

## NORTH KING

In the past, we have, on occasion, mentioned the process by which vessels may be chosen to be featured in these pages. We like to think that when we prepare our features, we have dug up everything we can find about the ships whose stories we are relating. There are times, however, when the most fascinating thing about a ship may be what we do NOT know about her history. This does not mean that we immediately write a feature which will be lacking in detail; instead, we attempt to do as much research as possible in an effort to tie down the "loose ends".

Sometimes, however, the ends refuse to be tied, and then we either give the matter up and set it aside for possible future use if the required information becomes available, or else we go ahead with the feature and throw the pertinent questions to our readers in an effort to stimulate interest and uncover additional detail. This latter approach has proven on several occasions to be very useful, and we will now give it one more try.

The steamer about which we write in this issue was at one time a very well-known vessel on eastern Lake Ontario. However, not much ever has been written about her, and about the only mention of her life history appeared in Anna G. Young's book Great Lakes Saga, which was published in 1965 to commemorate the influence of the Gildersleeve family on the Canadian lake shipping industry. Unfortunately, much of Anna Young's material concerning this particular vessel now appears to be suspect, and we are left with many questions, notably concerning the various rebuilds through which the ship was put, and the details of her service in her final years of existence.

During the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, the Gildersleeve family, of Kingston, Ontario, was very prominent in the shipping business. They owned and operated numerous vessels in both passenger and freight service on eastern Lake Ontario, and particularly on that famous body of water known as the Bay of Quinte. This is a peculiarly-shaped stretch of water that lies along the north shore of the lake, behind the jutting land of Prince Edward County, and runs all the way from west of Trenton down to Kingston.

It was in 1818 that Henry Gildersleeve formed the steamboat line that eventually would be incorporated as the Lake Ontario & Bay of Quinte Steamboat Company Limited, of Kingston. It would remain in existence until the close of the 1912 navigation season, at which time its operations were acquired by other interests.

One of the most lucrative routes operated by the company was the Lake Ontario crossing between Port Hope, Ontario, and Charlotte, New York (the port for the City of Rochester). Under the management of Charles F. Gildersleeve (one of Henry's sons), the Lake Ontario & Bay of Quinte Steamboat Company in 1864-1865 had built in Scotland and assembled at Kingston the iron-hulled, sidewheel steamer CORINTHIAN, of 374 Tons. She entered service in the spring of 1865 and appears to have been successful, although perhaps a little large for the requirements of the route she served. In 1868, Gildersleeve sold CORINTHIAN to the Canadian Navigation Company, which operated as the "Royal Mail Line".

To replace CORINTHIAN, the Gildersleeve firm commissioned the well known Montreal shipbuilder, Augustus Cantin, to construct a composite-hulled, sidewheel steamer, with iron frames planked over with oak. This steamer, whose keel was laid on Thursday, January 5th, 1868, was to be christened NORSEMAN. As built, she was 153.6 feet in length, 25.9 feet in the beam (hull only, for she was much wider over the guards), and 10.0 feet in depth. Her Net Registered Tonnage was 295.

The NORSEMAN was powered by a condensing beam engine which was built for