

CEDARVILLE

In the Editor's column, "Greetings of the Season", which appeared in the December issue, we remarked upon the fact that the 1995 navigation season had seen a number of very significant Great Lakes anniversaries. We noted a number of these but, on the spur of the moment, when we were penning that article, we overlooked several most important anniversaries. One of them was the 90th anniversary of the disastrous autumn of 1905, when a series of storms that raked the lakes wrecked an incredible number of ships, and the total loss in vessel tonnage was second only to that suffered in the Great Storm of 1913. Some of the ships that fell victim to that 1905 series of disturbances have been mentioned on occasion in the pages of this publication.

One particular anniversary of significance which we overlooked involves a vessel which, as far as we know, has never received any major attention in "Scanner", despite the fact that she was lost just three years before the formation of the Toronto Marine Historical Society. It hardly seems as if thirty years could have passed since the loss by collision of the "Bradley" self-unloading steamer CEDARVILLE, but such is the case and the present would seem to be a good time for us to look back at the life and death of this handsome laker. We should have done so during the 1995 calendar year, but we hope that our readers will forgive this oversight and enjoy the story even more now.

For the beginning of the history of CEDARVILLE, which only served for nine seasons under that name, we must turn our attention back to the years following the end of World War One, which were years of considerable fleet expansion for the Pittsburgh Steamship Company, which was the lake shipping subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation. On many previous occasions, we have reviewed the circumstances of the formation of United States Steel at the turn of the century by J. Pierpont Morgan and Judge Elbert H. Gary, one of the most important corporate developments ever to have occurred in North America, so we need not go into the details of that event any further at this time. Suffice it to say that by the 1920s, the Pittsburgh Steamship Company was firmly ensconced in a comfortable position as the largest fleet on the U.S. side of the Great Lakes and, in terms of total tonnage in service at any one time, it was the largest shipping fleet ever to have operated on the Great Lakes.

One of the interesting things which we previously have pointed out about the Pittsburgh Steamship Company fleet was that it tended to build ships not as individual units but rather as members of classes of boats. An example of this can be found in a group of six virtual sistership steamers, measuring 580 x 60 x 27.9 and just short of 8,000 Gross Tons, which were built during 1916 and 1917. The first four, christened D. M. CLEMSON (II), D. G. KERR (II), EUGENE W. PARGNY and HOMER D. WILLIAMS, were built by the American Ship Building Company at Lorain, Ohio, while the last two, named WILLIAM A. MCGONAGLE and AUGUST ZIESING, came from the Great Lakes Engineering Works at Ecorse, Michigan. These boats were notable in that they were the first freighters to be built for the company with a beam of 60 feet.

In 1922, the Pittsburgh Steamship Company went back to American Ship for two more vessels. These were similar to the 1916-1917 sextet except that they were just a little larger. These ships were christened JOSHUA A. HATFIELD and RICHARD V. LINDABURY. Launched early in 1923, these two boats proved to be very successful, and so only four years later, two more ships of generally similar design, but again just a bit larger, were added to the fleet. They were the B. F. AFFLECK, built in 1927 by the Toledo Shipbuilding Company, and the A. F. HARVEY (II), which came from the Great Lakes Engineering Works at River Rouge, Michigan. The HARVEY was the shipyard's Hull Number 255.