

whalebacks would be, with curved deck and sides, and rounded ends, all designed to provide as little resistance to the water as possible. He was granted his first patent in 1881, and there followed many changes in the plans as well as additional patents over the years. The first whaleback was the barge 101, which was built at Duluth in 1888 using a mid-section built at that port, and a bow and stern which had been constructed by the Pusey & Jones Company, of Wilmington, Delaware. The 101 was built with Alexander McDougall's own funds, but his situation was such that, even with the backing of friends such as Capt. Thomas Wilson (who was one of the original co-owners of 101), McDougall was not able to consider any further construction.

Accordingly, it was necessary for McDougall to seek additional capital in order for his plans to proceed. He contacted Colgate Hoyt, who was an associate of John D. Rockefeller, whose financial empire included ore mining, steel making, and lake shipping interests. Several of Rockefeller's associates agreed to back McDougall and, as a consequence, the American Steel Barge Company was formed. Four more barges were constructed in 1889 and 1890 at Duluth, these being 102, 103, 104 and 105, and also built there in 1890 was the first whaleback steamer, COLGATE HOYT, which was the company's Hull 106. The remaining fifteen steamers and nineteen barges which were built on the lakes came from the American Steel Barge Company shipyard at West Superior, Wisconsin, during the period 1890 through 1898. (The barges 201 and 202 were built at Brooklyn, New York, in 1890, the steamer CITY OF EVERETT was built at Everett, Washington, in 1894, and the "unauthorized" SAGAMORE was built by a completely unrelated firm, William Doxford & Sons Ltd., at Sunderland, England, in 1893.)

Although there were some changes in the shape of the whaleback hull as the first few vessels appeared, most of the whalebacks had ellipsoidal upper hulls, with straight sides which rounded off to a flat bottom. The bows and sterns were generally conoidal in shape, and the hatches were flush with the deck (without any raised coamings). All of the lake whalebacks had a turret-shaped structure forward, and the barges had another small turret aft, atop which was an open navigation bridge. The steamers had their machinery aft, with pilothouse and cabins located aft atop a series of turrets. There were three major exceptions to this type of construction amongst the lake-built whalebacks: CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (Hull 128) was built as a passenger vessel; JOHN ERICSSON (Hull 138) had her pilothouse up forward, abaft the second hatch, and the final whaleback, ALEXANDER McDOUGALL (Hull 141) had a straight "conventional" bow with her pilothouse forward.

In 1892, the American Steel Barge Company turned out its Hulls 124 and 125, which were unusual in that they were the only two lake-built whaleback-type freighters that were not specifically designed for the iron ore trade. They also were built for an owner other than the Barge Company itself. Both were built to the order of the Soo Line Railroad, and were completed as combination package freighters and bulk carriers. Hull 124 was christened WASHBURN, a name that she carried until 1896, when she was sold to the Bessemer Steamship Company and renamed (b) JAMES B. NEILSON. She became part of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company fleet in 1901. In 1928, she was purchased by the Spokane Steamship Corp. and renamed (c) J. T. REID. She was scrapped by the Joseph Schenthal Company, of Columbus, Ohio, in 1936 at the Cleveland plant of the Interlake Engineering Company.

Hull 125 was christened PILLSBURY, and was enrolled at Marquette, Michigan, as U.S.150587. (Early photos of PILLSBURY show the home port of Gladstone painted on her stern, but we have no official documentation of any such registration.) Her construction began on January 4th, 1892, she was launched on Saturday, June 25th, and she sailed from her builder's yard on Wednesday, August 17th. She was officially registered to the American Steel Barge Company from June 21st until September 29th, 1892, and on the latter date was transferred to the ownership of the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Buffalo Steamship Company, which was the lake shipping affiliate of the Soo Line Rail-