

OLIVER S. DUSTIN'S MEMORIES OF STEVEN B. GRUMMOND'S MACKINAC LINE

Grummond Sold 5-Day All-Expense Trips to Mackinac for \$11

I have been looking over an old folder of the Grummond, Mackinac Line, published prior to 1890. It reminds me of the days, as a young fellow on the docks of the Ashley & Mitchell, now Ashley & Dustin. Steve Grummond at that time operated two boats on the run, the side wheeler "Flora" and the propeller, "Atlantic", running between Cleveland, Toledo and Detroit, up the Lake Huron Shore to Mackinac Island, each boat making a round trip within a week. They would leave Detroit on Tuesday and Saturday nights, would occasionally stop at St. Clair and Marine City on the St. Clair River, mostly for cargoes of salt, then on to Port Huron, Lexington, Port Sanilac, Forester, Forestville, White Rock, Sand Beach (now Harbor Beach), and Port Hope, then jump across to the head of Saginaw Bay to Tawas, Au Sable, Oscoda, Harrisville, Black River, Alpena, Crawford's Quarry, Rogers City, Cheboygan, Mackinac City, St. Ignace and Mackinac Island. The boats would come out early in April and withdraw in November, generally about Thanksgiving time. There was much freight handled in the way of lumber camp supplies. I recall some of the lumber camps—the Alger Smith Company at Black River, Thompson Smith Sons, Duncan City—The Loudes, the Gilchrist and the Fletchers also had some holdings at Alpena and different ports. Herman Heft was at Rogers City and Boulton & McRae had a big supply house at Alpena.

Again referring to the ports between Port Huron and Port Hope, was an agricultural country, bringing down to Detroit their farm products, this was a great country for growing peas, beans and potatoes, also butter and eggs for the Detroit market. All this is no more, as the route has been taken up by good roads and auto travel and all the old docks show nothing but the wrecked spiling.

I am thinking about the wage scale in my youth's days, compared with what we are now paying the seafarers on the Great Lakes. All boats carried their own deck hands and the mates and wheelmen and watchmen had to help handle freight. Deck hands were getting anywhere from \$25.00 per month to \$1.00 per day. Wheelmen, watchmen and firemen were getting about \$45.00 per month. \$75.00 was good pay for a mate. Captain and Engineer top wage was \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00 per season.

One item in this circular reminds me of the summer months, June, July and August. It says right in the circular, a five day trip to Mackinac Island and all these stops, including meals and berth, would be \$11.00. Now-a-days it costs you more than that per diem when you take a tourist trip on the Lakes. The propeller "Atlantic" was a one cabin ship, staterooms on both sides and a long dining table was set down the center of the cabin. The food was cooked in the galley on the main deck, and passed through hatchways to the pantry above for service. Food was served family style, the table being laid down with plenty of vegetables and serve-yourself dishes and hot meats, good roast beef, and turkey and hot beans or what your appetite might crave. The Captain sat at the head of the table and all you had to do was eat your fill. I remember as a boy, I always stood in with the Chef or cook as we called him in those days, by seeing that his family got his laundry and other favors, the reward being a big huckleberry pie and pitcher of milk or coffee, and believe me, it was good. Allow me to repeat myself, for all those meals I am talking about were included in that \$11.00 five day trip. I remember the contract Grummond had with Smith & Yendall, Marine Supply Butcher, was 10 cents per pound for all meats. They stocked up with white fish and trout at the upper Lake Ports. Another thought I have was of the traders. These men carried supplies of green stuff on the up-bound trip, which they traded for butter, eggs and potatoes with the natives.

Steve Grummond had other interests beside these two boats. He had a fleet of eight tugs, engaged in wrecking jobs and towing barges, which they would pick up at Fort Gratiot Light, near Port Huron, tow through the St. Clair River, over Lake St. Clair, through the Detroit River and release them at the head of Lake Erie. The names of these tugs were Leviathan, Swain, Moore, Sweepstakes, Oswego, Crusader, Owen and Champion. Many a time I have seen them go through with seven or eight vessels in tow, also log rafts for the saw mills along the Detroit River. At most shipping offices on the Great Lakes they have that celebrated colored picture of the "Champion" and tow. I have one of them in my office.

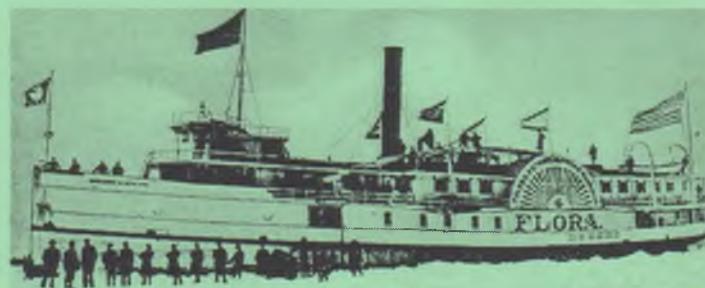


PHOTO COURTESY W. A. MCDONALD

Note that this photo shows the Steamer Flora fast in the ice.



PHOTO COURTESY REV. EDWARD J. DOWLING, S. J.

Str. State of Michigan, originally the "DePere".

About 1891 or '92, Grummond bought a passenger boat called the "De Pere" originally owned by the Goodrich Line. She was a propeller, and during the winter she was reconditioned and her name changed to the "State of Michigan". I remember pretty close to the date, for I know they stepped into her new spar, underneath which was placed a Columbia Half Dollar, gotten out especially for the World's Fair.

Grummond was as well interested in the Detroit-Port Huron run. About this time he was in strong competition with other steamboat companies. The Milton D. Ward used to carry passengers for a quarter from Baker's

Dock at the foot of Shelby St., but he got plenty of that in one season. The Ward was laid up and afterwards used by the City of Detroit as a smallpox hospital, being anchored off the head of Belle Isle.

As I remember Stephen B. Grummond, he was nicknamed by the sailors as "Black Steve". He had a big black mustache, handle bar, you would call it today. He grew up from the ranks of the tug boat life, had a big family of about eleven children, grew fine horses and had a mansion out Jefferson Ave. At the time of which I am writing, he was Mayor of Detroit. He sure was some Marine Czar.

SATURDAY TRIPS

People get the idea that we carry big loads on Saturday, but as a rule it is the lightest day of the week. Some go to Cedar Point or Put-In-Bay for the week-end, returning Sunday. But if you want a nice trip and no capacity load, Saturday is the day. You can leave Detroit at 9 A.M., have four hours at Put-In-Bay, and be back in Detroit at 8 P.M., or stop at Cedar Point after leaving Put-In-Bay if you wish to stop for a time at the Breakers Hotel. The fare for the round trip to Put-In-Bay is \$1.50, or if you want an all-day ride, go through to Sandusky, \$3.00 round trip. Call Randolph 0230 for parlor or steamer chair reservations.

TOLEDO SCHEDULE

STEAMER PUT-IN-BAY

EVERY TUESDAY

SEASON 1946

Sail from Madison Ave. Dock, Toledo, 8:30 A.M., E.S.T.

- Tuesday, June 18th—Blue Water Cruise
- “ June 25th—To Tashmoo Park
- “ July 2nd—To Put-In-Bay and Cedar Point
- “ July 9th—To Cedar Point
- “ July 16th—To Detroit and Belle Isle
- “ July 23rd—To Cedar Point
- “ July 30th—To Tashmoo Park
- “ Aug. 6th—To Cedar Point
- “ Aug. 13th—To Put-In-Bay and Cedar Point
- “ Aug. 20th—To Cedar Point
- “ Aug. 27th—To Tashmoo Park

Schedules subject to change without notice.

Robt. Stalker, Toledo Agent
836 Woodville St.

Taylor 1100-1

In the February issue, we showed you the front page of Vol. XI, No. 1, of "The Lake Erie Breeze", paper of the Ashley & Dustin steamer PUT-IN-BAY. Here, on page 4 of the same issue, "Ollie" Dustin presents some personal reminiscences of Steve Grummond's vessel operations. Meat at 10¢ per pound?