

GLENCLOVA

In our last issue, we noted that we are now in our thirtieth year of publishing "Scanner". We remarked that we have come a long way since those early days of a "bare bones" newsletter with rather primitive features and, at the very beginning, prints pasted in to provide photopages. We also used to address "Scanner" envelopes by hand during our Saturday morning photo trips to the Welland Canal - and get them ALL done between the time we left Toronto and the time we turned off the Queen Elizabeth Way at Seventh Street Louth to take the scenic route, along Lakeshore Road, via Port Dalhousie to Port Weller!

Much has changed during the intervening years. Not only have we increased our information and photographic base in order to provide more accurate and complete histories of the ships that we feature in "Scanner", but we also have honed our writing skills in the twenty-nine years that have passed since Ye Ed. assumed the editorial mantle. We also have learned a lot about what our members expect in a featured ship history!

When we were looking through Volume II of "Scanner" to prepare our feature on the WILLIAM C. MORELAND for the March issue, we noted how briefly we had treated the histories of the ships were featured back then. We did the best we could back in those early years of "Scanner", but today we can hardly be satisfied with those efforts.

Another of the Volume II features that makes us cringe when we read it today is our "Ship of the Month No. 7", which featured the canaller ELIZABETH HINDMAN and appeared in the issue of April 1970. At that time, this interesting little ship was a Great Lakes anachronism - a canaller that had failed to go peacefully into retirement after the new St. Lawrence Seaway opened in 1959. Nevertheless, by the time we wrote about her, she was inactive and was awaiting a scrap sale. How we managed back then to say so little about such an unusual lake freighter (and to mangle much of what we did say) is something that today escapes us. We shall, however, endeavour now to set matters to rights.

James Playfair, of Midland, Ontario, was a shipping entrepreneur par excellence on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes. Were it not for his influence, the Canadian lake shipping scene would not look anything like it currently does, some 61 years after his death. We have touched upon his operations many times in these pages, for he was so active on the shipping scene, in the first four decades of this century, that his importance to the industry cannot be estimated. His efforts were not always successful, but they always were significant.

And yet, when we reviewed briefly the history of ELIZABETH HINDMAN in our issue of April 1970, we said almost nothing about James Playfair, for whom she was built. We missed making comment about some of the very important things about Playfair's operations in those heady years when he controlled much of Canadian lake shipping.

James Playfair was born in Toronto on July 8th, 1860. His father, John Speers Playfair, had been born in St. Andrews, Scotland, and later emigrated to Canada, becoming a dry goods merchant at Toronto. In 1880, James Playfair took employment with the Toronto Lumber Company, which had lumber holdings and mill facilities in the Georgian Bay area. The young Playfair moved to Midland in 1883. In 1888, he formed a partnership with D. L. White, Jr., who had come to Midland in 1887; together they operated a lumber business. By 1896, James Playfair's interests had expanded into the lake shipping business. Over the next 41 years, he was to control or influence a great number of companies engaged in various aspects of the shipping trade.

Playfair was one of the leading lights in the formation of Canada Steamship Lines Ltd., Montreal, which came into being in 1913 and which swallowed up Playfair's own fleet of ships, which had been known as Inland Lines Ltd.