

available for her, and hence she retained the POINTE NOIRE name. The steamer was modernized over the winter of 1970-1971 when she was converted from coal to oil fuel whilst laid up at Toronto. This conversion made the ship far more economical to operate, and she no longer emitted the dense clouds of coal smoke which had been so characteristic of her and her sisterships.

POINTE NOIRE operated in a generally successful manner for Upper Lakes Shipping, although she did encounter her share of troubles. On November 8, 1974, she lost one of her anchors in the Welland Canal above the old Thorold South guard gate, and canal traffic was blocked until the potentially dangerous obstruction could be removed. June 6, 1977, was definitely not a good day for the steamer, for in the early afternoon, when the ship was near Southeast Shoal in Lake Erie, a crewman fell down a hatch and had to be evacuated from the boat by helicopter. Then, at 10:00 p.m., the light and upbound POINTE NOIRE collided with the downbound tanker SATURN in the Fighting Island Channel of the Detroit River. Damage was not severe and there were no injuries on either vessel.

POINTE NOIRE had her share of minor groundings, but one that was relatively severe occurred on August 4th, 1977, when the steamer, downbound with grain, hit bottom in the narrow West Neebish Channel of the St. Mary's River. Part of her cargo was lightered out, and she was refloated the following day, the Rock Cut then being reopened to traffic. POINTE NOIRE was allowed to continue her voyage, but it was determined that she had suffered rather extensive bottom damage near the bow, and accordingly, when she returned upbound, she was drydocked at Thunder Bay for the necessary repairs.

POINTE NOIRE served Upper Lakes Shipping Ltd. well for more than a decade, but eventually she outlived her usefulness. She lay idle at Toronto during the 1981 and 1982 seasons, and during the late summer of 1982, she was sold to the Newman Steel interests of St. Catharines, Ontario, for scrapping. The scrap market was very poor at the time, and the sale of POINTE NOIRE reportedly realized only \$56,000 for Upper Lakes. However, the fleet was going through a difficult period at the time, and it was necessary that the sale be concluded.

POINTE NOIRE was towed away from her Toronto lay-up berth early in the morning of September 20, 1982, and in tow of the tugs GLENEVIS and R. & L. NO. 1, she passed safely up the Welland Ship Canal that same day. The tugs took her to Port Maitland, Ontario, where she ~~later~~ was broken up by Port Maitland Shipbreaking Ltd. The dismantling of POINTE NOIRE did not begin in earnest until the summer of 1983 and was mostly complete by the end of 1983.

In the years following the sale of the MATHER (IV), the Interlake fleet went through a number of changes of ownership. In 1968, Pickands Mather & Company was merged with the Diamond Shamrock Corp., of Cleveland, and thereafter was operated as a division of Diamond Shamrock. Control of Pickands Mather subsequently passed in 1972 to Moore-McCormack Lines Inc., of New York. The three of the quadruplets which were left in the fleet continued to serve through these various changes, and the next to leave the fold was the oldest of the lot.

After several seasons of idleness, COLONEL JAMES PICKANDS was refitted in the spring of 1974, and she was placed back in regular service as a replacement for WALTER E. WATSON, (a) H. H. PORTER (25), (b) YOUNGSTOWN (57), which had been sold late in 1973 to other owners but which would never again run, despite being renamed (d) NATIONAL TRADER.

The return of the PICKANDS to service was, however, anything but successful. By May 10, she was tied up at the Lake Front Dock at Toledo, undergoing repairs for serious boiler damage which had occurred the previous day. She was back in service about a week later, but on June 3rd she suffered engine trouble in Lake Erie off Port Colborne, and she was towed to the wharf of the Frontier Elevator at Buffalo for repairs. By the 5th, the PICKANDS had made it back over to Port Colborne to unload her cargo of grain at Maple