

the same angle as the funnel. Large potable water tanks were positioned on the boat deck.

The JOHN MITCHELL seems to have operated successfully and seldom made the news reports. On July 28, 1890, however, the "Buffalo Evening News" reported that "Str. JOHN MITCHELL is aground at Detroit below the St. Clair Canal". This rather non-specific report was followed by another item in the same paper, two days later, which indicated that the MITCHELL had been released after being lightered of 500 tons of coal. We may, therefore, assume that she was upbound when she grounded. On May 4th, 1893, the "Buffalo Enquirer" noted: "Str. ESCANABA picked up the disabled str. JOHN MITCHELL on Thunder Bay (Lake Huron) yesterday, and passed down (at the Huron Cut) this morning at 10:00 a.m. Strong northwest wind with hail." No further details were given.

It is said that the MITCHELL was rebuilt with a new deck at some point, but we have no details of any such reconstruction. What we do know is that in the early part of the 1902 season, she was renamed (b) MAJOR. Why this came about, we do not know, but we suspect that the purpose was to free up the MITCHELL name for one of the new steel steamers then being built for the fleet. The JAMES GAYLEY, FRANK H. GOODYEAR (I), WILLIAM H. GRATWICK and MOSES TAYLOR all came out in 1902, and perhaps it was intended that one of these ships should bear the name JOHN MITCHELL. However, no other ship would carry the MITCHELL name until the 420-foot (b.p.) steel steamer JOHN MITCHELL (II) (U.S.203943) was built for C. W. Elphicke in 1907. (She was lost by collision in 1911.) Why the MAJOR name was selected for the wooden steamer MITCHELL is something we will never know. It may well have been a reference to one of Mitchell's financial backers who had served in the forces, but we have been unable to find a reference to any such person.

The only break in all of the years of JOHN MITCHELL/MAJOR's service for the Mitchell fleet came in 1902 (interestingly, the same year that she was renamed), when she was chartered for the season to the Port Huron and Duluth Steamship Company, of Port Huron, Michigan. This firm, which had been formed in 1901 by Frank D. Jenks, C. O. Duncan and J. E. Botsford, all of Port Huron, was contracted with the Grand Trunk Railroad to provide what was mainly a package freight service between Port Huron and Lake Superior ports. The company owned a few ships over the years, but most of its tonnage was chartered, and several bulk carriers were included. MAJOR served the line only briefly and did not return after the 1902 season.

After the expiration of the Port Huron and Duluth charter, MAJOR returned to Mitchell operation, and the change in her name does not appear to have signalled any change in her service, for she appears to have operated as before. We suspect, however, that as more and more of the new steel freighters made their appearance in Mitchell colours, MAJOR would have been occupied increasingly in the coal and grain trades, and not so much carrying iron ore. We have word of only one incident involving her during this period, and that comes in a news report dated July 30, 1906. It stated that MAJOR had gone aground on Madeline Island, which is the most southerly and largest of the Apostle Islands, located close to the southwest end of Lake Superior. The report noted that the MAJOR was released by the tug CROSBY.

The 1910 issue of "Mitchell & Company's Hand Book of the Great Lakes", compiled by Fred W. Green, listed MAJOR in the fleet of John Mitchell, Rockefeller Building, Cleveland, Ohio, and of nineteen ships listed in the fleet, she was one of only two wooden-hulled steamers. (The other was the ROBERT L. FRYER [II] [U.S.110766], built by Wheeler in 1888, which operated for the Mitchell interests until sold Canadian after being damaged in a fire at Marine City in the spring of 1914.) The 1910 directory showed MAJOR as having only one compartment to her hull (typical in a wooden vessel), and eight hatches in her deck, spaced on 24-foot centres. One of the hatches was seven feet wide measured fore-to-aft, while the others were all eight feet.