

his own account. Wheeler still was shown as her owner in the 1891 edition of Beeson's Directory. But from whence did she get her unusual name?

There is an Ossifrage Island on the northeastern shore of Lake Superior, not far from the mouth of the Montreal River, and only a short distance from Theano Point. However, whereas it is said that the Algoma Central Steamship Line's freighter THEANO was named for the point at which her first master's father previously had drowned during a mineral exploration, there is no logical reason why an operator/builder at West Bay City, situated just off Lake Huron's Saginaw Bay, would name his new ship after an obscure island on the Algoma District shoreline. We suspect, although we cannot prove it, that during her Algoma Central years, OSSIFRAGE had some sort of "incident" at or near that spot, and that the small and uninhabited island was named for the ship, rather than the ship being named for the island.

"Ossifrage" is also a Menominee Indian word meaning "old squaw duck", and although that doesn't, on the face of it, seem to have much connection with the Wheeler steamer, it certainly is more likely to have been the source of the name than a little-known and uninhabited island on a remote lake shore near which very few vessels traded, particularly as early as 1886.

What did Wheeler do with OSSIFRAGE when he owned her? Some sources have indicated that she was operated for a while, probably under charter, by the Inman Line of Duluth. We cannot, however, find anything to confirm this apart from the fact that the 1888 issue of Merchant Vessels of the United States showed that the steamer was registered at Duluth.

What is known for sure (albeit without dates) is that OSSIFRAGE operated for a period under charter to the Graham & Morton Transportation Company, which for many years ran steamers in the fruit, produce and passenger trades between the various ports of middle and lower Lake Michigan and Chicago. The line had been formed in 1875 by John Graham, of St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, Michigan, with the financial support of J. Stanley Morton, of Chicago. For a number of years, the company billed itself as "The Dustless Road to Happyland", referring to its ability to transport Chicago residents from the summer heat of the city to the vacation spots along the eastern shore of the lake. The G&M Line remained in operation until 1924, when the City of Chicago expropriated the company's wharf property, at which time Graham & Morton's directors decided to merge their company with its longtime rival, the Goodrich Transit Company.

We today can only guess concerning which routes OSSIFRAGE may have run for Graham & Morton, as we have no schedules showing her activities, but she may well have served the Chicago - St. Joseph line. By 1892, however, the steamer was down on the St. Clair River, at the shipyard of Abram Smith at Algonac, Michigan, where she was significantly enlarged. The rebuilding, according to subsequent shipping registers, increased her length to 153.0 feet, her breadth to 29.0 feet, and her depth of hull to 18.0 (!) feet. This latter figure was an obvious error that somehow became perpetuated, because such a great depth of hull would be inconceivable in such a vessel. We believe other reports which showed her depth of hull to be 9.0 feet. Regardless, her new tonnage was 432 Gross and 289 Net.

It was during this major rebuild that OSSIFRAGE was given entirely new machinery. She was fitted with a triple expansion steam engine, which had cylinders of 13½, 23 and 37 inches diameter and a stroke of 24 inches, and which produced Indicated Horsepower of 540 at 130 revolutions per minute. The engine was built by the S. F. Hodge Company at Detroit in 1892. Steam at 160 pounds per square inch pressure was generated by one Scotch boiler measuring 12'0" by 12'0", which had three furnaces with a total of 57 square feet of grate surface and 1,805 square feet of heating surface. This boiler was manufactured by the Wickes Bros., at Saginaw, Michigan.

We believe that the earliest photo we have of OSSIFRAGE shows her as she ap-