

The Corrigan's operated CALEDONIA, like most of their ships, in the iron ore trade, and indeed four of their boats had the word "iron" incorporated in their names - IRON AGE, IRON CHIEF, IRON CLIFF and IRON DUKE, all built in the 1880-1881 period and acquired by the Corrigan's in 1900. (Three other "iron" boats, IRON STATE, IRON QUEEN and IRON KING never were in the Corrigan Fleet.) Other cargoes such as coal were, of course, taken when available but iron ore was the mainstay of the Corrigan lake operations.

By 1901, according to both the Blue Book and the Shipmasters' Directory of that year, and subsequent issues of Merchant Vessels of the United States (the U.S. government vessel register), CALEDONIA's tonnage had been increased to 2197 Gross and 1509 Net. As well, the steamer's depth was now shown as 24.7 feet rather than the 13.9 feet shown by the U.S.M.V. in the boat's earlier years. Obviously, some major work was done on the ship to cause the increase in tonnage, but we cannot imagine that a wooden ship could have her depth increased by more than ten feet. We suspect that there was an error in the original U.S.M.V. listings, but we would like to know what the Corrigan's really did do to CALEDONIA to increase her tonnage so substantially around the turn of the century.

We know of only one accident involving CALEDONIA during her Corrigan years, and that occurred on Thursday, August 17, 1905. That day, CALEDONIA was out on Lake Superior, towing the wooden-hulled schooner-barge JOHN M. HUTCHINSON (U.S.75597), which also was Corrigan-owned. She was 229.0 x 36.0 x 14.0, 980 Gross and 931 Net, and had been built in 1873 at Cleveland by Quayle and Martin. When the tow was off Fourteen Mile Point, near Ontonagon, Michigan, on the southwest side of the Keweenaw Peninsula, JOHN M. HUTCHINSON began to take on water. CALEDONIA was able to rescue the HUTCHINSON's crew before the barge foundered. (Details of the loss of the HUTCHINSON are given by Dr. Julius F. Wolff, Jr., in his Lake Superior Shipwrecks.)

During the first decade of the new century, the Corrigan's decided that their big steel-hulled barges could be operated more efficiently as self-propelled freighters, and so they set about removing the engines from some of the better wooden steamers and fitting them into the barges. The triple expansion engine from CALEDONIA was one of those chosen for a move, and over the winter of 1907-1908, it was removed from the wooden ship and fitted in POLYNESIA (II)(24), (b) A. D. MacBETH, where it was to serve until that vessel was sold for scrapping at Hamilton in 1940.

The 1908 Great Lakes Register (Bureau Veritas) listed CALEDONIA as a sailing vessel (schooner barge) without power, but as far as we have been able to determine, no other vessel register or directory ever showed CALEDONIA as anything but a steamer. In fact, CALEDONIA soon did become a steamer again and, by 1913, according to Beeson's Marine Directory of the Northwestern Lakes, she had been fitted with a fore-and-aft compound engine which had cylinders of 24 and 44 inches bore, and a stroke of 42 inches. The 1913 Beeson's showed the same boilers in CALEDONIA as she had carried earlier (so they did not move to POLYNESIA along with the old engine), but Beeson's showed the second engine as having been built in 1888, just like the first one. We suspect that this may be an error, but we have never been able to trace where CALEDONIA's second engine came from, and so we cannot argue about the date of its building.

It was about this time that CALEDONIA was acquired by the Caledonia Steamship Company, of Buffalo, New York, which was managed by Boland and Cornelius of that same city. In fact, it may well have been Boland that put the "new" engine in CALEDONIA. The same operators also acquired the former Corrigan steamer ITALIA, which had given up her original engine so that it could be placed in the Corrigan barge AMAZON, after which ITALIA, like CALEDONIA, received a second-hand and less powerful replacement power plant.

One of the photographs of CALEDONIA which accompanies this feature shows the steamer in Boland and Cornelius colours, with a black hull, white fore-