

THREE STRIKES ON THE MOHAWK DEER

The Ship of the Month features that we wrote during the early years of the production of "Scanner" were good beginner-style efforts of which we were quite proud at the time. However, over the intervening years, we have learned much more about some of the ships we featured way back then, and we also have honed our writing skills. So when we look back on those early articles now, we cringe a bit and hope that not too many members ever go back and read them today. We can produce much better features now, and so we recently began to rewrite a few of those old bare-bones articles and present them in our current format.

This issue, we look back at Ship of the Month No. 11, which appeared in Vol. III, No. 2, in November of 1970. That article, featuring the venerable steamer MOHAWK DEER (which had passed from the scene three years to the day before our history of her appeared in print), took only a few lines more than two pages to deal with the story of this handsome freighter's long life! Accordingly, twenty-eight years and two months after our first history of the MOHAWK DEER appeared in "Scanner", we'll now do the story up right! And unlike our first feature, which had no accompanying photographs, we have six interesting ones for you this time. We hope that you will enjoy our second look at one of the oldest of the Canadian upper lakers that was still in service during the early years of the new St. Lawrence Seaway.

* * *

Few, indeed, in the annals of shipping on the Great Lakes, are cases of a ship being wrecked and abandoned on three occasions during her lifetime. In fact, although some of the wooden-hulled ships had an amazing ability to withstand the ravages of time, the elements and faulty navigation, we know of only one steel-hulled upper laker that suffered three major strandings and abandonments, and managed to bounce back after two of them as if little had happened. Despite her propensity for courting adversity, this ship enjoyed a career which lasted for seventy-one years, and at the time of her retirement she was the second oldest straight-deck bulk carrier still in operation on the lakes.

It was on Saturday, March 7th, 1896, three months and one day short of ten years after the launching of the first steel-hulled vessel ever built on the lakes, that the famous shipbuilding yard of F. W. Wheeler & Company, of West Bay City, Michigan, launched a steel steamer which had been ordered by the Roby Transportation Company, of Detroit. The new ship was christened L. C. WALDO in honour of Lewis C. Waldo, who managed not only the Roby firm, but also the fleets of the Northwestern Transportation Company and the Swain Wrecking Company. Mr. Waldo originally had been in the lumber business, but moved from Ludington, Michigan, to Detroit in 1890, setting his sights on bigger things.

It is interesting to note that, prior to the building of the L. C. WALDO, the Roby Transportation Company had owned the wooden-hulled steamer GEORGE W. ROBY (U.S.86031), 281.0 x 41.4 x 20.0, 1843.23 Gross and 1470.30 Net, which had been built in 1889 as Hull 45 of the Wheeler shipyard. The ROBY was "traded in" to F. W. Wheeler & Company late in 1895 as partial payment for the construction of the WALDO, which was Wheeler's Hull 112. Wheeler then resold the ROBY to the Becker interests of Cleveland. Converted to a barge after a fire in 1905, she lasted until November 14, 1906, when she was totally destroyed by fire in the Detroit River. Her last owner was George W. Pfohl, of Buffalo, New York.

L. C. WALDO was given U.S. official number 141421, and she was enrolled at Detroit. She was 387.3 feet in length between perpendiculars, 48.0 feet in the beam, and 23.8 feet in registered depth (28.1 feet molded), and her tonnage was 4244.26 Gross and 3290.02 Net. She had a steel tanktop, three holds and three watertight bulkheads, and like most steel ships of the period, she