

THE LOSS OF SCOTIADOC RECALLED

We were pleased to be able to present, in the Mid-Summer issue, as our Ship of the Month No. 236, the story of the Paterson steamer SCOTIADOC, (a) MARTIN MULLEN (47), which was lost on Lake Superior on June 20, 1953, as a result of a collision with the Canada Steamship Lines steamer BURLINGTON.

One of the major questions we had regarding our featured vessel concerned the circumstances of a 1910 collision which resulted in several photos being taken of MARTIN MULLEN with a severely stove-in bow. The answer has been provided by Rev. Raymond M. Donahue, of Port Hope, Michigan, who has sent us details culled from the December, 1910, issue of the "Marine Review", Cleveland, by another longtime T.M.H.S. member, Rev. Peter J. Van der Linden.

It seems that, during thick weather, MARTIN MULLEN was in collision with the steamer JAMES H. REED on Thursday, October 13th, 1910, in the lower St. Clair River near Joe Bedore's Landing. The REED was damaged on the port side and lost her port anchor. Taking water in her No. 1 tank, the REED was taken to Detroit before proceeding to the American Ship Building Company's yard at Lorain for repairs. The MULLEN, with her bow smashed in and both anchors lost, was beached. She was released the following day and was taken to Detroit for temporary repairs. She then steamed up to the shipyard at Superior, Wisconsin, for permanent repairs.

It is interesting to note that both vessels involved in the 1910 collision eventually would be done in by collision with a Canada Steamship Lines steamer. We know what happened to SCOTIADOC (MARTIN MULLEN). The Interlake Steamship Company's JAMES H. REED was sunk in a collision with C.S.L.'s upper lake bulk freight steamer ASHCROFT, (a) GLENIFFER (26), in fog on April 27th, 1944, in Lake Erie north of Conneaut, Ohio.

Ray Donahue also provided for us a photo of SCOTIADOC, taken by the late Elmer Treloar on June 7, 1953, showing SCOTIADOC, light, up alongside the bank of the Welland Canal at Thorold. She is listing to port (away from the bank) and has a cable fouled around her propeller. A large crowd of people can be seen milling about the area, watching the event. We presume that this was the accident that put SCOTIADOC on the Port Weller drydock, from which she had just emerged prior to her fateful meeting with the BURLINGTON.

We are grateful to Ray Donahue for his material. We were, however, totally surprised to receive an October 16th letter from a brand new T.M.H.S. member, Ronald J. "Sandy" Sanderson, of Collingwood, who just happens to have been Second Engineer aboard SCOTIADOC at the time of her loss. He has given us a most interesting account of the accident and of his escape from the sinking steamer. The entire letter is reproduced here for the benefit of all of our readers.

"I had just come back from supper when the danger whistle blew. I got up from my desk and went over to the throttle. We had the engine going at full speed when the BURLINGTON hit us. At that time, the 'Old Man' rang down 'Stop'; before the engine stopped, the water was up to the cranks on the main engine. I did not hear the whistle blow to abandon ship.

"I told the oiler to put the ballast pumps on the engine room. Then I told him to go and get his lifebelt and let me know what was going on. I did not see the fireman, so I went down in the lower engine room and went out to the stoke hole. I found the fireman had gone up (above). The water was out from the bunker. The BURLINGTON had hit us at the last hatch and (her bow) went through to the bunker.

"I went back into the engine room and went up on deck. At that time, I saw five seamen in the water, holding onto the log line. I went up to my room to get my life jacket, but someone had removed it. I guess he had planned to give it to me on deck.