

MAUNALOA REVISITED

The handsome old upper lake steamer MAUNALOA (45), (b) MAUNALOA II, was our Ship of the Month No. 260 in the December issue. The issue provoked much positive comment, and it turns out that MAUNALOA was a favourite of a great many more of us than just your Editor!

Ralph K. Roberts, of Saginaw, a frequent and valued contributor to these pages, came through with what appears to be the only readily available photo of MAUNALOA in Minnesota Steamship Company colours, and it is reproduced herewith. It shows her downbound above the old Poe Lock at the Soo.

Concerning the "original" names of MATAAFA, MALIETOA and MAUNALOA - namely PENNSYLVANIA, TEXAS and TENNESSEE, and the question of whether they were built on speculation or to the order of a prospective operator, Sterling Berry, of Grosse Pointe, has ventured the suggestion that the three boats actually were ordered by J. Pierpont Morgan's Federal Steel Company, and that they were to be operated by Augustus B. Wolvin under the name of the National Steamship Company. So why didn't that happen? We know that Federal Steel took over the Minnesota Iron Company, of which Minnesota Steamship was a subsidiary, in 1900. Perhaps Morgan (through the efforts of Elbert H. Gary, of course) actually got his mitts into Minnesota's operations as early as 1899, and if so, it would have been more convenient simply to place the three new boats in the existing Minnesota fleet rather than forming a whole new company to run them. Any thoughts from the members?

By the way, we know PENNSYLVANIA ran as such for the 1899 season, but MAUNALOA never was TENNESSEE, either officially or pre-enrollment. But we always understood that MALIETOA was actually laid down at the shipyard as TEXAS. We made a slip of the pen, however, when in our article we suggested she was first registered as such. Sterling Berry confirms that her first enrollment was at Cleveland - No. 38, dated September 13, 1899 - as MALIETOA.

Skip Gillham has been able to provide some detail concerning the interesting things that MAUNALOA II did when running for Upper Lakes & St. Lawrence and later for Upper Lakes Shipping. She ran mostly in the grain trade, but in 1950 she carried 12 cargoes of iron ore between July 16 and October 31, most likely in aid of the Korean War effort. She loaded eight of those cargoes at Duluth and four at Two Harbors. She unloaded six of them at Cleveland, three at Lorain, two at Ashtabula and one at Conneaut. On July 18, 1951, she loaded 7,094 tons of ore at Duluth for delivery to Hamilton. This was her first ever visit to the Dofasco plant at Hamilton.

Her very first trip down the new Seaway began when, on August 13, 1959, she loaded grain at the Lakehead for a split delivery to Trois-Rivieres and Quebec City. On another occasion that year, she took a full load of grain to Quebec City and returned with 7,462.56 tons of ore from Contrecoeur for Cleveland. In 1960, there was only one trip to Trois-Rivieres, with grain. In 1961, MAUNALOA took grain to Baie Comeau and returned with 7,594 net tons of ore from Sept Iles for Hamilton, and on September 5th, she cleared Duluth/Superior with 166,900 bushels of wheat for Trois-Rivieres. From this it will be seen that she was not a regular Seaway traveller, spending most of her time in the lakes. She made her last Seaway transit in 1963, with a cargo of grain for Montreal.

Some of the interesting cargoes she carried in 1969 were two loads of salt (7,100 and 7,000 tons) from Goderich for the Lakehead, and one part load of stone (only 2,000 tons) from Calcite, Michigan, to the Valley Camp Dock at the Lakehead.

In our feature, we wondered why it took MAUNALOA II from June 11 to June 17, 1971, to make her way from Thunder Bay to Toronto on her final revenue trip. Skip found the answer for us. She stopped at Sarnia enroute, unloading 39,346 bushels of wheat from No. 3 hold, and loading 33,910 bushels of soybeans in its place. Small wonder that last trip so long!