

HAMONIC

When we left the history of the famous and beautiful passenger steamer HAMONIC in the May issue, she had just completed her 1924 season and was not yet even half-way through her illustrious career. She still was operating on the route from Detroit and Windsor to Sarnia, the Canadian Soo, Port Arthur and Duluth, accompanied from early spring to late autumn by the older HURONIC, and in the summer high season by the larger but misfit NORONIC. Despite a number of ownership changes since the construction of HAMONIC in 1908-1909, she still was operated by the Northern Navigation Company Limited (by then a wholly-owned subsidiary of C.S.L.) until about 1925, when the operating firm became the Northern Navigation Division of Canada Steamship Lines.

During the autumn of 1924, a press report (later denied by the company) stated that the Northern Navigation boats would be making Cleveland, Ohio, their eastern terminus. Such a change had been discussed by the firm (and rumoured in the press) for several years, but nothing ever would come of it.

HAMONIC, as usual, spent the winter of 1924-1925 at Sarnia, accompanied by HURONIC, NORONIC and the excursion steamer THOUSAND ISLANDER, and for the 1925 season, Capt. W. H. Montgomery and Chief J. W. McLeod again were appointed to HAMONIC. The 1925 season was a good one for HAMONIC until after her passenger season was over. Running in the post-season freight trade, she ran foul of the "Gales of November" on Lake Superior, and came very near to losing her battle with the big lake.

During the first week of November, 1925, HAMONIC was bound from Sarnia to Port Arthur on her last upbound trip of the season. She was only partially loaded, carrying some 1,000 tons of package freight and, fortunately, no passengers. On November 5th, battling a 55 m.p.h. gale some 20 miles west of Caribou Island, HAMONIC lost her propeller and fell off into the trough of the seas, where she wallowed helplessly, blowing distress signals and firing red rockets. She was spotted by Capt. George Banker of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company's upbound steamer RICHARD TRIMBLE, once before HAMONIC's situation had become desperate, and again later after her way had been lost.

It took hours before Capt. Banker was able, battling the heavy seas, to bring the TRIMBLE close enough to HAMONIC for shouted communications between the ships to be established. Then, with HAMONIC having tossed into the lake a heaving line attached to a ringbuoy, it took four tries before the TRIMBLE was able to get close enough to pick up the line and haul it over, followed by a heavier line and then a towing hawser. Capt. Banker actually brought the TRIMBLE within 25 feet of HAMONIC's bow!

RICHARD TRIMBLE then took HAMONIC in tow and took her to safety, dropping the tow off Point Iroquois in Whitefish Bay, where HAMONIC was put to anchor late on November 6th. By that time, Capt. Banker had been on the bridge of the TRIMBLE for more than 48 hours without sleep and more than 30 hours with no meals. HAMONIC eventually was picked up by the Great Lakes Towing Company tugs L. C. SABIN and IOWA, which arrived with her at the Soo on the 8th. There, HAMONIC'S severely damaged cargo was unloaded and the steamer later was towed to the shipyard at Collingwood, where the necessary repairs could be completed. HAMONIC would spend the entire winter at Collingwood.

The 1926 season again saw HAMONIC involved in an accident, but one that was, fortunately, not of serious consequence. The October issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World" noted that the "Northern Navigation Co.'s s.s. HAMONIC, while inward bound from Duluth, Minn., collided with the s.s. AMERICA, outward bound, near the entrance to the Kaministiquia River, Fort William, early on Sept. 13, during a dense fog. A glancing blow was struck the AMERICA, but neither ship suffered much injury, the collision being so slight that the passengers were not disturbed in their berths." AMERICA (U.S.107367) was 182.6 feet long and 937 Gross Tons. Owned by Booth Fisheries Co., Duluth (the United States and Dominion Transportation Company),