

BRUCE HUDSON

The Story Continues

In our January issue, we began the story of the Lloyd Tankers Limited barge BRUCE HUDSON, which was built in 1935 by the Horton Steel Works Ltd. at Fort Erie, and which was named for Bruce Hudson Lloyd, the young son of Lorne Bruce Lloyd. The latter was the founder of Lloyd Refineries Ltd., Port Credit, and the HUDSON was designed and built to haul crude oil from Montreal East to the Port Credit Refinery.

In the first instalment of this fascinating story, we took the HUDSON through her first disaster which occurred when, on July 12, 1935 (her first year of service), and under the command of Capt. Clarence McKellar, she capsized whilst upbound on Lake Ontario in tow of the big wooden tug MUSCALLONGE. At the time of the accident, the HUDSON's crew had her big steering wheel tied down while the men enjoyed a meal in the cabin. They soon noted that the coffee in their cups had taken on a peculiar angle and, going on deck, they saw that the barge's bow already was some two feet under water. It seems that, in the heavy weather, the seas which continually washed over her deck, had gained access to the chain locker forward via the uncovered hawsepipes. Their covers had been left off, as usual, during the St. Lawrence River portion of the trip, in case the HUDSON had to drop her anchors quickly, but they had not been put in place when the barge emerged onto the open lake.

When we left the story of the HUDSON last issue, we were in the midst of the account, by Capt. William J. Stitt of the tug ETHEL (as told to C.H.J. Snider), of the events that took place off Cobourg in mid-November of 1935, when ETHEL and BRUCE HUDSON encountered some very heavy weather. We now resume the account at the point where the towline had snapped (on November 16th), ETHEL had taken the crew off the HUDSON, and the tug, short of fuel, had set off to ask a passing steamer to stand by the HUDSON while ETHEL ran into Cobourg for bunkers.

"On approaching the downbound steamer, we saw that she was the ELMBAY, of the Tree Line Navigation Co., en route from Fort William to Montreal loaded with grain and a big deckload of pipes and automobiles. When spoken to, Captain Dixon did not relish the idea of standing by, with this heavy deckload, but on learning of our predicament agreed to do so if he found he could stand the weather without harm to his own vessel and cargo.

"He then hauled in his log, turned and prepared to drift along behind the HUDSON. We then shaped our course for Cobourg, but found the seas too heavy for us to make a direct entry, so we had to run up the lake past Cobourg and zig-zag up and down the lake until we finally arrived there around 2:30 p.m.

"Capt. Charlie Redfern, the old sea dog of the Ontario car ferry, came over to see what it was all about and on hearing the story said, 'Well, you have the crew of the HUDSON with you, why worry about the barge?'

"I phoned our owners at Port Credit about the breakaway of the HUDSON, and had them send me two tanks (trucks) of fuel oil, which only arrived early the next morning. (Readers will remember that the tug had planned to refuel at Cobourg anyway, but her surplus bunkers were aboard the HUDSON -ed.) While waiting for the fuel oil to arrive, we got our galley straightened up and a new stock of dishes and supplies, as everything was broken to smithereens in our encounter with the lake.

"And while we were lying in Cobourg thinking that the ELMBAY was standing by our tow until we returned, it was all a mistake, for within two hours after we left her there, she had got in difficulty and had deserted the HUDSON to save her own cargo. Next morning (the 17th), after getting all our fuel oil aboard and something to eat, we boarded up all the doors and