

A MARUBA MYSTERY SOLVED!

One of the great pleasures we derive from "Scanner" lies in our being confronted with mysteries and historical problems, and resolving them with the assistance of our members. It gives us a great deal of satisfaction when we can report the answer to a major quandry that we have faced and overcome.

Readers will have been following the story of the steamer MARUBA, which was begun as our Ship of the Month No. 216 in the December issue and which continued with a major follow-up piece in January. It will be recalled that we were very much interested in finding out what happened to MARUBA after her return to the Great Lakes from salt water in 1923 under Hutchinson management, and her rebuilding, with pilothouse forward, at Ashtabula, Ohio.

In January, we mentioned that Capt. John Tackaberry had been told by his father that the COLLINGWOOD, in which he had served in the autumn of 1923, had suffered damage in a collision with MARUBA in a Lake Erie blizzard late that season, and that COLLINGWOOD had paid off her crew at the Port Arthur shipyard, where she went for repairs, on December 12th. In view of our previous inability to verify whether MARUBA ever operated after her return to the lakes, John was a bit afraid that perhaps his father might have been mistaken in recollecting the name of the ship that COLLINGWOOD had hit.

Thanks to the efforts of member Sterling P. Berry, of Grosse Pointe, Michigan, and some more digging on our part, we now know the answer, and we are happy to report that John Tackaberry's father was NOT wrong in what he told him about the MARUBA!

Sterling Berry indicated that he believed that MARUBA came up the Welland Canal in two pieces on August 26 and 27, 1923, and arrived at Ashtabula on Thursday, August 20th. We have now checked the Toronto Reference Library's microfilm of Toronto newspapers of the period and can report that the Navigation News column of "The Globe" confirms the upbound passage at Port Colborne of the stern section of MARUBA at 10:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 26th, and of the bow section at 1:00 a.m. on Monday, the 27th. No tugs were named. Where was MARUBA until she arrived at Ashtabula on the 30th? Most probably she was lying at Port Colborne, waiting either for weather or her tow.

She apparently spent some six weeks being rejoined and rebuilt by G.L.E.W. at Ashtabula, and then, as discovered by Mr. Berry, she made three trips from Fort William to Buffalo with grain, one from Port Arthur to Buffalo, and a final one from Duluth to Buffalo. Can this be proven? You bet it can!

"The Globe" reported four sailings of MARUBA from the Canadian "Head of the Lakes" (although not specified whether from Fort William or Port Arthur). She cleared on Tuesday, October 16th (right ahead of BRITON, another Hutchinson laker returned from salt water in 1923) with 118,000 bushels of wheat for Buffalo. On Sunday, October 28th, MARUBA sailed again with 105,000 bushels of wheat for Buffalo. On Thursday, November 8th, she cleared for Buffalo with 50,000 bushels of wheat and 80,000 bushels of oats. Then, on Monday, November 19th, she sailed with 160,000 bushels of oats for Buffalo.

The Toronto papers did not report Duluth harbour activity, so we cannot check from here for that sailing, but we probably could verify the Soo, Sarnia or Detroit passages on that trip if we cared to spend the time searching. We do not doubt, however, that the sailing from Duluth occurred.

Sterling Berry has searched the Buffalo port records, and they indicate that MARUBA sailed from that port on Friday, December 7, 1923, for yet another trip to Duluth, but he has been unable to find any further reported passages for her. We, also, cannot find her reported upbound at Detroit, Sarnia or the Soo after the December 7th Buffalo sailing. And why would this be? Because, most likely late on December 7th or early on the 8th, MARUBA had her snow-shrouded encounter with COLLINGWOOD out on Lake Erie, put about and headed for Cleveland, laid up there, and never turned her wheel again. This