

**WINDSOLITE, SIMCOLITE and ACADIALITE REVISITED**

In the issue of December, 1991, we featured as our Ship of the Month No. 193 the Imperial Oil Limited canal-sized tank steamers WINDSOLITE, SIMCOLITE and ACADIALITE. These near-sisterships were built by the Furness Shipbuilding Company Ltd. at Haverton Hill-on-Tees, England, as Hulls 115, 170 and 171, respectively, with WINDSOLITE completed in 1927 and the other two in 1930.

WINDSOLITE was renamed (b) IMPERIAL WINDSOR in 1947, was sold in 1972 to Beauchamp Investments Ltd., of Corunna, Ontario, and in 1973 was resold to the Algonquin Corporation Limited, which renamed her (c) CARDINAL (III). She was severely damaged in a May 23, 1974, collision with the steamer HENRY STEINBRENNER (III) on Lake Erie, and was scrapped at Hamilton later in 1974.

SIMCOLITE became (b) IMPERIAL SIMCOE in 1947, and never sailed for any other fleet. She remained with Imperial Oil until sold for scrapping in Spain during 1965.

ACADIALITE was renamed (b) IMPERIAL CORNWALL in 1947 and latterly served the bunkers trade at Halifax. She was sold in 1971 to Penn Shipping Ltd., of Guelph, Ontario, and later that same year to Messrs. Mottershead and MacLean of Toronto, who acted for the Neal Petroleum Company Ltd., of Toronto. The ship made only one trip for them, under the name (c) GOLDEN SABLE. She was sold in 1972 to Steel Factors Ltd., Montreal, for scrapping, and she lay at Louiseville, Quebec, for a number of years before actually being dismantled.

Our feature on these three interesting little steam tankers provoked a great deal of response from our readers, some of whom actually served aboard these boats, but most of whom simply remembered seeing them come and go about their routine duties for so many years. It is indeed difficult to believe that more than twenty years have passed since these ships went out of Imperial Oil service; it seems that it was only yesterday that we heard their distinctive whistles calling for the Cherry Street bridge here in Toronto.

Our readers responded to the feature with a welter of additional information about IMPERIAL WINDSOR, IMPERIAL SIMCOE and IMPERIAL CORNWALL, and we have been saving the follow-up items until we had sufficient space to present all of the new material at once, rather than having it appear piecemeal over a number of issues. We hope that our readers approve and enjoy the additional detail.

The first of the "new" items is a press report from Parry Sound, Ontario, dated Tuesday, April 12, 1932: "With the arrival of WINDSOLITE and ACADIALITE, of the Imperial Oil Co. today, navigation was officially opened here. They carried cargoes of fuel oil and gasoline. The WINDSOLITE unloaded 235,000 barrels (sic - read "gallons" -Ed.) of fuel oil, and the ACADIALITE 117,000 barrels (sic) of gasoline. The ACADIALITE left later for Collingwood with the balance of her cargo."

This same pair of tankers repeated their joint port-opening trick nine years later. A report from Port Stanley, Ontario, dated Monday, March 31st, 1941, stated that "The earliest opening of navigation in the memory of most lake-side fishermen saw the arrival here on Saturday (March 29) of two tankers, the ACADIALITE and the WINDSOLITE". As we shall see, it was not unusual for an Imperial Oil tanker to be the first ship of the year into many Canadian lake ports.

Meanwhile, however, the ACADIALITE got herself into some rather severe trouble during the summer of 1940. The following item, datelined Tobermory, Tuesday, July 2nd, 1940, was filed by E. H. Bartlett, a staff reporter for "The Evening Telegram", of Toronto.

"Stranding during a thick fog at four o'clock Saturday morning (June 30th), the Imperial Oil tanker ACADIALITE is aground at Gat Point, on Cove Island, at the Lake Huron entrance to Georgian Bay. Fully laden with about 22,000 barrels of fuel, she is reported to have lost about 10,000 barrels of her