

CITY OF BANGOR

The weather in the autumn of 1989 has been considerably less than desirable, windy and wet, with an early onset of cold temperatures and snow. It reminds us somewhat of the weather conditions which we described in our last issue's feature as having done in the Paterson steamer ALTADOC (I) on Lake Superior in the late autumn of 1927. This, in turn, puts us in mind of an earlier accident which resulted in the stranding on the Keweenaw Peninsula, in the autumn of 1926, of the automobile carrier CITY OF BANGOR. The wreck of the CITY OF BANGOR was still lying on the shore of the Keweenaw when, on December 8, 1927, the ALTADOC came ashore only some five hundred feet away from her. It is not surprising that, over the years, the names of the two vessels have come to be closely associated, although it is a rather sad association in that it arose only out of the untimely demise of the two handsome steamers and not out of their accomplishments when in active service.

CITY OF BANGOR (U.S.127131) was first owned and operated by the Eddy-Shaw Transit Company, which was one of several joint enterprises of the Eddy and Shaw families of Bay City, Michigan. Brothers Charles A. and Selwyn Eddy had been jointly involved in a number of ventures, and later were joined by John F., Newell A. and E. H. Eddy. Representing the other side of the partnership were Captain John Shaw (who had been involved in lake shipping at least as early as 1868) and his son, Captain Howard L. Shaw. The actual joint shipping operations of the two families appear to have begun in the early 1880s and, in various forms, were to last for almost half a century.

The Eddy-Shaw interests operated a variety of wooden-hulled steamers and schooner-barges during the 1880s and 1890s. Their first steel-hulled vessel was the steamer E. C. POPE, built in 1891 at Wyandotte, Michigan, and acquired from the Dry Dock Navigation Company, Detroit, in 1892. Then, in 1893, the Detroit Dry Dock Company built for the fleet the steel-hulled, straight-back type, combination bulk carrier and package freighter SELWYN EDDY. The POPE stayed with the fleet until she was requisitioned for war service in 1918, but she later came back to the lakes and lasted until she was scrapped at Buffalo in 1953. SELWYN EDDY was sold in 1910 to Boland and Cornelius, of Buffalo, and she also went to salt water during the war. She never returned to the lakes and was lost by stranding on the east coast in 1927.

In 1895, the Eddy-Shaw fleet contracted with the F. W. Wheeler & Company shipyard at West Bay City, Michigan, for the construction of the 351.9-foot steamer PENOBSCOT, which was launched on August 1st, 1895. She was named for a river and a county in the State of Maine, for Charles A. and Selwyn Eddy had both been born and raised in Bradley, Maine. Penobscot was also the name which the Eddy family gave to an iron ore mine which they owned. The CHARLES A. EDDY, a wooden-hulled bulk carrier, was handed over to the Wheeler yard as partial payment for the construction of PENOBSCOT.

Not long after PENOBSCOT was placed in service, Eddy-Shaw let another contract to F. W. Wheeler & Company. It called for the construction of a steamer generally similar to PENOBSCOT, but somewhat larger in size. This was to be the yard's Hull 113, which was launched on Wednesday, March 18, 1896. She was christened CITY OF BANGOR, in honour of the city which was and is the seat of Penobscot County, Maine, and which undoubtedly was very familiar to the members of the Eddy family. The new steamer was enrolled at Port Huron, Michigan, as also had been PENOBSCOT before her.

CITY OF BANGOR was 372.5 feet in length, with a beam of 44.8 feet and depth of 23.5 feet, her tonnage being registered as 3690.90 Gross and 2776.38 Net. She was powered by a triple expansion engine which had cylinders of 22, 35½ and 59 inches, and a stroke of 44 inches, the engine developing 1,235 Indicated Horsepower or 230 Nominal Horsepower. The engine was built for the ship in 1896 by F. W. Wheeler & Company. Steam was provided by two single-ended, coal-fired, Scotch boilers, 15'6" by 12'0", which were manufactured in 1896 by Wickes Bros., of Saginaw, Michigan. The engine appears to have been a duplicate of that installed in PENOBSCOT, while the boilers were a bit larger.