

where along the North Channel, and met with lots of ice between Cove Island and Collingwood. She reported that Owen Sound bay was full of ice, and ice straight out for eighteen miles off Cape Croker. Upon returning to Collingwood, CUMBERLAND was refitted for the summer trade to the Lakehead.

We should remark that Capt. McGregor, who had gone north to take command of CUMBERLAND after her winter in the ice, had sailed the schooner PACKET between Owen Sound and Sturgeon Bay back in 1844, and went on to command the steamer GERE in 1851. Afterwards, he commanded the steamers DETROIT and KALOOLAH. In 1871, he was master of CHICORA, and in 1872 he commanded the ALGOMA (I), which CUMBERLAND had replaced on the Lake Superior Route.

At this point in our narrative, we should pause to note that we are mightily mystified by the "Bear Lake ice incident". We have searched all available Great Lakes pilot guides for mention of "Bear Lake", and have been unable to find mention of one "north of the Soo". It must have been north of the Soo, because CUMBERLAND came down at the Soo when she got free from the ice in the spring; but was it really north of the Soo?

And if it was, why did the crew, in the height of winter inclemency, choose to hike all the way down around the shore of Georgian Bay when they could have stopped in the Soo and remained safe, warm and well-fed (no dogmeat) there? Was the lure of home in Collingwood or Owen Sound so strong that the men braved frostbite and starvation to get there rather than head for safety at Sault Ste. Marie?

The confusion seems to have been created by inaccuracies in press reports of the incident. The mention of the replacement crew going to northern Wisconsin is nothing but a red herring to lead historians astray; there is absolutely no reason to think their travels would take them that far westward. Then, too, there neither is nor was any Bear Lake above the Soo except for a small lake located four miles S.S.E. of Crisp Point and three and a half miles inland from Lake Superior up the Betsy River (which enters Lake Superior just west of Whitefish Point). CUMBERLAND could never have reached that Bear Lake, nor could she possibly have spent the winter exposed to the elements along the lee shore of Lake Superior.

There is, however, a Bear Lake which really is nothing more than a large bay lying along the north shore of St. Joseph Island, on the south side of the St. Joseph Channel. This is the channel that CUMBERLAND would have taken, after leaving the St. Mary's River, downbound, en route to the ports of the North Channel of Lake Huron. As such, the crew, setting out to walk around Georgian Bay, would have had to go past Bruce Mines, located on the north side of the North Channel, opposite the east end of St. Joseph Island, and there, in fact, is where they left off the eighteen crewmembers that did not make the whole walk. As well, the writings of the late Capt. James McCannell, longtime master of ASSINIBOIA and commodore of the Canadian Pacific Railway's Great Lakes fleet, make a vague mention of a steamer having been frozen in for the winter after being caught on a late-season trip, with some of the crew staying with the vessel and others making their way on foot back to Collingwood. McCannell had the location as near Sailor's Encampment, at the lower end of the Middle Neebish Channel, which really is not too far away from Bear Lake and just down the west side of St. Joseph Island.

And what about CUMBERLAND's early spring visit to the Soo when she got herself broken out? She must have headed back up to the Soo, no doubt to take on provisions and probably some freight and passengers for the downbound trip.

The 1873 season was not without incident for CUMBERLAND. On June 5th, the steamer called at Owen Sound on her way to the Lakehead. She had few passengers and little freight. On her return trip, she went ashore at Horse Shoe Harbour, below Brooke, in Owen Sound Bay, on July 3rd, in heavy fog. A tug