduction of steam propulsion in the very early 1800s. In fact, available data point to what might be considered a “crossover” from sail to steam preponderance did not occur until the last quarter of the 19th Century, in that it was not until 1884 that steam gross tonnage exceeded sail gross

1. For a lengthy and thoughtful analysis of that transition, see Walter Lewis, “Transition from Sail to Steam on the Great Lakes in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Northern Mariner*, 25 (October, 2015), 345-374.

tonnage and it was not until 1886 that the number of steam vessels exceeded the number of sailing vessels.²

Augmentation of Propulsion for Early Steamboats and for Later Steamers

In retrospect, it appears that the development of steam propulsion in the Great Lakes commercial trade was a rather cautionary tale, in that most, if not nearly all, of the early steamboats were fully-rigged for sailing; and that feature endured on some vessels to the close of the nineteenth century.

The *Frontenac*, launched near Kingston, Ontario in 1816, was the first steamboat on the lakes. James Barry noted that she had a clipper bow, was rigged as a three-masted schooner, and that “it would be many years before steamers ventured forth without rigging and sails for emergency and auxiliary use.”³ The *Walk-in-the-Water*, launched in 1818, “was a trim schooner-rigged two-master with two giant, awkward-looking paddle wheels port and starboard amidships, and an incongruous smokestack forward. *It is something of a question whether the sails were to augment the steam engine, or whether the steam was auxiliary to the sails.*”⁴ The *Great Western*, launched in 1838 was “a clipper-bowed steamer rigged with sails on each of her three masts. Thus she was equipped if necessary to work under sail as well as steam.”⁵

2. Unnumbered table labeled “The Number and Gross Tonnage of Sailing Vessels, Steam Vessels, Canal Boats, and Barges on the Northern Lakes, from 1868 to 1898, as Compiled by the Commissioner of Navigation....” in J.B. Mansfield, ed. *History of the Great Lakes*, I (Chicago: Beers, 1899), 439.

3. James P. Barry, *Ships of the Great Lakes; 300 Years of Navigation*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1974), 39. Although “use for emergencies” was normally mentioned along with “auxiliary power” as the reasons for mounting sailing rigs on steam vessels, there appear to be few documented cases wherein sail was actually deployed for emergency purposes.

4. Harlan Hatcher, *Lake Erie* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1945), 107. Italics within the quotation are those of the present writer.

5. Barry, *Ships of the Great Lakes*, 58.

In the summer of 1830, a passenger on the sidewheel steamboat *Sheldon Thompson*, upbound from Buffalo to Green Bay, wrote that at Detroit on August 4 “the packet bore away for Lake St. Clair *under all the force of wind and steam....*”⁶ About twenty-five miles south of Fort Gratiot, the *Thompson’s* master agreed to take a schooner in tow to Lake Huron. However, the passenger noted that the steamboat had a very difficult time making headway against the current with the schooner in tow, apparently even with sails still set,⁷ a portent of inadequate steam power issues to arise in the coming tow-barge system.



Steamer *Henry Chisholm*, by John Huntington. Image from the collection of the National Museum of the Great Lakes.

6. The vessel carried three masts. Gerald C. Metzler Lakes Vessel Database, Wisconsin Maritime Museum; Manitowoc, Wisconsin (available online).

7. C. Colton, *Tour of the American Lakes, and Among the Indians of the Northwest Territory in 1830* (London: Frederick Westley & A.H. Davis, 1833), 53 and 63-64. Italics within the quotation are those of the present writer.

The 1775 gross ton propeller steamer *Henry Chisholm* was built in 1880 at Cleveland, and was rigged with two masts including topmasts to augment its steam propulsion. Marine artist John Huntington depicted the propeller under steam and sail in a following wind at some point in the early to mid-1880s.

Augmentation of Steam Propulsion in Towing Arrangements

In that time in transit was often a major consideration for commercial sailing vessel masters; they often opted to engage steam tugs to tow their vessels in calms and in adverse current and/or wind conditions. Although elective towing situations were not pre-arranged, they were not necessarily unanticipated by those vessel masters who elected to tow.

Any sailing vessel traveling between the lower and upper lakes had to negotiate the Detroit River - Lake St. Clair - St. Clair River passage, commonly known in the 19th Century as “the rivers.” If upbound, a vessel required sufficient winds in terms of both direction and velocity to overcome the current, and if downbound, to maintain steerage. In the absence of the appropriate winds upon arrival at the rivers, waiting for those conditions to develop often required a delay of many hours or even days if not towed through by a steam tug.

Consequently, a large tug presence grew in the rivers, and tugmen soon learned that towing two or more vessels simultaneously was the approach to take to maximize profits. On the other hand, vessel masters in multiple-vessel tows soon came to realize that in appropriate winds, setting sail to augment a tug’s steam power saved time in transit for the entire tow. For instance, while downbound on Lake Huron in 1872, the master of the bark *Ogarita* agreed to be towed through the rivers by the large river tug *Champion* and was added to the tug’s tow of three vessels. Moreover, the tug subsequently took on the schooners *Knapp* and *Lake Forest* — in all a very large tow of six vessels. When the wind came around to the north, the *Ogarita* “made

the topsail, staysail, and jibs” as a means of aiding the tug.⁸ [It is not known whether or not any of the other vessels in the tow also made sail].

One of the most iconic images within the entire realm of Great Lakes maritime history is a lithograph produced from a painting by marine artist Seth Arca Whipple (1855-1901) and known as the “*Champion Tow*” which depicts the powerful river tug *Champion* towing eight schooners in the “the rivers.”

The more popularized towing arrangement was that of the planned variety known as the “tow-barge system.” The basic premise of



“*Champion Tow*” Lithograph of Seth Whipple Painting, 1878. From the collection of the National Museum of the Great Lakes.

8. Bark *Ogarita* log, entries for 2-4 June 1872; private collection. For more particulars on the matter of elective towing, see the present writer’s “Towing with Steam Tugs: An Aspect of the Great Lakes Commercial Trade under Sail” in *A Fully Accredited Ocean: Essays on the Great Lakes* edited by Victoria Brehm (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 45-57.

that system seemed straightforward and logical: a loaded steamer towing one or more also-loaded but unpowered consorts. At the outset, well-worn schooners were stripped down for the purpose of becoming consorts and became known as “schooner-barges.” These, in turn, became the stereotypical consort in the published secondary literature when alluding to the tow-barge system, but were utilized mostly in the short-haul trade (e.g., transporting lumber from west coast Michigan across Lake Michigan to Chicago).

Although the tow-barge system had a good number of advocates and participants, it did not meet all of their rather high expectations, particularly in long-distance inter-lake operational venues. The realities of under-powered loaded host steamers together with too-heavily loaded consorts soon became apparent, so that the ability to deliver cargoes in a timely manner became a concern. However, a practical and readily-available partial solution was at hand: that of deploying sail on consorts, even on host steamers, to enhance inadequate steam power.

Evidentiary records suggest that there were a fair number of fully-rigged schooners with full sailing complements used as consorts for lengthy inter-lake trips well before the tow-barge era came to a close. The reliance on fully-rigged consorts for auxiliary power was apparently acquired wisdom based on experience. For instance, Oscar B. Smith, master of the schooner *D.K. Clint*, a consort to the steamer *Chauncy Hurlbut*, often together with a second consort, the schooner *L.C. Butts*, wrote in his journal that “Our steam barge lacks power; two heavy vessels [without sail deployed] are more than she can tow with profit.”⁹ The three-vessel towing unit was involved in transporting ore downbound and coal upbound. One or both of the two consorts often deployed sail while under tow. For instance, in late 1890, while towing loaded behind the *Hurlbut* and with the second consort astern, the *Clint*’s master recorded that “I had mainsail, foresail, and three

9. Oscar B. Smith, “The Schooner *D.K. Clint*,” *Inland Seas*, 33 (Spring, 1977), 22-29; (Summer, 1977), 121-127; and (Fall, 1977), 215-218 and 227-232 at 24; entry for 14 May 1889.

jibs set. [It is not known if the second consort had deployed any sail]. We are making seven miles an hour.”¹⁰ By implication, that seven miles per hour was faster than the towing unit would have traveled without any sail set.

Apparently, it was anticipated at the creation of this particular towing arrangement that the consort schooners were sometimes to be sailed independently of the host steamer, in that Smith wrote in his journal at the outset of the 1889 season that the *Hurlbut* “will tow us more or less this season.”¹¹ According to some subsequent entries in his journal, that indeed came to be the case.

As an indicator of a growing preference for using fully-rigged schooners as consorts for lengthy inter-lake trips, it was reported that the new schooner *Comrade* arrived at Cleveland in early October of 1883 with 1,500 tons of ore as a consort to the steam barge *Columbia*. It was noted that although the *Comrade* was originally intended to be a barge, “the plans were altered somewhat and now she presents a fine appearance as a schooner.”¹²

Perhaps the exemplary host/consort towing arrangement in the long-distance inter-lake trade was that of the 1,189 gross ton propeller *Robert Wallace* and the 1,088 gross ton schooner *David Wallace*. The steamer was rigged with three masts including topmasts and the schooner with four masts including topmasts. The accompanying photo of the pair aground several miles east of Marquette, a result of a mid-November 1886 blizzard on Lake Superior, reveals sails lashed to the consort’s booms, suggesting very recent or anticipated use. A full sailing complement of nine individuals was taken off the consort by rescuers.¹³

10. Oscar B. Smith, “The Schooner *D.K. Clint*,” *Inland Seas*, 33 (Spring, 1977), 22-29; (Summer, 1977), 121-127; and (Fall, 1977), 215-218 and 227-232 at 24; entry for 14 May 1889.

11. *Ibid.*, 23; entry for 23 April 1889.

12. *Marine Record*, 10 October 1883.

13. Julius Wolff, Jr., “Some Noted Shipwrecks of the Michigan Coast of Lake Superior,” *Inland Seas*, 16 (Fall, 1960), 172-179 at 173-174.



Consort *David Wallace* and Steamer *Robert Wallace*, on Lake Superior 1886.
Photo courtesy of the Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library.

Pure Sail as a Continuing Viable Transportation Option

Available evidence indicates that there was an economically-viable commerce under pure sail that stretched to the close of the 19th Century and somewhat beyond. That is, the commercial trade under pure sail, although gradually, but steadily diminishing, quite apparently continued for a good while to be economically-advantageous to both a fair number of shippers of cargoes and to those carriers who provided transportation for them; *otherwise, that trade would not have continued*. Although there were 1,764 steam vessels in service by 1898, there also remained 960 commercial sailing vessels in service¹⁴ — a substantial number to have co-existed with steam-propelled vessels.

Historian Milo M. Quaife asserted that “sailing ships retained certain advantages which explain their persistence on the lakes for almost

14. Mansfield, *History of the Great Lakes*, 439.

a century after the introduction of the steamboat. Foremost among these was their *lower cost of both construction and of operation.*"¹⁵



Postcard image of the steamship *Eastland* and Chicago River. Image from the private collection of the author.

Apparently, there was an additional factor that contributed to the longevity of pure sail. Walter Havighurst, in his classic history of lakes commerce, suggests that lumber was one cargo that helped pure sail persevere into the turn of the century in that it normally could not be handled with machines. In essence, it had to be loaded and unloaded in harbors and river mouths by lumber shovers to and from schooners with relatively shallow drafts.¹⁶ Lakes maritime historian Theodore Karamanski reinforces the importance of lumber cargoes in extending the viability of pure sail in that “it was the product that allowed the ships [Lake Michigan schooners] to retain a niche in Lake commerce into the twentieth century.”¹⁷

15. Milo M. Quaife, *Lake Michigan* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944), 158. Italics within the quotation are those of the present writer.

16. Walter Havighurst, *The Long Ships Passing*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 73.

17. Theodore J. Karamanski, *Schooner Passage; Sailing Ships and the Lake Michigan Frontier* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), 65.

Finally, that independent or pure sail propulsion co-existed with steam propulsion into the twentieth century is visually evidenced by the accompanying image of a colorized postcard labeled “Steamship *Eastland* and the Chicago River.” In addition to the *Eastland*, the photographer captured in the image a moored steam bulk carrier in the background as well as a pair of moored fully-rigged schooners in the foreground which were in then-current use, as evidenced by furled sails in their rigging. The photograph must have been taken at some point between 1903 when the *Eastland* was built and 1908 when the card was postmarked on its reverse side. 

About the Author:

Edward S. Warner is a social scientist and former university library director who has previously published the results of his research in this journal and elsewhere. He is a long-time member of the Great Lakes Historical Society as well as the Association for Great Lakes Maritime History, and served as the Association’s Secretary for 20 years.

ELLEN S. TERRY / DON M. DICKINSON: AN ATLANTIC PROPELLER ON THE GREAT LAKES

By Walter Lewis

In February 1888, the Lake Carriers' Association and the Vessel Owners Association of Cleveland sent delegates to Washington to lobby for the interests of the major American shipping interests on the Great Lakes. Among the details they supplied was a table listing most of the advanced vessels on the American side of the Lakes, those with iron or steel hulls. Of these, only two were identified as not having been built on the Lakes, *Peerless*, a two-year-old product of a Philadelphia yard, and the *Don M. Dickinson*.¹ That the latter had been constructed in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1858 was well known, if only because this fact was repeated each time the vessel was re-enrolled. Her career in the seven years she served on the Lakes was reasonably well known, but what had it done before that?

A variety of tales were offered. One version had the vessel operating in the oyster fisheries of the Atlantic and that it had been rebuilt at least three times.² No other evidence links the *Dickinson* to the oyster trade, except perhaps that for a short time it actually operated on Chesapeake Bay where the primary oyster fisheries were located. A wildly improbable account, with absolutely no supporting evidence, had her operating as a Fenian cruiser.³ Perhaps some Irish immigrants had served on board at some time who had been sympathetic to the cause? A cruiser she was not. Given that her top speed was in the vicinity of eight knots, the version, actually given under oath in a court of law, that she had been a blockade runner in the Civil War, is a particularly remarkable stretch.⁴ Given her launch date of 1858

1. *Marine Record*, 2 February 1888.

2. *Daily State Gazette* (Green Bay), 6 September 1884.

3. *Detroit Free Press*, 3 September 1881.

4. James A. Caniff v. The Blanchard Navigation Company, *Michigan Reports*, 66: 640.

in Delaware, a conclusion that she had served the North during the war would have much more plausibility ... and as we shall see, was correct. An alternate story that she had been built to run between New York City and the southern states captures the bulk of her career but not her origins.⁵

From the opening of the St. Lawrence canals at the end of the 1840s, there had been a steady trickle of Great Lakes vessels going to sea. The flow of vessels built for service at sea onto the Lakes was less. Among them were a few vessels that had been involved in the American Civil War. Perhaps the most notorious were *Chicora*, *Rothsay Castle*, and *Little Ada*, iron-hulled steamboats built in Britain which had at some point served as Confederate blockade runners. Far more steamboats were employed by the Union forces in transporting and supplying a succession of expeditions along the coasts of the Confederacy. Among that number was the propeller *Ellen S. Terry*, which in 1881 was acquired for service in the Great Lakes lumber trade, re-named the *Don M. Dickinson* and, largely coincidentally, was the first vessel through the enlarged third Welland Canal on her delivery voyage.

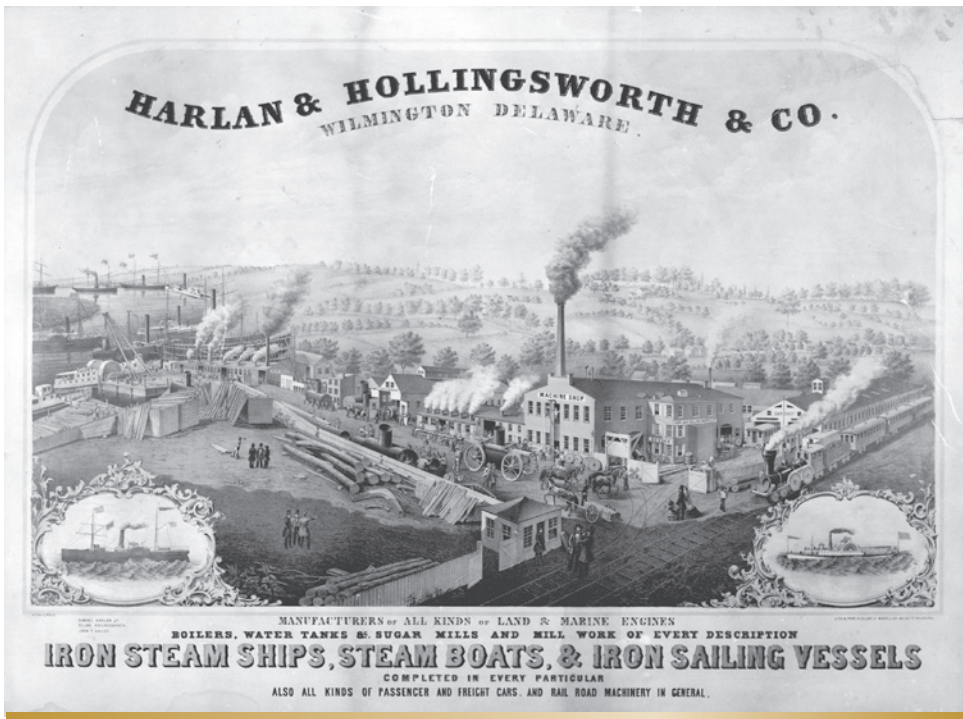
Hartford — Albany service

The *Ellen S. Terry* was built in Wilmington, Delaware, by the firm of Harlan & Hollingsworth. By 1857, the firm was already the most prolific builder of iron hulls in the United States, with the *Terry* being hull number 52.⁶ The Panic of 1857, a major economic depression triggered that September, led to layoffs in the yard, with the *Delaware Weekly Republican* reporting that “other parties have also been talking of making contracts, but they cannot as yet see the way clear for raising the money.”⁷ In defiance of this economic gloom, the *Terry*’s keel was laid in October 1857, shortly after the launch of the iron hull of the *John*

5. *Detroit Free Press*, 20 September 1881.

6. *Semi-Centennial Memoir of the Harlan & Hollingsworth Company*, Wilmington, Delaware, U. S. A., 1836-1886, p. 379.

7. *Delaware Weekly Republican*, 1 October 1857. The news of the launch and the imminent laying of the keel were reported in the same issue.



Harlan & Hollingsworth & Co. Wilmington Delaware, c 1850

This lithograph from just a few years before the construction of the *Ellen S. Terry*, shows the range of ventures in which the company engaged. To the right is the Car Shop, where railway carriages were constructed. The office is attached to the Machine Shop which produced a variety of mill work, including stationary and marine steam engines driven by the boilers produced in the next building. A variety of boilers line the interior roadway, while on the far-left, one is being positioned in a steamboat. At the river bank, an iron hull is being framed between the structures signed Shipyard and Mold Loft. Source: Library of Congress.

S. Shriver, of very similar dimensions.⁸ The *Shriver* was designed for both the package freight and passenger trades and was complete with over 30 staterooms, smoking room, dining saloon, and ladies' cabin, "handsomely painted and furnished in the most improved styles."⁹ The Wilmington description of the *Terry*, by contrast, was "a propeller

8. *Delaware Weekly Republican*, 15 October 1857. The account of the keel laying noted the keel was 12 inches in the centre, tapering off to 6 inches at the extremities, and that the vessel was intended to be 166' overall.

9. *Delaware Weekly Republican*, 26 November 1857.

boat to carry grain &c., from Albany to Hartford.” The dimensions were reported to be 164 feet in length, 23 ½ feet beam, 7 ½ feet depth of hold, with an engine of 246 horsepower.¹⁰ One of the principal benefits of iron hulls was their lighter deadweight, and consequently lighter draft. This would feature frequently over the course of the *Terry*’s career.¹¹ Like many other first-generation coastal propellers, she also featured three masts. Not only was her hull iron, but the rigging supporting those masts was formed with wire rope.¹² Noted American steamship historian, John H. Morrison, in an article about water-tight



Plans for the *Ellen S. Terry*’s Engine

Along with the hull, Harlan & Hollingsworth supplied the single cylinder engine for the *Ellen S. Terry* from these plans. Because they were drawn up before her name was given, they are simply labelled “Hartford Engine” because that is where she owned. Source: The Mariners’ Museum and Park, Newport News, Virginia.

10. *Delaware Weekly Republican*, 17 December 1857. *The Semi-Centennial Memoir* on p. 379 reports 145’ 10 ½” length x 23’9” beam x 8’6” depth of hold with a 28” diameter x 26” stroke high pressure engine.

11. *New Berne Times*, 11 May 1865. *The Detroit Free Press*, 20 September 1881, reported that the depth of hold was seven feet but that her average draft was seven feet nine inches.

12. *Hartford Courant*, 24 March 1858. *Detroit Free Press*, 20 September 1881.

compartments and bulkheads, credited the *Terry* as the first vessel built in the United States with five water-tight bulkheads.¹³ Launched at the turn of the year, she was finished over the winter before making her way north.

The propeller *Ellen S. Terry* arrived in Hartford, Connecticut, in late March 1858, about three weeks after the death of her namesake, Ellen Sophia Terry.¹⁴ The grieving father and part owner, Oliver Grant (more typically, O. G.) Terry, had been in the flour and feed business in Hartford for a number of years before moving to Albany, New York. He returned in 1854, where in partnership with Zephaniah Preston, he continued in the trade between Hartford and Albany moving western grain from the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal to Connecticut mills, using a succession of vessels. Alongside the *Terry* was the wooden-hulled *Parthenia*, launched in 1856. In contrast to the latter's delivery of 9,000 bushels of corn to Hartford in March 1858, the *Terry* arrived with 15,000 bushels of grain from Wilmington on her delivery trip.¹⁵ When O.G. Terry stepped away from active management to serve as president of the Aetna Bank of Hartford, ownership was organized into the Hartford and Albany Transportation Company, capitalized at \$30,000 with Z. Preston as secretary. O.G. Terry held 25% of the stock, and between them, Zephaniah and his son, William S. Preston, their Albany agent, held 40%. Although others would operate the vessel at times, the *Ellen S. Terry* was the company's principal asset until 1875.¹⁶

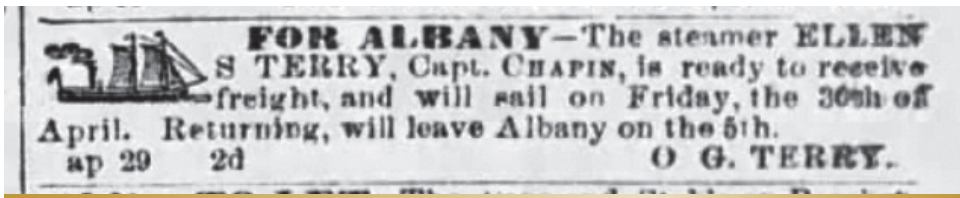
Although most of the *Terry's* sailings between Hartford and Albany were routine in the years before the Civil War, there were two exceptions. At the end of her first season, she struck off down

13. John H. Morrison, "Water-tight compartments and bulkheads in steam vessels," *Cassier's Magazine*, v. 12, n. 6 (October 1897) p. 713.

14. It had only been six months since the death of her mother. *Hartford Courant*, 23 September 1857, 2 March, 24 March 1858. All six children of O. G. Terry's first marriage predeceased him.

15. *Hartford Courant*, 27 March 1857, 8 February 1873. Melancthon W. Jacobus, *The Connecticut River Steamboat Story* (Hartford, Connecticut: Connecticut Historical Society, 1956) p. 101.

16. *Hartford Courant*, 20 March 1875.



Hartford Courant, 29 April 1858.

the Connecticut River from Hartford, but after a few miles, in the neighborhood of Wethersfield, she became “entangled in the ice,” abandoned the trip, and was trapped there until spring.¹⁷ Enough care was taken the following winters that it never happened again. Instead, in January, 1860, she was tied up in Williamsburg, opposite New York City, waiting to unload several thousand bushels of corn having just arrived from Wilmington, Delaware, consigned to a local distillery. The incoming tide brought with it an ice floe which tore the *Terry* from her moorings, setting her adrift in the East River. One of the river ferries quickly took her in tow and brought her back to shore, where she promptly sank. Her iron hull had withstood the ice but not being moored above pilings, on which she was impaled as the tide fell again. Adding to her injuries, the turning tides smashed that same ice floe against the sunken hull, damaging the upper deck and carrying away the foremast. Estimates of the damage to the hull ran to \$4,000.¹⁸

Civil War and Service Between New York and New Bern

The Civil War dramatically changed the course of the career of the *Ellen S. Terry*. In August 1861, the *Terry* transported supplies from New York to Washington. Thanks to the enlargement of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal locks in the early 1850s, she made the passage

17. *Hartford Courant*, 3 Dec. 1858.

18. *New York Tribune*, 13 January 1860. *New York Herald*, 13 January 1860. *Hartford Courant*, 14 January 1860. *Delaware Inquirer*, 21 January 1860. Even the *Detroit Free Press*, 14 January 1860, carried a summary of the story.

via the canal in about 50 hours.¹⁹ However, for the balance of 1861, she would spend more of her time on the route for which she had been designed, from Hartford down the length of the Connecticut River, Long Island Sound, up the Hudson River to Albany, and then back again.

The logistics of the Union army's amphibious operations along the east coast of the Confederacy required a supply chain running down the Atlantic, and then through a range of shallow, twisting, constantly shifting passages penetrating the Outer Banks, before running up various rivers to Union outposts. For most of the war, the *Ellen S. Terry* operated under orders from the Quarter Master General of the Union army. The initial charter was reported to have commenced on 10 February 1862 at \$200/day.²⁰ She was one of dozens of vessels assembled to supply the Burnside Expedition and its assault on the North Carolina coast. After the Battle of Roanoke Island, the Union forces moved inland and captured New Bern, among other places.²¹ While some of those were retaken by the Confederates, the Union army held New Bern through the balance of the war. The entrance to Pamlico Sound, the water inshore of the Outer Banks, was Hatteras Inlet, colloquially known as the "Swash," a shifting sandy channel which defied vessels with a substantial draft. The relatively shallow-draft, iron-hulled *Ellen S. Terry* would spend the war years running down Pamlico Sound and up the lower Neuse River to supply the troops in New Bern, usually in voyages originating in New York, and pausing at Fort Monroe at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay.

Accounts of the *Terry's* seagoing qualities varied. One account from February 1862 praised her "good sea-going qualities" in a nor'easter

19. *Hartford Courant*, 14 August 1861. *National Republican* (Washington, DC), 21 August 1861.

20. "Letter of the Secretary of War in answer to a resolution of the Senate of the 30th day of January in relation to the vessels purchased or chartered for the use of the War Department since the 1st day of April last," United States. 37th Congress, 2d Sess. Ex. Doc no. 37, 27 March 1862, pp. 10-11.

21. This is the common spelling of the town's name, although it routinely appeared as Newbern, New-Bern and occasionally as New Berne in contemporary publications.



New Bern, North Carolina, 1864

The artist has endeavored to crowd into the town's waterfront almost every vessel seen in the vicinity of the local wharves over the course of the war. If you look closely, there are tent encampments in every direction. Only on four of them is a cannon visible. Note the five propellers just below the rail bridge that were the principal army transports serving New Bern. Image courtesy of the New York Public Library.



***Ellen Terry* and others in detail of New Bern, North Carolina, 1864**

In this magnified view of the image above, in line are the principal US Army transports, which were rarely, if ever all at New Bern at the same time. From left to right: *Albany*, *Major Rucker*, *Ellen S. Terry*, *Jersey Blue*, and *Dudley Buck*. Image courtesy of the New York Public Library.

although this might be tempered by the fact that she sailed in company with the ferry *Chancellor Livingston* which was totally out of her league in rough seas.²² By contrast, here is a civilian account from a voyage in January 1865:

I found she had several horses and sixty head of cattle on her second or under deck, that were to be taken to Newbern. Two of the cattle had died in the passage from New York, and had been thrown overboard, and another had just died in the harbor; and the stench that came through the hatches was at times almost suffocating. ... About eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Tuesday, the 24th January, the storm cleared away and the Transport steamed out of the harbour [Hampton Roads], past the Rip Raps; and by meridian, we were ploughing old ocean with a stiff breeze and a heavy roll of the boat. The Capt. threw overboard another dead ox, and then we went to dinner. The whole Transport was infected with the stench from dead animals; which affected my appetite for food as long as I continued on board the vessel. In my judgment she was far from being a good sea boat, as she rolled terribly, and her progress was slow, not more than seven or eight knots per hour.

At length we saw Cape Hatteras on our starboard, and the light house standing upon the Point, and having sailed Tuesday and Tuesday night, we entered Hatteras Inlet about ten o'clock Wednesday forenoon, the 25th Jan'y. There the vessel had the ill luck to get aground upon a bar, and remained aground until six o'clock in the evening when, by the assistance of a steamship, she was

22. *New York Times*, 27 Feb. 1862. Testimony regarding the performance of the *Chancellor Livingston* is in "Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury Transmitting A Letter from the Second Comptroller, submitting statements of facts relative to certain claims re-examined as required by the provisions of the deficiency act of August 4, 1886," United States. House of Representatives, 49th Congress, 2d Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 22, pp. 6-10.

got off and proceeded immediately on her way through Pamlico Sound and up Neuse River to Newbern, N.C., where we arrived about nine o'clock in the morning²³

Seven or eight knots was a fairly typical speed for a propeller in the mid-19th Century, most of which were slower than the paddle-wheelers of the era in calm waters. In an era without effective refrigeration, the beef in soldiers' diets had to be delivered to camp on the hoof, whatever other odors were released during transit. Along with livestock, the *Terry* would carry the mail, dispatches, and the New York dailies. Thousands of letters were exchanged on each voyage.²⁴

More important, perhaps, were the wounded, sick, and in some instances, the dead, discharged and furloughed, which were carried north again along with occasional civilian passengers.²⁵ One account survives from March 1862. Two residents of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, were dispatched by the local Soldiers' Relief Committee to help ease the return of local men who had been injured in the Battle of Roanoke Island almost a month before. On March 5 they boarded the *Ellen S. Terry* with about 200 others, 125 of whom were sick and wounded. They arrived at the "Swash" too late at night to cross. The next day the *Terry* went ashore and was stuck fast, her flag hung upside down in distress, until sunset when she was able to get herself off. The combination of tides and shifting sands made using a local pilot critical. They finally crossed the bar on the 8th and made their way to Baltimore to land about 40 people. One of the passengers then spent three hours in the depth of the night pursuing a pilot that would take them through the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and on to Philadelphia where the wounded were transferred to rail for the

23. S. K. Wightman, "In Search of my Son," *American Heritage* v. 14, n. 2 (Feb. 1963), pp. 66-67.

24. W. P. Derby, *Bearing Arms in the Twenty-Seventh Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1883) pp. 163-64.

25. See, for example, *Hartford Courant*, 10 Mar. 1862. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 12 May 1862. *New Bern Progress*, 15 Nov. 1862.

rest of their journey.²⁶ The passage of the seriously injured Sergeant Charles Hickling in February 1863 was summed up as “a rough and comfortless wintry passage.”²⁷

Clearly the passage up Chesapeake Bay was not familiar to Captain Chapin this early in the *Terry's* war time service, and the general accounts suggest that she usually went up the Atlantic coast rather than the quieter, but slower passage up the bay and across the canal.

Her return trips were routinely reported with news of the war in the vicinity of New Bern, and as the Northern papers were sometimes circulated in the south, the *Terry's* news was echoed in southern papers as well.²⁸ While there was talk of sending her to New Orleans to transfer troops to the eastern theatre in June 1864, the *Terry* continued her regular passages between New York and New Bern.²⁹

A report of the Secretary of War for the fiscal year 1863-64, indicates that the *Ellen S. Terry* was chartered at two different rates. For the longer period, July 28, 1863 – June 30, 1864, the rate was \$125 per diem for a total of \$37,619.79. Of this time, it was noted that 39 days were “lost.” These may have been accounted for by the period between 3 November 1863 and 29 February 1864, when the daily rate was bumped to \$350 and another \$38,246.25 was paid over to the owners.³⁰ The reason for the shift in charter rate is unclear as the *Terry* continued on the same route and does not appear to have suffered in its routine runs up the Neuse River. No account of her being under fire has surfaced

26. Henry A. Willis, *Fitchburg in the War of the Rebellion* (Fitchburg, Stephen Shepley, 1866) pp. 135-36.

27. *Harvard Memorial Biographies* (Cambridge: Sever and Francis, 1867) 2: 491. A Harvard graduate, Hickling was accompanied on the trip home by his father and a doctor.

28. See, for example, *Richmond Dispatch*, 14 March 1862. *Georgia Weekly Telegraph* (Macon, GA), 12 December 1862. *Weekly State Journal* (Raleigh, NC), 4 Feb. 1863. *The Daily Picayune*, (New Orleans), 18 April 1863.

29. Charles Dana Gibson with E. Kay Gibson, *Assault and logistics: Union Army Coastal and River Operations, 1861-1866*, (Camden, ME: Ensign Press, 1995) p. 435.

30. “Statement of vessels chartered or employed by the Quartermaster’s Department, etc.” in *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 1 March 1865, 28th Cong, 2d Session, Ex. Doc., No. 83, P. 223.

and news of Confederates on the river are all from points above New Bern. Throughout the war, she continued to be commanded by W.H. Chapin, who had been her captain from the beginning of her career.

THE FIRST-CLASS STEAMSHIP
ELLEN S. TERRY,
CAPT. W. H. CHAPIN,



Will sail from this port for New
York direct on
SATURDAY, MAY 20th, 1865.
For passage, having good accommodations,
and freight, apply on board, or to
C. P. GOODSPEED.
At **W. AMES' Store** for further information.
New Bern, May 16, 1865. 47-5t.

New Bern Times, 16 May 1865.

Surprisingly, the end of the war did not mean the end of the *Ellen S. Terry*'s trips to New Bern. In May 1865, Captain Charles P. Goodspeed arranged for her to continue running from New York to New Bern in conjunction with the *El Cid*.³¹ W. H. Chapin was retained as captain. By this stage, Chapin had three years experience taking the *Terry* from the Atlantic through the challenging "Swash", albeit with a local pilot with specific, current knowledge of that passage. His worst transit came on December 27, 1865, when the *Terry* struck the schooner *Vesta*,

31. *New Bern Times*, 11 May, 16 May 1865.

which had grounded and was blocking much of the channel. The day before, the pilot had sounded what remained of the channel off *Vesta's* bow and was confident that there was enough water to carry the *Terry* around her. That day, there wasn't. The keel grounded. In backing off, the *Terry* was swung by wind and tide, striking the schooner's port side, crushing it and sinking her. Almost nine years later, the court of the Southern District of New York found the *Terry* liable for the damages.³² In the following years, the *Terry's* case was routinely cited as a cautionary tale of liability when navigating around vessels in narrow waters.

Goodspeed ran the line for three years.³³ Trouble came again in mid-January 1867 in New York. Fire was discovered in the vicinity of the boilers about 9:30 in the morning. It was subdued within two hours, after being doused by streams from nine different "fire steamers." The news reports suggested that the fire damage was merely some "light work around the engine," with the larger damage coming from the water saturating the flour, butter, and dry goods on board. The vessel was valued at \$40,000 or \$45,000, depending on the paper, and was partially insured by the Hartford and Albany Transportation Company, who were still her owners.³⁴ How damaged was she? Not so much apparently, as she made her own way back to Harlan & Hollingsworth for repairs and a replacement boiler. Credit for this was immediately given to her iron hull and water-tight and fire-proof compartments.³⁵ Rumors of Goodspeed's insolvency were circulating by April 1867.³⁶ Despite this, when the *Terry* returned to the route at

32. "The Steamer *Ellen S. Terry*", Robert D. Benedict and B. Lincoln Benedict, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the District Courts of the United States within the Second Circuit*, (New York: Baker, Vorhis & Co., 1876) 7: 401-5. The case was decided in August 1874.

33. *New York Times*, 5 June 1868.

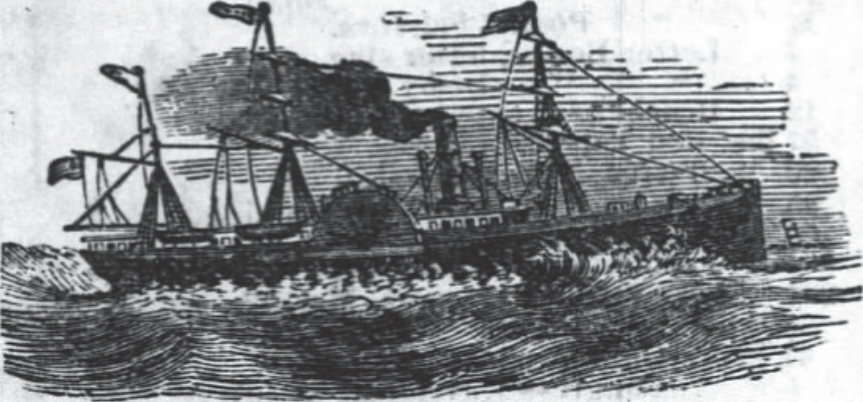
34. *New York Times*, 19 January 1867. *New York Tribune*, 19 January 1867.

35. *Boston Evening Transcript*, 18 Jan. 1867. *Delaware Tribune* (Wilmington, Delaware), 14 March 1867.

36. *Newbern Journal of Commerce*, 9 April 1867.

the end of April, it was for the Goodspeed Line. She was reported to be in better trim and have enlarged accommodations.³⁷

FOR NEW YORK.
MURRAY'S N. C. STEAMSHIP LINE



SAILING EVERY WEEK.

Ellen S. Terry, - - - Chapin,

Freight received at all times under cover.

For freight or Passage apply to
WHITFORD DILL & Co.,
nov 11 tf. **No. 6, Cravent St.**

New Berne Times, 21 October 1869.

37. *Newbern Journal of Commerce*, 24 April 1867.

Murray, Ferris & Co. had been shipping to a variety of southern locations including New Bern for a while, but in February 1867 the firm put the *Sappho* and *Dudley Buck* into direct competition on the route, challenging Goodspeed with lower freight rates.³⁸ By the fall, Goodspeed was out of the picture and the *Ellen S. Terry* was running in the New York & North Carolina Line of Murray, Ferris & Co. of New York. She was, moreover, on the same route and still under the command of Captain W. H. Chapin.

In May 1868, the *New York Herald* printed a scathing three-column discussion of “Our Steam Vessels” which contrasted the federal regulations regarding steamboat safety and inspection with what the reporter found when visiting various vessels in New York harbor. Despite its overhaul after the fire the previous year, the *Terry* was subject to some of the heavier criticism:

The *Ellen S. Terry* runs between here and Newbern, N.C., employed in the transportation of freight, yet carries some passengers. No person on board at the time visited knew anything of the inspector’s certificate. It was subsequently discovered in the captain’s room. This document certifies that there are 200 feet of hose, twenty fire buckets, five axes, one metal life boat and another of wood, and fifty life preservers. These last named were placed under the mattresses in the sleeping apartments. The boiler is old and leaks badly. It is without covering and almost against the woodwork of the hull. The independent pump is on the upper deck, but in an inaccessible position. This, also, the United States inspectors can see when it is their pleasure.³⁹

The criticism of the boiler as old and leaky is particularly striking given that it was specifically on the list of things which had been replaced 12 months earlier.

38. *Newbern Journal of Commerce*, 9 February, 15 February 1867.

39. *New York Daily Herald*, 4 May 1868.

Over the course of the next few years, the *Ellen S. Terry* suffered a couple of additional accidents. In February 1872, she struck an anchor while crossing the “Swash.” Her iron plating tore and she began to take on water. Captain Chapin had been transferred to a newer ship, so it was Captain Salyer who was given credit for running her ashore with very little, if any, damage to the freight. Four days later she had been hauled out for repairs, and ten days after the accident she made a “pleasure excursion” from New Bern down to Hatteras, near the scene of the accident.⁴⁰ In February 1874, she was docked in New York to have her propeller replaced.⁴¹ Later that year an engine valve broke while northbound off Delaware Bay, and she was towed, first out of the Atlantic into Lewes, Delaware, and then up to New Castle (just south of Wilmington). Repairs were quickly made and the following day she arrived in New York.⁴²

Bigger troubles were brewing in the summer of 1874. In July, Murray, Ferris & Co. admitted to being insolvent. Over the course of the summer, stockholder Josiah J. White sued L. Murray Ferris and the directors of the Albany and Hartford Transportation Company. The day after Murray, Ferris & Co. were officially declared bankrupt on September 15, White was in court demanding an accounting for the earnings of the *Emma L. Sterling* and the *Ellen S. Terry*.⁴³

From there things got even more heated. On February 9, 1875, the Hartford & Albany Transportation Company held its annual meeting in Hartford, Connecticut. Lindley M. Ferris Jr. had acquired a power of attorney from the assignee in bankruptcy, authorizing him to vote the 559 shares formerly held by his firm. With 1005 shares represented at the meeting, Ferris held a majority. Supported by one of his clerks, George B. Mills, and Captain William H. Chapin, he voted himself chairman of the meeting, to the board of directors, and subsequently installed himself as president of the firm. White promptly sued again.

40. *New Berne Times*, 20 February, 24 February, 1 March 1872.

41. *New York Daily Herald*, 1 March 1874

42. *New York Daily Herald*, 8 July, 9 July, 10 July 1874. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 9 July 1874.

43. *Brooklyn Daily Times*, 16 September 1874. *Brooklyn Eagle*, 17 September 1874.

Was the power of attorney valid? Given that he no longer owned the stock, could Ferris be elected to the board? The answers were “no” both in the initial case heard in Hartford in March, and on appeal in September.⁴⁴ Almost immediately, the *Ellen S. Terry* was reported to have been auctioned off for \$8,200 cash.⁴⁵

Despite this, the *Terry* spent the next two years continuing to run to New Bern, under Captain Salyer. Early in 1877 she completed her 15th year on the New York to New Bern run. The principal difference from the spring of 1875 was that her New York agent was the winner of that winter’s fight for control of the Hartford & Albany Transportation Company, Josiah J. White.

But in February 1877, the *Ellen S. Terry* shifted back to Long Island Sound, making her first trip to Providence, Rhode Island. She had been built for the route up the Sound, but for the first time this stretched beyond the mouth of the Connecticut River. Over the course of the year, she also ran to Pawtucket, Rhode Island and Fall River, Massachusetts.⁴⁶

New York and North Carolina
STEAMSHIP LINE!

Capt. WALLACE



ST. ELLEN S. TERRY,

CONNECTING WITH THE
Atlantic & N. C. Railroad
at
NEWBERN.

For Points on the
Atlantic and N. C. and N. C. Railroads.
Through BILLS of LADING Given.
Rates Guaranteed as Low as by Any
Other Route!

J. J. WHITE. WM. DUNN,
Ag't 118 Wall St., N. Y. Ag't Newbern.

Daily Nut Shell (New Bern),
21 March 1876.

44. *Hartford Courant*, 20 March, 22 March 1875. Ste ex Rel. Josiah J. White and another vs. Lindley M. Ferris, Jr., and others, *Connecticut Reports*, (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co., 1876) 42: 560-70. White’s “another” was William H. Goodspeed.

45. *Boston Post*, 22 March 1875.

46. *New York Tribune*, 9 February 1877. *New York Daily Herald*, 24 June, 21 September 1877. *Hartford Courant*, 25 June 1877. *Fall River Daily Evening News*, 23 August, 13 September 1877.

At the end of the 1877 season the trail of the *Ellen S. Terry* goes cold for a while. She may have been laid up for most of the 1878-1879 seasons. While the absence of evidence is not proof, it is striking that when she reappears in November 1879, she was being towed from New York to Philadelphia by the tug *Clyde*.⁴⁷

In the new year, the *Ellen S. Terry* returned to the southbound coastal routes, now running to Philadelphia for William P. Clyde. From his Philadelphia base as well as from New York, Clyde was running lines to the West Indies, New Orleans, and the southern Atlantic states. In 1880, Clyde had eight vessels on routes to Virginia alone, with the *Terry* being among the smallest and the oldest.⁴⁸ In early 1881, she was on a regular route between North Carolina (typically Wilmington and Morehead City) and New York, carrying among other things, merchandise, passengers, and cotton.⁴⁹

Six weeks after her last reported trip to the southern states, on May 27, 1881, the *Ellen S. Terry* cleared New York bound for Quebec.⁵⁰ The Clyde Steamship Company had sold her to Captain H. G. Blanchard for use on the Great Lakes, towing barges in the lumber trade.⁵¹

Blanchard and the lumber trade (mostly)

Capt. Henry G. (Harry) Blanchard had an unusual career for a Great Lakes vessel owner. Born in New York in 1837, he went to sea at the age of twelve before heading to Detroit with, in a story he probably repeated dozens of times, reputed 37 cents in his pocket. He sailed with Capt. Atwood on the *Ariel* for three seasons before taking on his own commands up to 1865. These were mostly small steamers on local passenger and package freight runs in the Detroit and Lake St. Clair

47. *New York Daily Herald*, 26 November 1879.

48. *Norfolk Virginian*, 1 October 1880.

49. *New York Times*, 2 January, 12 February, 12 April 1881. *Daily Review* (Wilmington, NC), 6 January 1881. *Weekly Star* (Wilmington, NC), 18 March, 8 April 1881.

50. *New York Times*, 28 May 1881.

51. *Detroit Free Press*, 31 May 1881.



CAPT. HENRY G. BLANCHARD,

Detroit Free Press, 5 April 1900.

region.⁵² For the next few years he served as a detective for the Detroit customs office, as a Deputy U.S. Marshall, and with the secret service. His obituary is full of stories of his dealings with smugglers.⁵³ By 1877, the widowed ex-Deputy Marshall began acting as agent in a variety of Detroit ventures, as well as being active in Detroit campaigns on behalf of the Republican party.⁵⁴

In another sharp turn in Capt. Blanchard's career, in February 1879, he acquired the steam barge *Mayflower*, along with her barges *America*, *Lillie May*, *Emerald*, and *Colorado*. He decided that collectively they would be the Diamond B. Line, perhaps a play on the seven-cent cigar popular at the time.⁵⁵ In June he added the barge *Mary Barter*, which had not been in commission yet that season. Two months later the tug *A. F. Bartlett* was added to the fleet. At the end of the season, he picked up the *T. U. Bradbury*, which after sitting idle for two seasons, had recently been converted from a propeller into a barge but required further work over the winter.⁵⁶ This fleet was then deployed with the steam vessels towing barges loaded with lumber from Saginaw region ports to Toledo or Tonawanda. The steam barge *Mayflower*, at 184 feet in length, could carry as much or more than her barges, while the 48-foot *A. F. Bartlett* was simply a tug. Acquired in June 1881, the *L. Q. Rawson* was a 52-foot tug that matched the *Bartlett*.

Like most of the lumber carriers in the early 1880s, Blanchard's fleet was largely composed of older hulls. The *Mayflower* and *Bradbury* had been built in the 1850s, as was a later acquisition, the barge (formerly

52. *Detroit Free Press*, 21 March 1861 describes him as "formerly of the *Ariel*" and taking command of the *B. F. Bruce* between New Baltimore and Detroit. *Detroit Free Press*, 15 August 1862 reported his fitting up the *Princess* for the same route, before trying the Detroit to Chatham, Detroit to Wallaceburg routes in 1863 before reverting to New Baltimore in the fall and into the spring of 1864.

53. *Detroit Free Press*, 5 April 1900.

54. *Detroit Free Press*, 29 March, 26 April, 23 October, 26 October, 31 October, 8 December, 21 December, 28 December 1877 (assignee in bankruptcy); 18 November 1877 (house rental agent). Ads beginning in September 1878 identified him as an auctioneer. (*Detroit Free Press*, 22 September 1878).

55. *Detroit Free Press*, 23 February 1879.

56. *Detroit Free Press*, 19 September, 21 October 1879; 28 February 1880.

salvage tug) *Magnet*. Most of the rest dated from the 1860s and all of them before 1874. Price was probably a consideration in the acquisition of these vessels, as it is not clear where Blanchard found the funds to assemble the line. Clearly, Blanchard would have had no hesitation considering a 24-year-old, iron-hulled, relatively small, shallow-draft, propeller-driven freighter running on the east coast.

The deal by which Blanchard acquired the *Ellen S. Terry* from the Clyde Steamship Company was announced in Detroit on May 31, 1881 under the heading "That Ocean Steamer." It reported that Blanchard had cleared New York with his "new iron steamer."⁵⁷ "Newly acquired" would have been more accurate, as would "accompanied by Capt. Blanchard" as she cleared New York under Captain J. F. Mitchell.⁵⁸

She arrived at Quebec on June 6 with a load of coal.⁵⁹ On June 11 she cleared with the coal still on board, still under Capt. Mitchell, for Detroit, arriving two days later in Montreal.⁶⁰

Here things got more interesting. It boggles the mind that Blanchard had given no thought to the size of the *Ellen S. Terry* until she was tied up in Montreal alongside some vessels designed to transit the Welland Canal. As the *Detroit Free Press* later reported:

On reaching the Lachine Rapids he noticed that she was rather longer than the regular canalers and on measurement found her to be eleven feet more of a boat than he had paid for. This would have been a pleasant surprise to most men but Capt. Blanchard felt greatly annoyed by it as it necessitated a delay of about three months, until the new Welland Canal was finished.⁶¹

57. *Detroit Free Press*, 31 May 1881.

58. *New York Times*, 28 May 1881. The *Free Press* article says she cleared on the 29th. The *Times* article reported she cleared on the 27th as did the *Morning Chronicle* (Quebec), 3 June 1881.

59. *Daily Evening Mercury* (Quebec), 6 June 1881.

60. *Montreal Herald*, 13 June, 14 June 1881.

61. *Detroit Free Press*, 20 September 1881.

One is left speculating whether the size of the *Terry* had been misrepresented or whether Blanchard was clueless to the significance of the length of the vessel recorded on the papers he was signing. What is not suggested in any account was the expectation that the enlarged Welland Canal might be open by early June. Nor, given that the opening was anticipated by the end of the summer, was any consideration given to repeating the work done to the iron-hulled, ex-blockade runner *Chicora* which had been split in two to transit the canals for service on the upper Lakes, and then again to return her to Lake Ontario.

They waited. She remained tied up at Barker's dock at Clayton, New York, all summer, although one account suggested that the opportunity was taken to make unspecified changes to better fit her for the lumber trade.⁶²

Still waiting, in early August Blanchard petitioned the Secretary of the Treasury to change the name of the *Ellen S. Terry*. In previous years, a name change for an American vessel had required an act of Congress. But in March 1881, Congress had delegated that authority to the Secretary of the Treasury.⁶³ According to the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser*, the first owner on the Great Lakes to take advantage of the new legislation was Capt. Blanchard who had the *T. U. Bradbury* renamed *Florence M. Dickinson*.⁶⁴ While the *Terry* languished at the dock in Clayton, Blanchard received permission to rename her the *Don M. Dickinson*, in honor of the Michigan lawyer and Democratic politician.⁶⁵ It may be possible that Blanchard had drawn on Dickinson to underwrite the expansion of his fleet. Given that Florence was his wife, Blanchard may also have anticipated that his

62. *Clayton Independent*, 21 September 1881. *Cleveland Leader*, 30 July 1881.

63. United States. *Statutes at Large*, 21: 377. Chap. 107 "An Act to authorize the Secretary of the Treasury to change the name of vessels under certain circumstances." 2 March 1881.

64. *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser*, 6 April 1881.

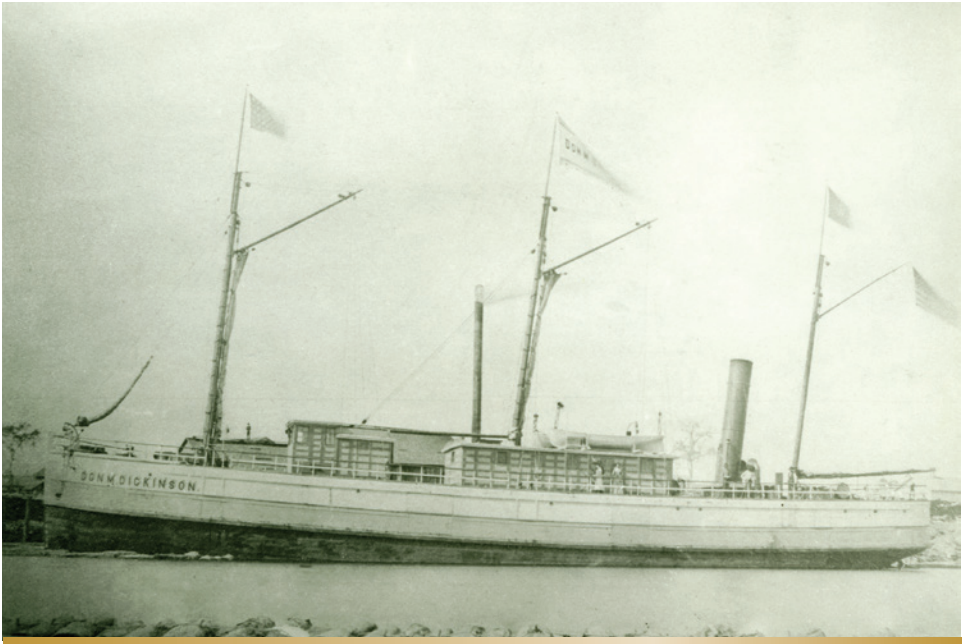
65. *Synopsis of the Decisions of the Treasury Department ... for the year ended December 31, 1881* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1882) p. 242, no. 4998.

new acquisition should have an appropriately named consort barge.

The principal construction of the third Welland Canal slowly approached completion over the summer of 1881. The watering of the canal was largely completed by the first week of September, but the last gates were not in place until about September 10. A few days later the authorities indicated that the first transits of vessels that were too large for the old canal could be made after the 15th. So promptly on September 16, 1881, the newly renamed *Don M. Dickinson* appeared at Port Dalhousie requesting passage. She would be the first. With considerable (and perhaps an excess of) caution, the *Dickinson* was taken in tow by the tug *Harvey Neelon*, both vessels decked out with bunting. This inaugural passage drew crowds along the way as the two vessels made their way to the summit, despite some difficulties with locks that were not yet completely functional.⁶⁶ The *Dickinson* arrived in Detroit the evening of September 20 with her cargo of 300 tons of coal.

The surviving photograph of the *Don M. Dickinson* afloat is consistent with the description of her on her arrival in Detroit. She had three masts, with sails secured to the foremast and mainmast, and to the boom of the aftermast. All three masts are slightly raked, with a jib-sail secured to the stem rather than a bowsprit. A boom was attached to the mainmast, but was rigged forward, more useful for loading cargo than in deploying a sail. The upper deck featured a small cabin midships completely detached from the pilothouse and Texas deck which were set back about one-third of the ship's length from the bow. An open railing ran the circumference of the upper deck. The result was a unique profile for a Great Lakes vessel. With her gangways shut, the main deck was completely enclosed with a limited number of small portholes. No portholes are visible in her iron hull.

66. Roberta M. Styran and Robert R. Taylor, *This Great National Object: Building the Nineteenth-Century Welland Canals* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), p. 188. On the other hand, most of the newspaper accounts were surprisingly optimistic about the canal's performance. *Plain Dealer*, (Cleveland), 17 September 1881. *Chicago Tribune*, 18 September 1881. *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser*, 19 September 1881.



Don M. Dickinson, Fall 1881. Image courtesy of the Ralph Roberts Collection.

Assuming there had been no unreported rebuilds, that hull was still sub-divided with some five bulkheads. Between them and the enclosed main deck, the *Dickinson* was not laid out like a typical lumber hooker of the period. Nor had the strength of her engines ever been tested towing barges.

But for the balance of the 1881 season right through the 1886 season, the *Don M. Dickinson* towed lumber barges. Her initial stay at Detroit was brief, clearing for Bay City at midnight.⁶⁷ No barge was identified on the trip in mid-October when she took refuge in at the harbor of Sand Beach for at least three days.⁶⁸ A week later she returned with a single barge, but by November the listings routinely said “barges.”⁶⁹ The plan for 1882 was to have her routinely tow *Lily May*, *Colorado* and *America*. They were being rebuilt at Wheeler’s in Bay City.

67. *Detroit Free Press*, 20 September, 21 September 1881.

68. *Detroit Free Press*, 11-14 October 1881.

69. *Detroit Free Press*, 22 October, 11 November 1881.

There, the *Dickinson* was also receiving some serious upgrades. Her old engine was replaced with a new 34-inch cylinder “with all modern improvements.” The boiler was re-braced. A pony engine for handling freight into and out of the holds apparently did not need work. On the other hand, the propeller was replaced. The open railing, such a striking feature of the sole surviving photograph of her, was gone. New stanchions were being installed and tight bulwarks created.⁷⁰ The previous paint was being blistered and scraped off, so that the bare decks could get coats of shellac followed by white lead paint. At least the deck braces, Capt. Blanchard was able to boast, were much heavier than those required for lake navigation.

The engineering makeover did not mean her mechanical issues were at an end. A few months later she lost three days thanks to a broken crank pin.⁷¹ The following spring more “extensive repairs” were made to the machinery, this time at the Riverside Iron Works in Detroit.⁷² At the end of the 1885 season, the lumber-laden *Dickinson* broke down at Algonac with two barges in tow. Her fleet mate, the *Justice Field*, had to be deployed to tow them to Tonawanda to be unloaded and for repairs.⁷³ Five years after the work in Wheeler’s yard, the boilers required another overhaul. In the summer of 1887, she was hauled out at Port Huron for “minor repairs” including work on her propeller.⁷⁴ Perhaps the final mechanical insult for the Blanchard interests came in the fall of 1887, when she was tied up in Bay City for nearly a week with a broken shaft.⁷⁵

While the *Don M. Dickinson* endured a series of mechanical challenges, she did manage to avoid being seriously damaged. In terms of stormy passages, perhaps the most challenging came in September 1883 while upbound from Toledo to Bay City with the *N. P. Goodell* and *Colorado*

70. *Evening Press* (Bay City), 3 February 1882.

71. *Evening Press* (Bay City), 10 July 1882.

72. *Detroit Free Press*, 20 April 1883.

73. *Detroit Free Press*, 2 December, 3 December 1885.

74. *Marine Record*, 18 August 1887.

75. *Marine Record*, 10 November 1887.

in tow. An equinoctial gale met them when they were nearly abreast of Sand Beach (now Harbor Beach). The *Dickinson* immediately altered course running into the new harbor of refuge. The *Goodell* followed but the tow line to *Colorado* failed and she ran ashore south of the harbor. Fortunately, there was no loss of life.⁷⁶ Apart from that, the *Dickinson* was briefly ashore in the Saint Clair River near Sarnia in November 1885 on the trip before she broke down at Algonac.⁷⁷

By this time, ownership of the *Dickinson* and the rest of the Blanchard fleet had changed. In February 1885, the Blanchard Navigation Company was formed. Of the \$100,000 in capital, half was in shares held by Henry G. Blanchard. The balance was divided into eight parts. Among the new investors were Don M. Dickinson, the steamer's namesake, who two years later would serve as Postmaster General in the first Grover Cleveland administration. Henry T. Thurber was a member of Dickinson's law firm. William D. Robinson was a partner with Dickinson in a wholesale boots and shoes company. A. Ives & Sons were Detroit bankers. Henry C. Hart was the president of the Henry C. Hart Manufacturing Co., making railway, builder's, and cabinet hardware. Marvin H. Chamberlain was in the wines and liquor business. Caroline F. Brooks was the widow of the Hon. Nathaniel W. Brooks, who had been in the lumber trade, owning a sawmill on the Detroit waterfront as well as mills in the Saginaw region. The last eighth was divided between Walter Buhl, partner in a firm dealing in furs and straw goods and George H. Hopkins, the treasurer of a firm manufacturing tobacco.⁷⁸ Among the things the investors had in common were living in Detroit, having money to invest, and not being currently engaged in the shipping business.

76. Wes Oleszewski, *Keepers of Valor, Lakes of Vengeance: Lakeboats, Lifesavers and Lighthouses* (Gwinn, Michigan. Avery Color Studios, Inc., 2000) devotes a chapter to this story, which is much more about the barge crews and the lifesavers than the *Dickinson*.

77. *Detroit Free Press*, 12 November 1885. *Port Huron Daily Times*, 12 November 1885.

78. J. W. Weeks & Co's *Detroit City Directory for 1885* (Detroit: R. L. Polk, 1885), pp. 217, 290, 301, 329, 406, 559, 601, 621, 968, 1117. *Detroit Free Press*, 1 October 1872 (Obituary of N. W. Brooks).

While Blanchard had occasionally found himself in court over the course of the 1880s, perhaps the most significant case was triggered by an incident on the *Don M. Dickinson* before the start of the 1886 season. Captain William J. Crosby had commanded the *Dickinson* the previous year and had then been hired as a ship-keeper to ensure the vessel remained safe over the winter while moored in a slip at the foot of Adair St. in Detroit. With the expectation of being in command the following season, in March, Crosby started recruiting a crew and engaged James A. Caniff, a veteran of some 12 or so years on the Lakes, to serve as mate. Never having been on board, Caniff was offered a tour. Captain Crosby went a little ahead with a couple of junk dealers, leaving Caniff to follow him up a ladder to the upper deck forward, and then down through a scuttle to the main deck. Being still shut up for the winter, this deck was quite dark. Calling out to the captain, Caniff was told to come up forward. In doing so he stepped over a ten-inch hatch coaming and onto the forward hatch cover. Unfortunately the hatch was actually open and the newly hired mate plunged into the forward hold.

More than a year later, Caniff's suit against the Blanchard Navigation Company finally came to trial, over his claim that there had been negligence by not keeping the hatches covered. In the initial trial, Caniff was awarded \$500 in damages.⁷⁹ The following year, on the company's appeal to the Supreme Court of Michigan, the award was overturned. Evidence was presented that hatches were routinely opened over the winter to allow air to circulate through the holds. It was particularly effective, according to the testimony, at reducing the rate of rusting of iron hulls, but it was not exclusive to them. It was argued that a man of Caniff's experience should have known this, even if the captain had failed to mention it, or, at the very least given the darkness, he should have proceeded down the edge of the deck. The court also noted that the captain, acting as ship-keeper, had positive orders not to allow anyone else on board, and consequently the owners could not be held responsible for Caniff's unauthorized

79. *Detroit Free Press*, 14 April 1887.

presence on board, even if he had just been hired.⁸⁰ Over the course of the next half-century, the case would be routinely cited in legal volumes on negligence, personal injuries, automobiles, masters and servants, a legal dictionary, along with American and even Canadian legal cases. Much good did that legal notoriety do for the injured James Caniff.

When Blanchard resigned as manager after the end of the 1886 season, William D. Morton was brought in to manage the firm. He was very actively engaged on the Detroit waterfront in the wholesale and retail lumber, lath and shingles trade, and shared a home address with Mrs. Brooks, at 233 Fort St. West.⁸¹ As already noted, the *Ellen S. Terry* had been an unlikely pick as a lumber steam barge, and the transformation into the *Don M. Dickinson* had not greatly improved on that. Among the larger loads credited to her, in June 1882 she cleared Bay City with 104,000 board feet of lumber and 300,000 feet of lath for Cleveland.⁸² With her enclosed main deck and smaller holds separated by bulkheads, it must have been an interesting challenge to load and unload her with the dispatch that her barges could be handled. As on her delivery trip she occasionally carried coal as she did in 1884 to Menominee.⁸³

The new management dropped the *Dickinson* as a lumber carrying, barge towing steamer, having conceded, as Harry Blanchard never had, that “as a lumber carrier she was unprofitable owing to her build.”⁸⁴ They redeployed her on a regular weekly service between Saginaw ports and Cleveland carrying freight alongside the *Sanilac*.⁸⁵ Her first clearance from Cleveland included 1,000 barrels of oil

80. James A. Caniff v. The Blanchard Navigation Company, *Michigan Reports*, 66: 638-648.

81. *Detroit City Directory*, 1885, pp. 123, 727.

82. *Evening Press* (Bay City), 1 June 1882.

83. *Daily State Gazette* (Green Bay), 6 September 1884.

84. *Cleveland Leader*, 30 May 1887.

85. *Marine Record*, 2 June 1887. *Industries of the Saginaws: Historical Descriptive and Statistical* (East Saginaw, MI: J. M. Elstner & Co., 1887) p. 27

from the local refineries.⁸⁶ Up to the point she broke her shaft in mid-November, she ran regularly carrying merchandise, oil, and occasionally clearing with lath on a return trip. It is unlikely that she was any more profitable. After one season back in the package freight business, the *Dickinson* was offered for sale.

It should be noted that the Blanchard Navigation Company was in the process of selling off much of the tonnage that Captain Blanchard had accumulated just a few years earlier. The sloop barge *Magnet* had been sold to John W. and Charles H. Westcott in the spring of 1887, and the barge *Emerald* to other parties the following September.⁸⁷ Apart from the *Dickinson*, the tugs *Justice Field* and *A. F. Bartlett* and the barges *Colorado* and *Knight Templar* were disposed of in 1888.

Although the re-enrollment of the *Don M. Dickinson* is dated in April, the sale was public by late January 1888.⁸⁸ A few days later the propeller *Lowell* was also acquired by the Westcotts for a reported \$14,000.⁸⁹ While the public accounts generally ascribe the new ownership of the *Dickinson* to be the Westcott brothers, the ownership in April was divided into four equal parts. The Westcott brothers split one part. The other three-quarters were held by Frank Hart of Marine City, Thomas Pringle of Marine City, and Perry Prentiss of Cleveland, with Thomas Pringle listed as master.⁹⁰ Captain Pringle's quarter share was worth \$2,500 making the general value of the vessel \$10,000 when he was brought into the ownership.⁹¹ In September the enrollment was renewed with the Westcott brothers splitting Frank Hart's share, giving the four remaining investors a quarter share each.⁹²

86. *Cleveland Leader*, 31 May 1887.

87. For an extensive background of the Westcott interests see John Polacsek, "The Nautical Heritage of Michigan's Westcott Family," *Telescope*, v. 72, n. 1 (Spring 2024): 4-43 and especially 41-42.

88. *Detroit Free Press*, 21 January 1888. *Marine Record*, 2 February 1888

89. *Detroit Free Press*, 26 January 1888.

90. *Port of Detroit*, Enrollments, No. 46, 3 April 1888.

91. *Marine Record*, 15 March 1888.

92. *Port of Detroit*, Enrollments, No. 19, 10 September 1888.

And what was the *Dickinson* to do? The initial account of the sale suggests that the new owners were not really sure.⁹³ She opened the season as a freighter. In April, she cleared Toledo with a load of coal for Marine City under Pringle's command, returning with barrels of salt.⁹⁴ By mid-July, she began to appear in the vessel passages at Detroit and Port Huron with barges in tow.⁹⁵ In September she took shelter at Sand Beach with four barges.⁹⁶ This service wrapped up in early October when she was briefly sidelined to allow Samuel F. Hodge to fit her with a new rudder.⁹⁷

At this point the Westcott brothers announced that the *Don M. Dickinson* had been fitted out as a wrecking steamer and would be stationed at Detroit, along with steam pumps and lighters "and everything that goes with a complete wrecker."⁹⁸ Shortly afterwards, the *Dickinson* went off to raise the schooner barge *Henry W. Sage* which had sunk at the St. Clair Ship Canal in a collision with the *Lansing*.⁹⁹ No sooner had she towed the *Sage* to Detroit for repairs, when the *Dickinson* set off with her lighter to help unload the *Golden Age*, which was partially obstructing the canal.¹⁰⁰ Days later they were lightening wheat from the *Pensaukee*, on the St. Clair River. The schooner had been under tow when her tug had broken a shaft. The anchor had been quickly let go to avoid a collision, but unfortunately in the shallow water the *Pensaukee* promptly ran over it and holed herself. Having lightened her, the *Dickinson* was able to tow her back to Detroit for repairs.¹⁰¹

93. *Marine Record*, 2 February 1888.

94. *Toledo Blade*, 9 April, 16 April 1888. *Marine Record*, 19 April 1888.

95. *Toledo Blade*, 14 July 1888.

96. *Marine Record*, 20 September 1888.

97. *Marine Record*, 11 October 1888.

98. *Evening News* (Detroit), 23 October 1888. *Saginaw Evening News*, 19 October 1888.

99. *Evening News* (Detroit), 23 October, 27 October 1888.

100. *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), 26 October 1888.

101. *Daily Inter Ocean* (Chicago), 29 October 1888. *Chicago Tribune*, 29 October 1888. *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland), 31 October, 1 November 1888.

While work was underway on the *Pensaukee*, the big new steel bulk freighter *Corsica* struck a submerged obstruction just north of Port Huron on the approaches to the Saint Clair River. The shoal she discovered has since been known as the Corsica Shoal, after which it was guarded by a succession of lightships, including the museum *Lightship No. 103 (Huron)*. The *Corsica* settled on the bottom at Port Huron, where the *Don M. Dickinson* delivered a steam pump a short time later. According to the account in the *Marine Record*, the *Corsica* had no pump well. Consequently, men had to cut a hole through her inch-thick iron deck. After having 150 tons of her cargo offloaded into a lighter, *Corsica* towed the lighter with its cargo down to Ashtabula before crossing to Cleveland to be drydocked.¹⁰²

The *Don M. Dickinson's* brief career as a wrecker was cut short in the early hours of November 11. She had been tied off to some piles by the lighthouse at the upper end of Belle Isle in the Detroit River. Captain A. P. Gallino was later quoted:

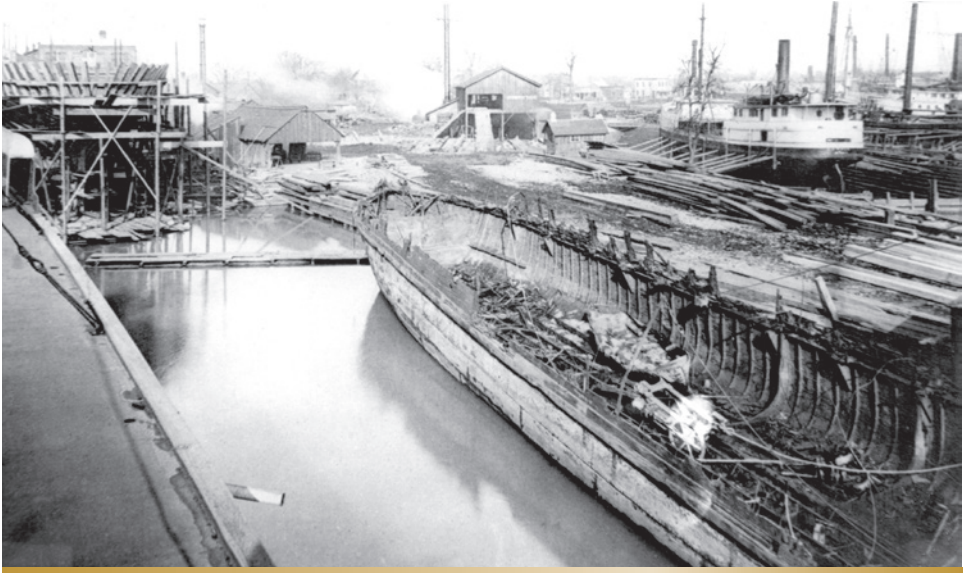
I was awakened about 3:30 a.m. by the flames coming into my cabin. There was a crew of six men, and I made it my first effort to see that all were aroused and safely off, as the flames had made too much progress to think for a moment of saving her. Each man clutched a pile and held on. T. B. McHugh, the engineer, in getting off fell overboard and narrowly escaped drowning, as did also the fireman. Soon the lines were burned away and the boat drifted over to the Canadian shore and went aground. The lighthouse keeper then came to our rescue with a boat and took the crew off the piles. I have no idea how the fire started, except that it must have caught from the furnaces."¹⁰³

The *Detroit Free Press*, probably quoting J. W. Wescott, claimed the vessel was worth \$20,000. That week's issue of the *Marine Record*,

102. *Marine Record* 8 November 1888. *Detroit Free Press* 2 November 1888.

103. *Detroit Free Press*, 12 November 1888.

drawing on the value in the classification register of Inland Lloyds, put the value at \$7,500 but noted that the wrecking machinery on board had also been destroyed. More to the point, the last transfers of ownership in September had been based on a value of \$12,000. The insurance covered \$8,000 of that.¹⁰⁴ Westcott summed up the results of the fire simply: the boat was a total loss.



Clark's Drydock, c1889. The burned out hull of the *Dickinson* sits in the forefront of the image. Image courtesy of Thunder Bay Research Collection at Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library.

We are left with one final scene: a gutted hull tied up at Clark's drydock just downriver from Detroit. On the one side in the background is the *Lowell* propped up in the dock. On the other is a wooden hull under construction. But the image is dominated by that gutted hull. It was published on the cover of *The Detroit Marine Historian* in September 1959 and came from the collection of Father Dowling. He and some of his contemporaries, William A. McDonald, Capt. Frank E. Hamilton, and Canon St. Clair had studied the image and believed the hull in the foreground was the *Don M. Dickinson*. The exterior of the port side shows long, relatively wide iron plates placed horizontally. The interior shows a succession of closely spaced, but very small frames.

104. *Marine Record*, 15 November 1888.

Clearly it is an iron hull. Randomly, stunted blackened timbers reach up from the starboard side of the hull, with a short stretch of solid planking surviving near the port bow. Inside the hull the eye is drawn to a wheel with six spokes and no apparent handles, while behind it is a crumpled boat. Draped through the hull are several cables, perhaps wire rigging. What is not in the picture are any of the bulkheads the *Dickinson* was supposed to have to separate her holds, although the forward, “crash” bulkhead is still in place. After a fire, there would have been substantially more debris than is in view in this photograph. It is hard to argue with Dowling, McDonald, Hamilton, and St. Clair in terms of the identification of the hull. Their suggestion that the date might be 1891 or 1892, given that she burned in 1890 is probably off by two years. Certainly the date of the *Dickinson's* destruction is. *Lowell* was docked late in 1889 although the news account did not specify at which Detroit facility.

No further evidence has surfaced of the re-use or disposal of the hull. A number of the older iron hulls of this period were cut down to barges, which were still economically viable in the smaller lumber ports on Lake Huron/Georgian Bay and upper Lake Michigan. Perhaps the best example of this was the *Grace Grummond*. Built in Philadelphia in 1856, she was an iron-hulled, near contemporary of the *Dickinson* designed initially for the Great Lakes Survey. Three years after she burned in 1884, the hull was repurposed as a schooner-rigged tow barge, serving both American and Canadian lumber interests well into the 20th Century.¹⁰⁵

That the *Dickinson's* hull was still afloat is a testament to the resilience of this class of hull. Had the hull been partially gutted and the bulkheads removed? Was it waiting on a private sale? Did it persist as a barge under another name or perhaps, even, another flag? Or was it scrapped or abandoned in one of the Detroit area boneyards?

105. *Marine Record*, 23 June, 4 August, 18 August 1887. In Canadian registry since 1904, the *Grace Grummond* was renamed *Baltic*. She was broken up at Clear Creek in a severe storm in August 1939. Library and Archives Canada, R184, RG12-B-15-A-i, Volume number: 3044, Register of vessels closed out during year 1940, *Baltic*. The registry was closed on 20 December 1940.

Whether this was the end of the road, or just a sharp turn out of sight, the career of the *Ellen S. Terry* / *Don M. Dickinson* may not have been as exciting as that of a mythical Fenian cruiser or even a blockade runner but it still has a lot to teach us about the adaptability of a simple form to a succession of functions. 

About the Author:

Walter Lewis is an award-winning maritime historian and frequent speaker, specializing in the history of the Great Lakes region. A graduate of Queen's University and the University of Toronto, he took up SCUBA diving as part of the research for *The River Palace*, co-authored with Rick Neilson of Kingston. His website, MaritimeHistoryOfTheGreatLakes.ca is recognized as one of the richest resources for researchers of Great Lakes history.

TRAVEL BY BOAT AND TRAIN

Contributed by Richard Palmer

Contributors Note:

It's the old newspapers that capture the color and romance of steamboat days on the St. Lawrence river such as this article that appeared in the *St. Lawrence Republican*, Ogdensburg, N.Y., July 10, 1856. The letter "h" at the end of Ogdensburg was dropped in 1890.



The steamer *New York* was built at the Merrick shipyard in Clayton, New York by John Oades in 1851 (Official No. 18324) and was owned by the Ontario & St. Lawrence Steamboat Co. of Ogdensburg. It had a vertical (walking) beam engine, was 234' 9" long, 32'4" beam, 14'6" depth, registered at 99 tons, and was steam powered. For a time it was the largest steamboat on Lake Ontario. During the Civil War it was chartered to the U. S. Government. After the Civil War it was used on the East coast, finally running on Delaware Bay excursions. It burned on May 20, 1894. Photo courtesy of Alpena County George N. Fletcher Public Library.

QUICKEST TIME YET!

Steamer *New York* Aboard!

The steamer *New York*, Capt. R. B. Chapman, surprised our citizens and the Steamboat men at the depot, on Thursday morning last, by arriving from Hamilton in time to connect with the 10 o'clock train for Rouse's Point. This, by a long ways, the best trip that has been made from Hamilton to this port. She left Hamilton at 6:50 o'clock, Wednesday, p.m., and arrived at Cape Vincent at 5:56 o'clock Thursday morning.

She made her regular stops, leaving a large number of passengers at Brockville, and had her lines on the spiles at the Railroad wharf at 9:56 - making the trip from Hamilton to this port in 15 hours and 8 minutes. This is at least one hour quicker than the trip has been made this season, and is two hours better than has been expected of the boats on this line, as the 12 o'clock Express is the regular train for the Hamilton boats to connect with, instead of the 11 o'clock.

This is quite a victory for the "fine little boat," as the Hamiltonians call the *New York*. We think after this they will add "fast" also among their other prefixes. The *New York* may not be as large as her other companions on this line, but for speed and comfort she is their equal. She is the best boat of the Ontario and St. Lawrence Steamboat Co.'s line, and is officered by as fine a set of men as ever floated.

Her Captain, R. B. Chapman, is "an old-hand" at navigation, both in sail and steam vessels, and is noted for his strict attention to his steamer, and his courteousness and gentlemanly bearing with his passengers. Capt. Warner, the 1st Mate, is a host in himself, and while he is about, everything goes right.

Her Engineer, Wm. Gardner, is good to the core, and can make the *New York* walk the water like a thing of life. What he don't know about an engine, as the boy said, "is not worth knowing." It is to him that the credit of making such excellent time is due, and while he is Engineer, the *New York* "can't be beat."

Everybody knows Charley Barton, the popular Clerk of the *New York*, always at his post - always pleasant, agreeable and gentlemanly - never neglecting any duty, and his little body contains as large a heart as beats in the bosom of any of the human family.

George Rice, who keeps the Saloon, is "SOUND", and a general favorite among all who have made his acquaintance. There is no better caterer on the lakes than Mr. Hunt, the Steward, and the passengers always express themselves as being well pleased with the bountiful supply which he places upon the table.

In a word, the *New York* is a fine boat, well-officered, and long may she sail upon our lake and river to uphold the honor of the American line — the American flag and the achievements of American mechanics.

Ogdensburgh Railroad

The present arrangement of trains on this road offer the traveler a better means of reaching New York and Boston, from Ogdensburgh, than any other route. Passengers who desire to go through can take the 12 p.m. train and arrive in Rouse's Point in season for the Vermont Central run or the Lake Champlain steamers.

Passengers to New York will take these steamers, and after having a good night's rest, reach Whitehall at breakfast, and then take the rail again, arriving in New York in the afternoon. The fare is as cheap by this route as any, and the accommodation for passengers cannot be surpassed.

The 10 o'clock train, from this place, stops at all the stations, and persons who desire to transact business on the route can take this train, do their business, and be ready when the express train comes along to go on. We think this arrangement, the present season, is better than the previous ones, and we trust will be liberally patronized by the traveling public.

The passengers from the West, by the steamers from Hamilton, are carried east in the 12 o'clock run. G. V. Hoyle, Esq., the indefatigable

Superintendent of the Ogdensburgh Road, is entitled to great credit for his efforts to conduce to the convenience and wants of the traveling public. His arrangements are carried out to the letter by the excellent employees of the road, and with Engineers like Brown, Scarier and —, and Conductors like Marney, Grinnell, George, and Barry, the timetables are followed to a dot - the connections are always made and the wants of the public always attended to. We trust the time is soon coming when this road will be relieved from its embarrassments caused by its enormous original cost.

It is quite often the case that the management of a road which thus suffers do not receive the credit which is eminently their due, and which is lavished upon that of a prosperous road, who are far less entitled to it. To the Ogdensburgh Road the farmers and land owners of this section of the State are indebted for the market of their produce and lands, and for the prices which they received, and it is but fair that they should do what they can to aid that which has enriched them. 

History Above and Below the Water

USA Today announced on February 18, 2026 that two Great Lakes maritime museums were recognized in an on-line poll of its readers as among the top 10 maritime museums in the United States. The Dossin Museum was voted 6th best while our very own National Museum of the Great Lakes in Toledo was voted 2nd best maritime museum in the United States! ⚓



**National Museum of the Great Lakes
#2 Best Maritime Museum**

Riding high on the heels of the *USA Today* announcement, the National Museum of the Great Lakes also announced the confirmation of a newly discovered shipwreck in Lake Erie, the bark *Clough*, along with the opening of a temporary micro exhibit showcasing the find. The *Clough* was discovered by the Cleveland Underwater Explorers (CLUE).

CLUE, with support from NMGL, has worked since 2001 to locate and identify shipwrecks in Lake Erie, helping to preserve and share the region's maritime history. Following several site visits, the creation of a detailed site map, and extensive historical research, the team has now positively identified the vessel as the *Clough*.

The discovery carries deep meaning for CLUE and NMGL. The wreck site is associated with the tragic loss of CLUE founder David VanZandt in June 2024. In the months following his passing, both organizations committed to completing the identification process

with care, accuracy, and respect. Through collaborative research and documentation, the vessel has now been formally confirmed.

Built in Lorain, Ohio, in 1867, the *Clough* was a stone-hauling sailing vessel owned by Baxter Clough, a quarry owner from Amherst, Ohio. Measuring 125 feet in length with a breadth of 26.5 feet, the *Clough* was classified as a bark, a three-masted vessel rigged with square sails on the foremast and schooner sails on the main and mizzen masts. The ship met its fate just a year after its launch, sinking on September 15, 1868, while transporting stone for Great Lakes commerce. ⚓



Mast hole and fife rail with pump just behind on the recently identified shipwreck *Clough*. Photo by Jack Papes.

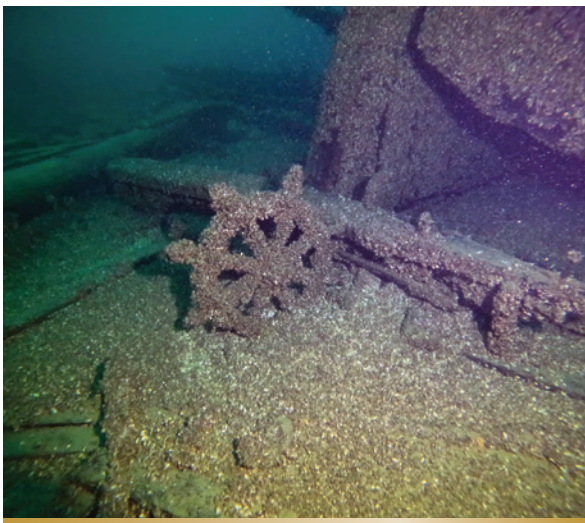
On February 10, 2026, local media in Sandusky reported that city officials had begun the formal process of redeveloping the historic Boeckling Building and its attached pier, following the property's recent transfer from Cedar Point. The initiative was described as a key component of the city's broader downtown waterfront revitalization strategy.

The building, constructed in 1928, named after Cedar Point's founder, and long associated with Cedar Point's operation, had been vacant in recent years. City leaders issued a request for qualifications to identify development partners capable of restoring the structure while preserving its historic character.

Plans for the site include a mix of commercial and public-facing uses, such as retail or mixed-use space within the building, alongside continued access to the pier for existing ferry operations. Additional concepts discussed in coverage included the potential for a water taxi system linking downtown Sandusky to Cedar Point across the bay.

Officials emphasized that redevelopment would strengthen connections between downtown and the waterfront, activate an underutilized historic asset, and support long-term economic growth through tourism and maritime activity. ⚓

On March 11, 2026, Wisconsin officials announced that the historic schooner *F.J. King* had been formally listed on the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places, recognizing its significance to Great Lakes maritime history.



The ship's wheel from the *F.J. King*. Image by Tamara Thomsen, Wisconsin Historical Society.

The *F.J. King*, built in 1867, sank in 1886 during a storm while carrying iron ore and had long been considered one of the region's most elusive missing wrecks. Its wreck was finally located in 2025 by researchers and citizen scientists using modern sonar and remote-operated vehicles, ending decades of unsuccessful searches.

State officials emphasized that the landmark designation helps protect the underwater site while acknowledging its historical and archaeological importance. The remarkably intact wreck provides insight into 19th Century shipbuilding and Great Lakes commerce. ⚓

On March 17, 2026, officials in Buffalo updated the public on the remediation work on the historic destroyer USS *The Sullivans* (DD-537) at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval & Military Park, as part of an ongoing effort to stabilize and preserve the vessel following its near-sinking in 2022.



Efforts to remediate the impact of the sinking of the museum ship, USS *The Sullivans*, continued in 2026. Image by Roger Lelievre.

Local reports indicated that crews focused on environmental remediation and structural stabilization, particularly addressing lingering fuel, water intrusion, and contaminated materials within the ship. Dewatering operations, hull sealing, and internal cleanup remained central to the work, ensuring the vessel stayed afloat and safe for future restoration phases.

Officials emphasized that the March 2026 work represented a transition from emergency response to longer-term preservation. Efforts included removing residual pollutants, improving onboard monitoring systems, and preparing the ship for eventual drydock repairs—all seen as essential for permanent hull restoration. ⚓

On the Water

On January 2, 2026, the Montreal Port Authority continued one of Canada's oldest maritime traditions by formally presenting its Gold-Headed Cane to the captain of the first ocean-going vessel of the year to arrive at the port. The ceremony followed the New Year's Day arrival of the tanker *Byzantion*, which crossed into port waters on January 1 after an 11-day Atlantic voyage and was scheduled to depart again on January 3, 2026.

Local and industry media described the presentation as both symbolic and strategic. The cane is engraved with the captain's name and ship's name. This year it was awarded to Captain Andrejs Kuharenoks during a ceremony aboard the vessel, marking his first visit to Montreal. He told reporters he was "honored to receive this distinction" and said the recognition "reflect[s] well on the entire crew." Montreal Port CEO Julie Gascon called it "a powerful symbolic moment to welcome the first ship of the year," adding that it highlights Canada's identity as "a great maritime nation, connected to the world by the St. Lawrence River." Federal Transport Minister Steven MacKinnon likewise noted that the tradition underscores "the importance of maritime transport to Canada's economic resilience." Quebec and municipal leaders echoed those remarks. Provincial minister Bernard Drainville said the award "highlights the strategic importance of the St. Lawrence River," while Montreal's mayor praised the 185-year-old custom as "a noteworthy achievement." ⚓

At the close of 2025, a rare winter maritime incident drew attention to the condition of aging Great Lakes workboats when the tug *Hawaii* sank in Erie, Pennsylvania. The vessel went down at its berth in

Presque Isle Bay, and the situation became more widely reported in the first days of January.

The *Hawaii*, an 81-foot tug, settled in shallow water, leaving only a small portion visible above the surface. Observers noted that the vessel had been brought to Erie for winter work shortly before the sinking, suggesting the incident may have occurred while laid up or undergoing seasonal operations. Authorities and response crews acted quickly to contain potential environmental damage. Pollution-control booms were deployed around the partially submerged tug, while dewatering pumps were positioned in an effort to refloat it. No major injuries were reported, and details about the exact cause remained limited in early coverage.

The incident also highlighted the vessel's long history. Originally launched in 1911 and later renamed from *Indiana* to *Hawaii* in 2011, the tug represented more than a century of Great Lakes maritime service before its unexpected sinking. ⚓



The *Hawaii* settling to the bottom in Erie, Pennsylvania.
Photo by Greg Rudnick.

It was reported on January 21, 2026 that the laker, *Whitefish Bay*, laid up at Sarnia, Ontario at the Cargill Dock after it sustained damage from striking a dock. The damage was significant enough to force Canada

Steamship Company to quickly fit out the *Frontenac* to maintain service. *Whitefish Bay* returned to service on March 20, 2026. ⚓

Despite the cold weather and growing ice concerns, Algoma Central boats were on the move at the end of January aided by the escort from the CCG *Vincent Massey*. The tankers *Algoterra* and *Algocanada* were bound for Sarnia, while *Algoberta* was headed to Milwaukee. All of Algoma's product tankers are Ice Class 1A vessels.

Ice Class 1A ships are designed to operate in heavy ice, often with the assistance of icebreakers, though they are capable of independent operation in lighter ice. Their hulls are reinforced with high-strength, ductile steel to withstand ice pressure and impact – particularly around the ice belt near the waterline. ⚓



The CCG *Vincent Massey* breaks ice in support of Algoma fleet boats working through the winter months. Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

On February 10, 2026, a dramatic 80-mile crack split the ice covering Lake Erie, highlighting the intensity of that winter's conditions. The fracture formed around February 8 during a period of extreme cold, when the lake was more than 95% ice-covered, far above average.

Satellite imagery from NOAA captured the event in real time, showing what officials described as a “massive fracture” stretching from Port Burwell, Ontario to near Cleveland, Ohio. The crack was so large it was visible from space, drawing widespread attention across weather networks and local news outlets.

Meteorologists explained that strong winds and shifting temperatures forced large sheets of ice apart, creating the long fissure. While such cracks are not unusual on the Great Lakes, the sheer size made this one notable.

Officials warned that the feature created dangerous conditions, emphasizing that lake ice is “never 100 percent safe” due to hidden weaknesses and sudden movement. ⚓



80-mile-long ice crack in Lake Erie as seen from a satellite.
Image courtesy of NOAA.

In February 2026, officials in Thunder Bay, Ontario announced the start of demolition on a portion of the former Canadian National Railway iron ore trestle along the waterfront, a structure that had stood for roughly 80 years as part of the region's historic ore-handling network. The elevated steel trestle, rising about 75 feet, once carried rail traffic delivering iron ore to dockside loading facilities but had long since become obsolete.

According to local sources, the removal was initiated by Midcontinent Terminal, which now owns the site. Crews began dismantling sections of the aging structure piece by piece, citing safety concerns, maintenance costs, and the lack of modern operational use. Officials noted that taking down part of the trestle would eliminate a liability while opening valuable waterfront land for redevelopment.

Crucially, the demolition was tied to forward-looking plans for the property. Midcontinent indicated the cleared area would support terminal expansion and new industrial activity, with the goal of increasing capacity and attracting additional business to the port area.



The CNR ore trestle back in its early days. Image courtesy of the Historical Collections of the Great Lakes at Bowling Green State University.

The project was also expected to create jobs and improve logistics efficiency at the site. ⚓

“The iceman cometh”, Eugene O’Neil wrote almost a century ago. And in the first quarter of 2026, the United States Coast Guard and the Canadian Coast Guard responded. Severe cold and heavy ice formation characterized the period with both Coast Guards working to maintain navigation and prevent flooding.

The winter season began immediately with the launch of Operation Coal Shovel on January 2, 2026. Managed by Coast Guard Sector Detroit, the operation covered southern Lake Huron through the St. Clair – Detroit River system and into Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence Seaway. Yet, by late January, heavy ice had already immobilized multiple freighters. On January 23, the US Coast Guard reported that the heavy icebreaker USCGC *Mackinaw* and the icebreaking tug USCGC *Neah Bay* were deployed to free trapped vessels. *Mackinaw* broke a channel and escorted the *Wilfred Sykes* on



The *Wilfred Sykes* in ice on Lake Huron. Image courtesy of the United States Coast Guard.

Lake Huron, while *Neah Bay* assisted the 1,004-foot *American Spirit* on Lake Erie.

The extreme weather of late January and early February intensified operations across the system. Coast Guard units worked “around the clock” as Arctic air and winter storms caused rapid ice growth across the Great Lakes and connected waterways. Icebreaking cutters, including *Mackinaw* and smaller 140-foot tugs, were deployed strategically to keep shipping lanes open and prevent vessels from becoming immobilized.



The USCG *Bristol Bay*, one of the 140-foot class Coast Guard vessels deployed to break ice on Lake Huron. Image courtesy of the United States Coast Guard.

Operational constraints also emerged. A February 9, 2026 Coast Guard update noted that icebreaking in Fairport Harbor, Ohio, had to be limited due to reduced water depth in the Grand River channel. The Coast Guard emphasized that all icebreaking transits were dependent on “wind and weather conditions that permit safe operations,” underscoring the environmental limits on even the most capable icebreakers.

By March and into early spring, operations transitioned toward Operation Taconite, focusing on the upper Great Lakes and the St. Marys River as ice began to shift but still required active management. Beyond aiding commerce, these missions served broader purposes. Icebreaking prevented flooding caused by ice jams, maintained access to ports, and ensured delivery of critical winter cargoes such as fuel and road salt. ⚓

During the winter shutdown of Great Lakes navigation, the United States Army Corps of Engineers carried out extensive maintenance work at the Soo Locks between early January and late March 2026. This annual closure, lasting roughly ten weeks, allowed engineers and crews to inspect, repair, and modernize critical infrastructure that handles the heavy load of vessel transits each year.

According to the Corps, the 2026 maintenance cycle focused heavily on reliability improvements to the Poe and MacArthur locks, both of which are decades old and essential to Great Lakes shipping. Crews conducted structural inspections, fabricated and replaced worn components, and serviced mechanical and electrical systems that operate the lock gates and valves. The Corps emphasized that this “winter maintenance cycle” is vital to ensuring safe and efficient operations once shipping resumes in March.

One notable element of the work involved the installation and commissioning of upgraded infrastructure components, including parts of the ship arrestor system at the Poe Lock. These systems are designed to stop vessels in emergencies and are critical for safety given the size of modern freighters. In addition to major repairs,

routine but essential work was completed across the facility. This included dewatering lock chambers, inspecting concrete and steel structures, repairing gates, and performing preventative maintenance on machinery. Corps personnel noted that the pause in navigation allows crews to access areas that are otherwise submerged or in constant use during the shipping season. ⚓

Algocanada arrived in Cleveland on March 10, 2026 assisted by the tugs *Puerto Rico* and *Pennsylvania*. The tanker was escorted to the Sunoco dock on the Cuyahoga River but was unable to tie up due to her draft. After an hour or so, *Algocanada* was towed back out of the river and departed for Nanticoke, Ontario without unloading any product. Waterfront reports indicate she may have been over draft.



The *Algocanada* in tow of the tug *Puerto Rico* on the Cuyahoga River.
Photo by Bill Kloss.

The Season Opens

Harvest Spirit was loading grain at Sarnia on March 19, 2026 which was the first such cargo loaded at that port this shipping season. ⚓

On March 22, 2026, the *Algoma Bear* cleared the St. Lambert Dock earning the honor of being the first merchant vessel to transit the St. Lawrence Seaway in 2026.

Boatnerds at Mission Point below the Soo greeted the tug-barge *Dirk S. VanEnkevort/Michigan Trader* and the *John G. Munson*, which were upbound at Mission Point on March 23, 2026.

The *James L. Oberstar* was the first ship to leave the Duluth port, sailing under the Lift Bridge on March 23, 2026 bound for Marquette, Michigan to pick up a load of iron ore pellets. The *Mesabi Miner* followed later that evening, bound for Cleveland loaded with a cargo of taconite pellets.



Hon. James L Oberstar was the first ship to leave Duluth this year.
Image courtesy of Interlake Steamship Company.

Two American Steamship Company 1000-footers, now part of Mainstay Maritime, departed the Twin Ports to open the season at Two Harbors and Silver Bay on March 24, and 25, 2026. The *Indiana Harbor* headed out after fueling at Two Harbors and then fleetmate, *Burns Harbor*, headed for Silver Bay, also after fueling.

The first boat to the port of Lorain, OH, was Interlake Steamship's articulated tug and barge *Dorothy Ann/Pathfinder* on March 24, 2026. The duo arrived carrying stone that was quarried in Marblehead.

The 2026 shipping season officially began at the Port of Thunder Bay as the *Kathy McKeil* passed the breakwall at 3:23 p.m. on March 26, 2026. Capt. Adam Barnes and chief Engineer Matthew Rankine were named as Top Hat Award winners, continuing a long-standing maritime tradition.

The *Federal Nakagawa* was Toledo's first ocean vessel of the season, arriving March 30, 2026 for a load of grain from ADM.

The *Blacky* was the winner of the 165th (2026) annual Port of Toronto Top Hat Ceremony, as the first arriving saltie to kick off the shipping season on March 30, 2026. 

Caucus Concerns

On January 8, 2026, the United States Department of Labor announced significant funding aimed at strengthening workforce readiness in the American shipbuilding sector, with implications for Great Lakes shipyards and the broader maritime industry. The department awarded \$13.8 million in grants to expand training and apprenticeship pipelines for shipbuilding trades.

The funding was split between Delaware County Community College in Pennsylvania, which received \$8 million, and Massachusetts Maritime Academy, which received \$5.8 million. These programs were designed to deliver "hands-on, cutting-edge training" and to build a new generation of skilled workers for U.S. shipyards.

Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer emphasized the national importance of the initiative, stating, "Restoring America's maritime dominance can't be accomplished without skilled American workers." The projects focus on developing specialized curricula, expanding registered apprenticeships, and supporting modern shipbuilding techniques such as modular construction and icebreaker design.

Although no Great Lakes institution was included in the award, many in the maritime community applauded the announcement as the funding aligned with broader federal efforts to rebuild domestic shipbuilding capacity, a priority frequently cited by Great Lakes policymakers. By investing in training pipelines and workforce development, these awards marked a concrete step toward ensuring that U.S. regions, including Great Lakes shipyards, have access to the skilled labor needed to sustain and expand maritime production. ⚓

On February 13, 2026, the long-awaited America's Maritime Action Plan (MAP), was released outlining a sweeping federal strategy aimed at reversing the long-term decline of U.S. shipbuilding and maritime capability. The plan implemented a mandate from a 2025 executive order to "restore America's maritime dominance" by rebuilding the nation's maritime industrial base.

At its core, the plan focuses on expanding domestic shipbuilding capacity, growing the U.S.-flagged fleet, and strengthening the maritime workforce. Officials emphasized that the United States currently produces less than 1% of global commercial ships, a vulnerability the plan seeks to correct through large-scale investment and policy reform.

The MAP was organized around several key pillars: rebuilding shipyard capacity, reforming workforce training, protecting the maritime industrial base, and enhancing national and economic security. Proposed measures included creating Maritime Prosperity Zones, expanding training and credentialing programs, and incentivizing private investment in shipyards and port infrastructure.

A major funding concept involved new fees on foreign-built vessels and imported cargo, with revenue directed into a Maritime Security Trust Fund to finance shipbuilding and fleet expansion.

Overall, the plan represented one of the most ambitious U.S. maritime policy initiatives in decades, combining industrial policy, national security priorities, and economic development goals to rebuild

American maritime strength. 

On February 18, 2026, the U.S. Navy announced a major step forward in the Medium Landing Ship program, awarding contracts that included work for Fincantieri Marinette Marine in Wisconsin. The decision was part of the broader MAP industrial strategy while accelerating production of a new class of amphibious vessels for the U.S. Marine Corps.

According to defense reporting, the contracts designated shipyards in Wisconsin and Mississippi to construct the first vessels in the program. Fincantieri Marine Group was selected to help build multiple ships, with initial work focused on the first several hulls.

The Medium Landing Ship, also known as the McClung-class landing ship medium, is designed to transport Marines, equipment, and supplies directly to austere shorelines without relying on established ports. Officials emphasized that the program supports the Marine Corps' evolving expeditionary strategy, particularly in the Pacific.

It should be noted that the award also reflected a shift in acquisition strategy, using a "vessel construction manager" model to coordinate production across multiple shipyards and speed delivery timelines. Naval ship production has been hampered for years by government management which allowed costs to escalate and timelines breached. 

In the Board Room

On January 30, 2026, the Cleveland–Cuyahoga County Port Authority announced it had secured approximately \$4.2 million in state grant funding through the Ohio Department of Transportation's Maritime Assistance Program, aimed at advancing two major physical improvement projects at the Port of Cleveland. Port officials stated that the funding is a key investment in modernizing aging waterfront infrastructure and strengthening cargo-handling capacity.

The largest portion of the award, about \$2.7 million, was directed to the Dock 22 Rehabilitation and Operational Efficiency Project.

This work is intended to rehabilitate deteriorating dock structures at the general cargo terminal and improve operational flow. Planned upgrades include concrete repaving of the dock apron, reinforcement of bulkhead structures, stormwater system improvements, electrical system modernization, and construction of a vehicle maintenance and hiring-hall annex to support port labor operations.

The remaining \$1.5 million was allocated to the CHEERS Early Action Breakwater Project (Cleveland Harbor Eastern Embayment Resilience Strategy). This phase focuses on early engineering and permitting work for shoreline stabilization, including breakwater improvements, coastal resilience features, and preparation for future public-access waterfront enhancements. ⚓

In early February, the Polish Steamship Co. (Polsteam) added another vessel to its growing fleet of Laker-Class vessels. The newest addition is the *Polsteam Wadag*, built in 2026 in China. *Polsteam Wadag* becomes the 10th member of Polsteam's Laker-class fleet. The fleet's renewal program began in 2024 with the addition of the *Polsteam Dabie*. ⚓

On February 11, 2026, Saltchuk Resources announced a major expansion of its maritime portfolio through the planned acquisition of Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Corporation, the largest dredging company in the United States. As its name suggests, Great Lakes Dredge and Dock has had a long history on the Great Lakes.

The definitive agreement is valued at approximately \$1.5 billion, including about \$1.2 billion in equity. Under the terms, Saltchuk offered \$17 per share in cash, representing a significant premium over Great Lakes' recent trading prices.

Company leadership framed the deal as both strategic and long-term. Great Lakes' chairman, Lawrence Dickerson, said the agreement delivered "immediate and certain value" to shareholders, while Saltchuk chairman, Mark Tabbutt, emphasized that the acquisition would provide "a permanent home for great companies."

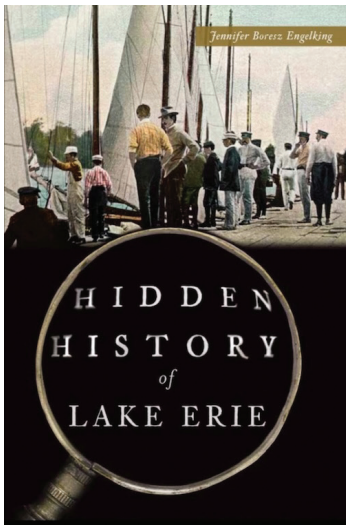
The acquisition was unanimously approved by both companies' boards and structured as a tender offer followed by a merger to acquire remaining shares. It was also backed by committed financing from major U.S. banks and expected to close in the second quarter of 2026.

Following completion, Great Lakes Dredge and Dock is expected to operate as a standalone business within Saltchuk's family of companies, strengthening the conglomerate's presence in marine services, dredging, and coastal infrastructure markets. ⚓

BOOK REVIEWS

By Faith Currie

If you're looking for a compelling nonfiction summer read, two recent books from Arcadia Publishing imprints that excel in local histories and place-based narratives fit the bill. Jennifer Boresz Engelking's *Hidden History of Lake Erie* uncovers the forgotten and little-known histories lurking beneath Lake Erie's surface. Belt Publishing's *On An Inland Sea: Writing the Great Lakes*, edited by Michael Welch, dives into what it means — in a personal sense — to live, love, and work alongside the freshwater seas. Both books are suited to reading front to back or dipping in and out of in any order that appeals to you. Both books are available in the National Museum of the Great Lakes museum store and through the website, nmglstore.org.



Hidden History of Lake Erie

By Jennifer Boresz Engelking

The History Press. October 28, 2025.

Paperback. 192p. \$24.99.

ISBN: 9781467159678

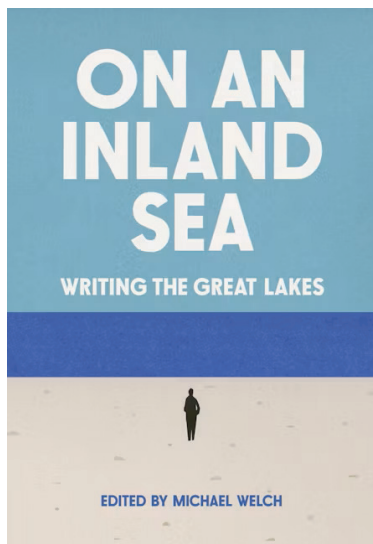
Jennifer Boresz Engelking grew up in Willowick, Ohio, just down the way from the site where the steamship *G.P. Griffith* sank in 1850. In a November 2025 interview with Cleveland.com, she recalled that the stretch of shoreline where the wreck occurred was her childhood bike-ride path, and that she even wrote about it in a seventh-grade paper, asserting that one day she'd write about the wreck. Decades later, it's one of the many fascinating stories in her latest book *Hidden History of Lake Erie*.¹

1. Bona, Marc. "NE Ohio Author Dives into Fascinating Stories in 'Hidden History of Lake Erie' - Cleveland.Com." *Cleveland.com*, November 4, 2025. <https://www.cleveland.com/entertainment/2025/11/ne-ohio-author-dives-into-fascinating-stories-in-hidden-history-of-lake-erie.html>.

That rich personal connection to the lakeshore gives *Hidden History of Lake Erie* an authenticity that sets it apart from history books intended for a primarily academic audience. Boresz Engelking is a storyteller. She writes with the interest and attention of someone who's writing about their own community. The book covers a variety of subjects from Lake Erie's past: maritime disasters, the people and interesting characters who lived along its shores, the region's importance as a corridor for the Underground Railroad, and the peculiar folklore and legends that have swirled around the lake for centuries.

The wide-ranging subjects Boresz Engelking covers will appeal to readers with many interests. Her background in broadcast journalism, including news stations in Toledo, Ohio, and Erie, Pennsylvania, documentary filmmaking, and magazine writing comes through in her ability to hold the reader's attention.

The book is ideal for readers who know very little about Lake Erie, as well as readers who are very familiar with the Lake. Boresz Engelking has been thinking about some of these stories from a very young age and her writing is suitable for all ages as well. *Hidden History of Lake Erie* is a local and regional accomplishment that multi-generational friend and family groups can enjoy reading and discussing for years to come.



On An Inland Sea:

Writing the Great Lakes

Edited By Michael Welch

Belt Publishing. March 10, 2026.

Paperback. 192p. \$20.00.

ISBN 9781540270160

If you live near the Great Lakes and have ever stood at the water's edge and contemplated life, loss, joy, the past, the future, or even the universe, *On an*

Inland Sea: Writing the Great Lakes, edited by Michael Welch, is for you. If you've even imagined standing next to them, it's for you, too.

The anthology features 32 writers from across the region. 33 if you count Welch's introduction, which stands as a compelling piece of writing on its own. Writers from Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Ontario, and beyond are included. Each author has something personal and specific to say about what it means to live alongside one of the world's great bodies of fresh water. Welch, who is editor-in-chief of the *Chicago Review of Books*, has assembled a collection that presents the Great Lakes as a unified whole—eight states, an international border, and a shared relationship with water that runs true.

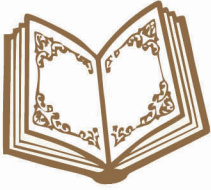
In addition to the quality of the writing, the variety of experiences in *On An Inland Sea* makes it appealing to a wide variety of readers. The essays touch on timeless topics such as the environment, relationships, labor, politics, identity, and understanding one's place in the world. For example, Gabriel Bump writes about Lake Michigan and grief, exploring how his connection to the water changed after losing a friend. Haudenosaunee poet Kenzie Allen's piece traces Indigenous history through the lakes, grounding the whole collection in the longer story of the people who first called this region home. The essays chosen for the collection do what personal essays do best: relate the larger topic through the lens of a person's life; a person the reader feels they are getting to know.

On An Inland Sea sets itself apart from rigorously thematic essay collections by making the relationships people have with the Lakes the constant that weaves through different topics. The collection as a whole has the personal touches of trip diaries and the subject knowledge of popular science and history articles. The authors know these shores and these waters. Their personal relationships with the Lakes may reinforce and remind you of your own.

The essays are organized into three sections titled "Boundaries & Boundlessness," "Wreck & Renewal," and "Futures, Unmoored &

Undetermined.” The book can be read from start to finish, by section, or one essay at a time in any order. Readers will find shipwrecks, manoomin (wild rice) harvesting, ice caves, invasive species, and industrial runoff alongside topics that may spark poignant memories from their own lives near the lakes.

On An Inland Sea: Writing the Great Lakes is intended for general adult audiences and includes several instances of language or descriptions that might make it a PG-13 type of book in some households. ⚓



Revelations from the Archives at BGSU

By Mark Sprang

For many Great Lakes aficionados, the Bradley Transportation Company looms large. The company's founder, Alva Bradley, was at one point the largest individual owner of ships in the city of Cleveland. Given the number of vessel operators in the city in the 19th Century, this was a major feat. Bradley was born in Connecticut, but his family resettled in Ohio in 1823 when he was nine years. After a decade, young Alva got his first job as a Great Lakes sailor, eventually reaching the rank of captain of the schooner *Olive Branch*. The *Olive Branch* ran cargo between the Lake Erie Islands and the mainland. Command of a larger schooner, the *Commodore Lawrence*, followed. In the meantime, in Vermilion, Bradley established a shipbuilding operation. By the beginning of the 1860s, he was establishing shipping and shipbuilding operations in Cleveland on the east bank of the Cuyahoga River. In 1880, he co-founded the Cleveland Vessel Owner's Association, the precursor to the Lake Carriers' Association, which still exists to this day. At the time of his death in 1885, Bradley Transportation Company, and the associated Ohio Transportation Company, operated numerous steam and sail vessels. In addition, he had substantial investment in iron and steel interests, and in real estate.

The archival collection of the Great Lakes Historical Society contains many original records relating to the history of the Bradley Transportation Company. The featured item in this issue's column is an account book from the company spanning the 1870s-1890s. Most of this book enumerates the income brought in by each vessel in the fleet. Though each vessel was owned by the Bradley Transportation Company, individual investors could purchase shares in a particular vessel. An example of this a segment of page 57 from the account book.

The first entry is for the schooner *S. J. Tilden*, which was owned by the company from 1869 to 1881. In this particular sailing season, the *Tilden* produced \$5,300 in income for its shareholders, here listed by name, their portion of ownership, and their share of the income. Alva is listed as owning 10/16 of the *Tilden*, garnering him \$3,312.50, a very substantial sum for the time. By comparison, in the 1870s, when this entry was likely made, the average worker in the United States earned between \$10 and \$50 per month. The account book provides detailed insight into Alva Bradley's investments and how they enabled him to amass a fortune that was eventually worth more than \$10 million (in 1885 dollars).

All archival materials featured in these columns are available for use at the Center for Archival Collections at Bowling Green State University. 

Sch Lilden		Schuckgauner #200	
<u>5300</u>			
Krull 1/16	331.25	Loomis 1/8	525.00
Stone 1/16	331.25	Krull 1/8	525.00
Loomis 1/16	331.25	Cobb 1/8	525.00
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Judeon 1/8	662.50	Bradley 1/16	2362.50
Bradley 1/16	3312.50		<u>4200.00</u>
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Stur Hale 16000.00		Sch Bradley 5200.00	
Stone 1/16	1000.00	Stone 1/16	325.00
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Quayle 1/8	2000.	Loomis 1/16	325.00
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Bradley	9613.50	M. Bradley 1/24	216.66
	<u>16000.00</u>	Bradley 1/16	2925.00
			<u>5200.00</u>
		Stur Ranney	

Page 57 of the Bradley Transportation Company's account book.

COLLECTIONS COLUMN

By Elyssa Bisoski

The National Museum of the Great Lakes has a collection of over 2000 artifacts collected over its 80 year history. Every year we add a few new items, and we try to be very judicious in what we choose to collect. Space is limited, so we must consider what items can truly help us preserve and share the stories of the Great Lakes. One of our recent acquisitions was a hat - a baseball hat, with the text "Hotel Georgia" and an image of a tug on the water. This item isn't worth a lot of money, it's not related to a major event in Great Lakes history, and it's not even in great condition. Therefore, you might be forgiven for wondering why we accepted it into the collection. The reason is simple: it came with fun and fascinating personal stories from the donor.

The donor, Thomas Phelps, told us how he graduated from the Great Lakes Maritime Academy in the 1980s, and spent one summer during school on placement on a bulk carrier working on the lakes. A former classmate of his, a recent graduate, had found a job with Great Lakes Towing in Cleveland, and whenever Phelps's ship was in port there he would visit. As it happened, the classmate was actually living on the Tug *Georgia*, which had been set up as a temporary rooming option. The classmate made up these hats, joking that the *Georgia* had become a hotel, to commemorate the uniqueness of the situation. Phelps also told a story of how he happened to be visiting the *Georgia* the night the Detroit Tigers won the World Series in 1984, and as fans they watched the game and celebrated the win by blowing the whistle - which perhaps would have been less surprising to those who heard it had they been in Detroit rather than Cleveland!

This hat, with its story of workers on the Great Lakes finding the fun in their jobs, helps make the larger story of industry on the Great Lakes more personal. Many people might have a hard time imagining themselves working on a bulk freighter for weeks at a time. But they *can* understand visiting an old friend when you are in town for work,

or watching a game and celebrating together, or turning an unusual situation into an inside joke. Objects like these help history come alive for many people.



“Hotel Georgia” hat. Image courtesy of the National Museum of the Great Lakes.

Like many items in our collection, the “Hotel Georgia” hat is not currently on display. Typically, a museum only displays a small portion of its collection at any given time. Instead, items are stored securely, stories are recorded, and they are saved to be featured in future, exhibits, events, and journal articles like this one! ⚓



New Members

The National Museum of the Great Lakes welcomes these newcomers who joined the museum between January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026 (*an asterisk indicates a membership upgrade*).

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Karen Fraker, Holland, Ohio*
Linda & Adam Paetz, Toledo, Ohio
Josh & Micha White, Napoleon, Ohio

Contributing

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John O'Neil, Holland, Ohio
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The Admiral Society members play an active role in shaping portions of the museum's curation and programming. Part of each member's annual contribution will fund "future-building" maritime history projects as determined by The Admiral Society members.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Preserve, share, and celebrate the past, present,
and future of the Great Lakes story.

Ancillary:

Collect and exhibit the material culture of the Great Lakes through the operation of the National Museum of the Great Lakes, Toledo, Ohio.

Conserve and share 20th Century Great Lakes shipping history in a direct way with the maintenance of the *Col. James M. Schoonmaker* and tug *Ohio*.

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Articles, letters, pictures, and books relating to the history, geography, transportation, industry, people, and lifestyles of the Great Lakes region are cordially considered. (No responsibility assumed for statements made by contributors.) Manuscripts of 8,000 words or less may be submitted in Microsoft® Word® format, which is preferred but not required. Physical photos/art carefully returned. Digital art may be submitted, 4" x 6", 300 dpi, TIF file. Submit to: Editor, *Inland Seas*®, 1701 Front Street, Toledo, Ohio 43605-1481. Send submissions to editor@nmgl.org.



**THE GREAT LAKES
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



Front Cover Image:

The deep freeze on Lake Erie in February forced the USCG *Neah Bay* to work in Sandusky Bay off Cedar Point Amusement Park to enable the movement of winter cargos. Image courtesy of the United States Coast Guard.



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