

for reactivation if that ever had become necessary. It did not, and in 1987 she, too, was sold for scrapping, the purchaser being Marine Salvage Ltd., of Port Colborne. She was towed out of Duluth by the Purvis Marine Ltd. tug AVENGER IV, and tied up below the Canadian Lock at Sault Ste. Marie on November 12, 1987. Two days later, the tugs ELMORE M. MISNER and THUNDER CAPE cleared the Canadian Soo with the WATSON in tow, bound for Humberstone, and on her arrival, she was tied up on the west side of the old canal section above Dain City.

The two Great Lakes Marine Contracting Ltd. tugs then returned up the lakes and fetched another old tinstacker, the Maritime Class ROBERT C. STANLEY, which they towed all the way down to Sorel, Quebec. After this tow was completed, the MISNER and THUNDER CAPE returned for the WATSON, and they passed down the Welland Canal with her on December 13th, 1987. They arrived at Sorel with her on December 19th.

Over the next year and a half, the WATSON and STANLEY languished at Sorel until eventually they were resold to Turkish breakers. Finally, on May 16, 1989, RALPH H. WATSON and ROBERT C. STANLEY cleared Sorel in tandem tow behind the deep-sea tug FAIRPLAY IX, and after a very long tow, they arrived during July at Aliaga, Turkey, where they were beached and soon dismantled.

And so ended the operational careers of the four tinstackers of 1937-1938. The four steamers had been very popular amongst lake shipping enthusiasts, especially the GOVERNOR MILLER and WILLIAM A. IRVIN, whose tall, sawmill-like funnels belching clack clouds of coal smoke, and their big, triple-deck forward cabins made them the most handsome of any of the United States Steel Corporation's ore freighters. Unfortunately, however, esthetic considerations almost always take a back seat to the economics of operation, and it was the economic exigencies of the day that led to the demise of the ships, despite their relatively short careers.

We are fortunate, indeed, that the WILLIAM A. IRVIN survives today and that the general public and shipping enthusiasts alike may go aboard her and observe the facilities and equipment of this important vessel. They may also imagine some of the pleasures enjoyed aboard the IRVIN by the many guests of the corporation who enjoyed her special passenger quarters over her 41 years of operation.

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**Ed. Note:** We are indebted to member Brian Bernard, of Hamilton, Ontario, for his suggestion that we feature these four steamers, and for his work in preparing most of the material for the article. It will be recalled that Brian earlier prepared for us an excellent feature concerning the U.S. Steel "Supers" of 1942. The assistance of members such as Brian make the job of your Editor so very much easier.

We also appreciate the assistance of T.M.H.S. secretary John H. Bascom, who combed the records seeking anything else he could find out about the four sisterships.

In addition to the June, 1938, issue, of "Marine Engineering and Shipping Review", certain information was obtained from the September, 1937, 'Pittsburgh Steamship Company Number' issue of "U.S. Steel News", which was a monthly magazine published out of Hoboken, New Jersey, for the employees of the corporation and its affiliates.

We would be remiss if we did not include a very strong recommendation that our members visit the WILLIAM A. IRVIN if they should have occasion to be in Duluth, Minnesota. Not only is the IRVIN well worth a visit, but she deserves the continued support of those marine historians who appreciate her preservation.

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