

Under her new ownership, HENRY CORT travelled to a wide variety of lake ports carrying scrap metal. During the early 1930s, she made several visits to Lake Ontario, calling at both Toronto and Hamilton. In Toronto, she loaded both at the Terminal Warehouse and also on the south side of the channel near where the Iroquois salt dock is today. On at least one visit down the channel, she loaded a cargo of old railroad car wheels which were lifted from the dock by magnets on the ship's deck cranes. The wheels were let drop into the hold from a considerable height, with a resounding crash when they landed.

The issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World" for March 1933 carried an interesting news item concerning HENRY CORT. "What is believed to be a record for Great Lakes navigation was made on February 2, when the HENRY CORT navigated the lower Detroit River en route from Detroit to Cleveland to secure a cargo of steel for carriage to Monroe, Michigan."

On Christmas Eve, 1933, HENRY CORT managed to scrape over Ballard's Reef in the Detroit River while carrying a cargo of some 3,000 tons of pig iron. The ship began to take water but she was able to reach a dock at Ecorse before she settled on the bottom. Salvagers soon had the steamer refloated, and the necessary repairs were put in hand over the winter. HENRY CORT was able to return to service in the spring of 1934, which was to be her last year of operation. Unfortunately, she would not end her days peacefully, but rather went out in a violent and tragic manner.

On Friday, November 30, 1934, under the command of Capt. Charles V. Cox, HENRY CORT cleared Holland, Michigan, at about 9:00 a.m. She was en route to Chicago, but she had on board about 600 tons of scrap which she was to drop off at a foundry at South Haven on the way. During the course of the trip, she encountered unusually severe weather conditions and, late that evening, she attempted to enter the harbour at Muskegon, Michigan, for shelter. The storm drove her against the outer end of the rubble breakwater, which extended three-quarters of a mile out into the lake. The ship then pounded her way along the outer side of the breakwall and settled on the rocks, with the seas breaking over her.

For the rest of the story, we quote from a press report from Muskegon that appeared in both "The Toronto Daily Star" and "The Hamilton Spectator" on Saturday, December 1st, 1934.

"Making their way hand-over-hand along a slender line which had been put aboard by Coast Guardsmen, 26 members of the crew of the half-submerged, 315-foot whaleback freighter HENRY CORT, which struck the Muskegon harbor breakwater in a 60-mile gale last night, reached the head of the breakwater today, but high waves marooned them there temporarily. Last to leave the ship, true to the code of the sea, was Charles V. Cox, captain of the 2394-ton vessel.

"The men had to fight their way along several hundred feet of rope, their feet dangling just above the waves and rocks. Eventually, the rescued sailors walked the length of the breakwater, clinging to ropes strung from the shore, while waves further threatening their lives flung savagely across the barrier. Exhausted, they were taken in automobiles to the Muskegon Coast Guard station, 17 miles from the shore end of the breakwater.

"Henry Sutton, 67, of Detroit, the ship's cook, was seriously injured when the CORT crashed on the breakwater. At Mackley Hospital here, physicians said he had a broken pelvis.

"One Coast Guardsman died during the night as savage Lake Michigan, lashed by a 60-mile gale, beat back rescuers. He was surfman John Dippert, 22, lost when a boat sent to the CORT's aid was swamped by the huge waves. His body had not been recovered.

"The CORT rammed the Muskegon breakwater about 10:30 p.m. yesterday as she sought to enter the harbor to escape the storm. The breakwater extends about three-quarters of a mile into the lake, and the ship struck on the extreme end of the finger of rock.