

within a few days, all of the Soo River boats were under seizure at Canadian ports.

On that fateful Friday, August 6th, JOAN M. McCULLOUGH had just arrived at the Victory Mills elevator at Toronto with a cargo of soya beans, and she was seized there on the 9th. All but two of the Soo River ships spent most or all of the remainder of the month of August at the wall until the receivers could get things back on track. The McCULLOUGH lay at Toronto, with steam up and her crew aboard the whole time, until she was freed to sail on September 3rd. By that time, a deal had been worked out for the entire Soo River fleet to be sold at a "fire sale" price to P & H Shipping Division of Parrish & Heimbecker Limited, and this sale was completed on September 16th, 1982.

The McCULLOUGH was renamed (d) BIRCHGLEN by the new owner, and she was placed in the colours still worn today by P & H boats, which were adapted from the old Soo River livery. The "mustache" was removed from the bow and the smokestack shamrock was replaced by the P & H crest, but otherwise the colours remained the same. BIRCHGLEN was only to wear these colours for a few years, however, as she was retired at the close of the 1986 season and was laid up at Hamilton. She was sold in 1987 to International Marine Salvage, of Port Colborne, but instead of being broken up as originally had been intended, she was towed to Toronto where she was used briefly for soya bean storage at Victory Mills.

Early in 1988, however, she was resold to east coast shipbreaking interests, and on April 21st, she was towed out of Toronto by the tugs ATOMIC and ELMORE M. MISNER. With THUNDER CAPE replacing ATOMIC, the tow was downbound in the Seaway on April 23rd. Unfortunately, whilst traversing the South Shore Canal in Lake St. Louis, BIRCHGLEN struck the port bow of the Paterson straight-deck bulk carrier QUEDOC (III), which was upbound in ballast. QUEDOC was forced out of the narrow channel and grounded, ripping up some 350 feet of her bottom. BIRCHGLEN escaped the encounter without significant damage, and the scrap tow continued.

The tow arrived in the Riviere Maheux anchorage off Ile d'Orleans, east of Quebec City, on April 24, and on the 26th, BIRCHGLEN was taken in tow by the tug ORION EXPEDITOR, which towed BIRCHGLEN through to Sydney, Nova Scotia, where she finally was dismantled.

Thus endeth the saga of our four sisterships, which had formed part of a class of laker generally called "The 600 Footers" because they were all 600 feet in overall length and 60 feet in the beam. The four Pickands Mather steamers served well, although they did not frequently make the news and thus undoubtedly pleased their owners immensely. Today they are but a memory, although their slightly older near-sister CHARLES M. SCHWAB survives still, albeit much rebuilt, in the P & H fleet as (c) BEECHGLEN. As well, the later and larger HARRY COULBY (II) still operates as (b) KINSMAN ENTERPRISE (II) for Kinsman Lines Inc., of Cleveland, for which she runs primarily in the U.S. grain trade to Buffalo.

* * *

Ed. Note: We sincerely hope that we have explained in adequate fashion the tangled web woven by the various vessels we have mentioned which bore the name SAMUEL MATHER, but if any of our readers have any lingering problems in separating these various ships, we invite them to let us know and we will do our best to explain the situation further. In fact, there have been more ships named for Samuel Mather than for any other individual or corporate entity in lake history, so it is not surprising that the situation is confusing. There were two more lakers named SAMUEL MATHER subsequent to the ones mentioned herein, and one of them is still in existence today, although not currently active.

* * * * *