

LEMOYNE

Time really does fly past, and it is true that it seems to go faster the older we get. Just the other day, Ye Ed. was down in the basement doing some chores when our attention wandered to the many ringbuoys mounted along the walls. We realized, with something of a shock, that most of them have been hanging there for at least thirty years, and several have been there for more than thirty-five years! Gee, it was "just a while back" in the 1960s that we acquired most of them, but as we enter the year 2000, we are reminded of just how long ago the 1960s really were... (Our apologies to those members born during the 1960s!)

It seems almost inconceivable that it is coming up on thirty-two years since one of the most famous Great Lakes freighters made her final revenue trip. Not only was this ship, the LEMOYNE, a symbol for many years of the biggest and best in lake shipping, but she was rather remarkable in that she bore four names during her lifetime but only sailed under one of them! It gives us pleasure to present with this feature one of the rarest photos in existence of this ship, and to recall the steamer's proudest moment, which rescued her from idleness during the height of the Great Depression.

We have spoken many times in these pages of the great Canadian shipping entrepreneur, James Playfair of Midland, Ontario. That we have mentioned him so frequently is not surprising, because his influence was felt all around the lakes for a good many years, and because so many fleets operating in later years owed at least a part of their success in some manner to James Playfair.

The longest-lived of the various Playfair-managed shipping companies was the Great Lakes Transportation Company Ltd., which he incorporated in 1914 after he had participated in the formation of Canada Steamship Lines Ltd. His Inland Lines Ltd. had been merged in 1912 with the Richelieu & Ontario Navigation Company Ltd., and R & O was the major base for the creation of C.S.L. in 1913. Playfair's busiest period was during the early 1920s, when the fleets that he managed underwent a great expansion, buying a number of older vessels and building a large number of canallers and some large upper lakers as well.

Because Playfair was usually acting only as a vessel manager, with operational decisions in fact controlled by the interests for which he was acting, Playfair's fortunes took some unpredictable turns over the years. However, the crowning glory of his operations undoubtedly came during the mid-1920s, when in quick succession he had built by the Midland Shipbuilding Company Ltd., three large upper lake bulk freight steamers. All three were of generally similar design, although each was larger than the one before.

Built in 1924 was the Midland shipyard's Hull 12, which was christened GLENIFFER. Better known for her later service for C.S.L. as (b) ASHCROFT, she was 546.0 x 60.2 x 28.0, 7726 Gross and 4439 Net Tons. In 1925, the yard launched the second ship in the series, Hull 14, which was given the name GLENEAGLES and would carry that name for 53 years. Similar in appearance to GLENIFFER except that she had triple-deck forward cabins, GLENEAGLES was 582.0 x 60.2 x 28.0, 8233 Gross and 4780 Net.

The third vessel in the series was the Midland Shipbuilding Company's Hull 16, whose construction was begun late in 1925. She was built under the name GLENMHOR, but the management of her fleet changed even before she was launched. The April 1926 issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World" reported that "On March 10, W. H. Coverdale, President, Canada Steamship Lines, gave an interview to the press in Montreal, in which he was reported to have said that negotiations had been going on for about three months, and that the C.S.L. directors had, at a meeting on that day, authorized the purchase of the following Playfair interests, viz.: (1) The Great Lakes Transportation Co.'s fleet of 10 upper lake steamships, 1 barge, 1 floating elevator, a