

ONE PICKANDS, A HOBSON AND TWO MATHERS

Ed. Note: In the February issue, we began our review of the careers of four sistership, straight-deck bulk carriers which were built in 1926 for the Interlake Steamship Company, of Cleveland. All four were built by the Lorain yard of the American Ship Building Company, being the yard's Hulls 791, 792, 793 and 794. They were christened, respectively, COLONEL JAMES PICKANDS, SAMUEL MATHER (IV), WILLIAM McLAUHLAN and ROBERT HOBSON, and they served their owners well for many years.

We did not have sufficient space in the February issue to complete the stories of these four handsome steamers, and so we left them at the point in the narrative where all four of the ships had been completed and were in service for Interlake. We will now resume their stories and follow their lives through to the end.

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The four steamers operated very successfully for Interlake, and were involved in no major accidents of which we have been able to locate mention. They also underwent very few alterations during their years under the Pickands Mather houseflag. Over the years, they did receive new smokestacks, or at least stack "liners". As well, they had their pilothouses "streamlined" when the roofs were replaced during the 1950s and the roof overhang above the sunvisor was eliminated. All four steamers received new cargo hold sidetanks and tanktops during the 1955-1957 period. Their colours stayed basically the same over the years, there being only minor changes in respect of the appearance of the owner's name and corporate symbol on the bows.

The first major change for any of the sisterships came in 1965, when SAMUEL MATHER (IV) was transferred to the ownership of a new Canadian subsidiary, the Labrador Steamship Company Limited, of Montreal, Quebec. Briefly registered at Hamilton, Bermuda, under British official number 317139, she was renamed (b) POINTE NOIRE in honour of the St. Lawrence River ore-shipping port which she was intended to serve. Soon, however, she was brought under the Canadian flag and re-registered at Montreal with the same official number on the Canadian books.

Under Canadian registry, POINTE NOIRE was shown as having dimensions of 587.5 x 60.2 x 27.9, 9171 Gross and 6486 Net. She operated mainly in the Canadian ore trade, bringing iron ore up the St. Lawrence Seaway to Lake Erie ports, and then running Canadian grain back down to St. Lawrence River ports when such "backhauls" were available to her. In this trade, she was accompanied by the 1904-built steamer AUGUSTUS B. WOLVIN, also transferred over from Interlake, but during 1966. Then, in 1966, this pair was joined by the newly-built A. S. GLOSSBRENNER, and in 1967, the Labrador fleet was brought up to four ships by the addition of V. W. SCULLY, the 1965-built (a) DON-DE-DIEU, acquired from the Papachristidis fleet. The latter two vessels were both maximum-sized for Seaway service.

The Labrador Steamship vessels shared Interlake fleet colours, except that there was no fleet name or corporate logo on their bows, and on the orange stack band there appeared the black outline of a circle, inside which was a black letter 'L'. The two newer ships remained with the Labrador subsidiary until 1971, but the veteran WOLVIN was sold for scrap after a stranding in 1967, and in 1968 the POINTE NOIRE was sold to Upper Lakes Shipping Ltd., of Toronto.

Upper Lakes Shipping re-registered POINTE NOIRE at Toronto, and painted the steamer in the fleet's usual colours, with a black hull and forecastle, white cabins, and red stack with a black smokeband at the top and a white-outlined black diamond over the dividing line between the black and red sections of the stack. POINTE NOIRE operated mainly in the grain trade, although she did bring cargoes of ore up the Seaway when they were