

developed in one of her pumps and she was obliged to return to Port Colborne for repairs. Her master, Capt. John Clifford, then headed CELTIC for Toledo, where the steamer took on a cargo of 17,000 bushels of corn for delivery to Montreal.

On Thursday, May 1st, 1890, the downbound CELTIC was in a position some 15 miles off Rondeau Light when her career came to a quick end. Rondeau Harbour, a harbour of refuge, is located on the north shore of Lake Erie, to the west of Port Stanley and some 64 miles east of the mouth of the Detroit River. In the same area of Lake Erie at the time was the iron-hulled package freighter RUSSIA (U.S.110063), 231.7 x 35.7 x 13.3, 1501 Gross and 1334 Net. The RUSSIA had been built at Buffalo in 1872 as Hull 12 of the King Iron Works, and in 1890 she was being operated by the Lackawanna Transportation Company, commonly known as the "Red Star Line", which was the lake shipping affiliate of the Lackawanna Railroad.

Off Rondeau Light, CELTIC and RUSSIA met. We do not know why they came together, but the all-too-common spring fog may have been the reason. In any event, the meeting of the two steamers was disastrous, and the heavily damaged CELTIC sank in ten minutes. The CELTIC's elderly cook, Mrs. Strachan, of St. Catharines, was the only human casualty. All the rest of CELTIC's crew were safely taken aboard the RUSSIA despite the rapid foundering of their steamer.

RUSSIA, however, had not emerged unscathed from the collision, and she soon was found to be making water badly. She was run full steam toward the Canadian shore and she was beached successfully about a mile to the east of the Rondeau Light Station. All persons aboard the steamer were able to reach the shore safely, and RUSSIA herself survived to operate for many more years. (RUSSIA finally foundered in heavy weather on Lake Huron on April 30, 1909.)

CELTIC's surviving crew members eventually made their way to Ridgetown, Ontario, from whence they wired the Mackays for money so that they could return home. At the time of her loss, CELTIC was valued at \$18,000 and it was said that she was insured for \$12,000. Interestingly, although CELTIC had been on the bottom of Lake Erie for two years, presumably without any hope of salvage, she was listed in the 1892 edition of The Inland Lloyd's register of Canadian hulls. She was classed A2, valued at \$16,000 and shown as having received "large repairs" in 1890. No doubt this late listing of CELTIC was simply the result of the list not having been updated in respect of the steamer's loss and her deletion from the Canadian registry books.

In any event, the 1890 collision on Lake Erie had brought to a conclusion the 17-year career of CELTIC, a handsome example of the old style of "canaller". She had served the Mackay interests well, and never had any other owner. She was particularly well known around the lower lakes because of her almost-annual lighthouse supply trips, made in those far-off days when manned lighthouses abounded around our Great Lakes.

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Ed. Note: We hope that our readers have enjoyed our account of this little steamer which was lost over one hundred years ago. For much of the information concerning the comings and goings of CELTIC, we are indebted to longtime T.M.H.S. member Ivan S. Brookes, of Hamilton, for the use of his unpublished manuscript Hamilton Harbour 1826-1901. This work is of invaluable assistance in the researching of vessel activities in the Hamilton area and, of course, it contains many references to the Mackay family and their various vessels.

The preliminary draft of this feature was prepared by T.M.H.S. secretary J. H. Bascom, for whose special efforts we are, as usual, very grateful.

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