

Most of the whalebacks were painted in the usual colours of the American Steel Barge Company when they entered service; in other words, everything was painted a drab, brownish colour. Not so PILLSBURY or WASHBURN. Their hulls were black, and all of the deckhouses, including the turrets, were white. The stack was black, and on it was the square Soo Line insignia, featuring those two short words spelled out on the diagonal across the square. The square was painted white, but we never have heard any reliable description of the colour of the lettering.

PILLSBURY and her sistership entered service and operated for the remainder of the 1892 season plus three additional years. The Soo Line did not, however, operate its own lake shipping line for very long, whereas some of the other railroads did. The Minneapolis, St. Paul & Buffalo Steamship Company had been formed in 1890 and ran an assortment of ships through 1900. In that year, the Lower Lakes Steamship Company, of Cleveland, assumed management of the Soo Line's package freighters, and in 1903 the service was taken over for the Soo Line by the Mutual Transit Company, of Buffalo.

PILLSBURY and WASHBURN did not remain with the Soo Line fleet until it went to the new management. The whalebacks do not seem to have been particularly successful in the package freight trade and, on April 18, 1896, they were transferred to the ownership of the Bessemer Steamship Company, Cleveland. That firm was created early in 1896 by John D. Rockefeller and his associates as a division of their Lake Superior Consolidated Iron Mining Company. In the spring of 1896, Bessemer also acquired two whaleback barges for the steamers to tow, these being 102 and 103, which were renamed (b) SIR JOSEPH WHITWORTH and JOHN SCOTT RUSSELL, respectively. As previously mentioned, WASHBURN was renamed (b) JAMES B. NEILSON when Bessemer took her over, while on June 16, 1896, PILLSBURY became (b) HENRY CORT. Most Bessemer ships were named for inventors, particularly those associated with the iron and steel industry, and HENRY CORT was no exception. Mr. Cort had been the inventor of the "puddling" process whereby pig iron could be transformed into wrought iron, and he lived in England from 1740 until his death in 1800.

The Bessemer Steamship Company boats carried black hulls, white cabins, and black stacks with a large, white letter 'B' on them. HENRY CORT was given these colours and wore them into the new century. The Bessemer fleet began a programme of construction as soon as it was formed, and over the next few years took delivery of a large number of new and modern, steel-hulled, bulk-carrying steamers and consort barges. Almost all of them were of conventional design, except for two whalebacks built for the fleet by McDougall's yard in 1896, these being the steamer JOHN ERICSSON and the barge ALEXANDER HOLLEY (Hull 139).

The CORT and her fleetmates operated successfully in the growing Bessemer fleet. However, by this time, several large lake fleets were mounting competition in the haulage of iron ore, and the Rockefeller interests were determined to maintain supremacy in the trade. Accordingly, in March of 1900, the Bessemer Steamship Company purchased the balance of the whalebacks (which then remained on the lakes) from the American Steel Barge Company. Bessemer purchased these ships not so much to make use of them itself, because in fact Bessemer did not need them, but rather as a move designed to keep the large whaleback fleet from falling into the hands of Andrew Carnegie's lake fleet, which was known as the Pittsburgh Steamship Company and which had been formed about 1898. It would appear that Rockefeller's blocking of the Carnegie acquisition of the whalebacks was one of the factors which influenced Carnegie to sell out to J. Pierpont Morgan and Elbert H. Gary in 1901 for a sum reported to be about \$400,000,000.

Nevertheless, the efforts of Morgan and Gary in creating the United States Steel Corporation in 1901 were not to be denied, and the new firm put together the largest lake shipping fleet that ever would operate under the U.S. flag. It took its name from the old Carnegie fleet, and thus came into being a new Pittsburgh Steamship Company. The Bessemer fleet also was merged