

tion was hostile to the development of the Canadian Soo as a steel-making location (the Algoma Steel Company began its life as another of Clergue's companies), fearing competition to its own mills in the United States. Hematite from the Helen Mine was taken to Algoma Steel at the Soo for smelting.

One might well wonder, however, whether Clergue's finances could support such incredible expansion of activities over a short period of time. In fact, they couldn't and, due to over-extension, the Consolidated Lake Superior Company encountered major financial problems on December 12th, 1902, when over \$12 million in stock values was wiped out in just a few hours. As a result of lack of confidence by investors in the company's growth potential, Clergue's position as manager of the corporate complex became untenable during 1903. He relinquished control that year, although he remained in the Soo until 1907.

Meanwhile, many of Francis Clergue's former enterprises were forced to suspend operations temporarily, and a number of the subsidiaries eventually passed into the hands of independent owners. The Algoma Central and Hudson Bay Railroad Company managed to keep operating, but the extension of its rail lines was postponed for some six years, and control of the railroad was eventually acquired by English investors. (We will not get into the later history of the company at this stage, as it is not relevant to the stories of the four ships we are featuring.) Throughout the years of financial turmoil, however, the Algoma Central Steamship Line played a very important part in local development with its movement of ore, coal, assorted general cargo and passengers.

And now, let us begin our look at the four ocean-going freight steamers that Francis Clergue acquired in 1900 for his fledgling steamship line. Why would Clergue look off-lakes to buy his first bulk carriers? The simple fact was that things were booming on the lakes with the rapid expansion of the iron ore trade, and suitable vessels that could operate in Canadian coastwise trade just were not available. The four vessels that Clergue found were British-flagged, and thus could be brought easily into Canadian lake service. They were of such size that they could be brought up the old St. Lawrence and Welland Canals, and were close enough to maximum canal dimensions that their cargo capacity was the best that could be expected of such imports.

Although differing in minor details, all four of the steamers were generally similar in design. They were two-masted well-deckers, with fully-topgallant forecastles, well-decks forward with closed steel bulwarks, bridge structure and funnel amidships, and a long quarterdeck, one half deck level above the forward well-deck and a half level below the bridge deck. Three of the ships had closed taffrails running all the way back from the bridge and around the fantail, while THEANO had open rails aft. All four of the ships had cargo booms on their masts, rigged fore-and-aft.

The LEAFIELD and MONKSHAVEN had steel hulls, while PALIKI and THEANO were built of iron. All had open navigation bridges, with three of them coming to the lakes with only small lower pilothouses and open bridges on the monkey's island above. Those three ships later received upper pilothouses, although they still had open bridges above. LEAFIELD, however, came to the lakes with a rudimentary upper pilothouse, with three little windows in its face, and an open bridge with flying bridgewings above, and she retained this bridge configuration throughout her years of lake operation.

The four steamers were soon painted up in their company's colours, although not one of them was renamed. They had black hulls, with the name in white letters on the bow over the legend 'Algoma Central Steamship Line'. The deckhouses were white, although early photos seem to indicate that they may originally have been buff or grey. Only THEANO and PALIKI had white forecastle head bulwarks. All had buff masts. Smokestacks originally were buff with a black smokeband at the top, and on the buff section appeared a