

These hatches show clearly in our photo of the MAJOR in the Chicago River which appears on the photopage accompanying this issue.

The 1913 Great Lakes shipping season will forever be known for but one thing, the series of major weather disturbances which swept across the upper lakes during the second week of November. Lake Huron bore the brunt of the incredible force of these storms, which collectively came to be known as The Great Storm of 1913, and many vessels and lives were lost there, but Lakes Michigan and Superior also felt the wrath of the storms. After a day of enjoyable "Indian Summer" weather on November 6th, storm warnings were hoisted at Duluth during the morning of November 7th, and the nasty weather hit that evening. The American Lakehead area itself was not particularly hard hit by the storms, but the rest of the big lake was, and the storms gained strength as they passed over the open water.

Some issues back, we told the story of the steamer L. C. WALDO, which was the first ship to be wrecked on Lake Superior in The Great Storm. It fell the lot of the MAJOR to be the last. She passed upbound at Sault Ste. Marie on Thursday, November 13th, with a cargo of coal. She was only thirty miles out in Lake Superior past Whitefish Point when she reportedly burst a steam pipe, lost power and fell off into the trough of the seas. At that point, her position was precarious, to say the least. One may take it on the best of authority that it is most undesirable to be aboard a disabled ship which, powerless, has fallen into the trough and is rolling helplessly from side to side, achieving arcs of swing that seem beyond her capabilities of recovery.

MAJOR found herself in just such a situation, and she rolled so viciously that her smokestack went over the side and severe damage was inflicted on her superstructure, while her hull began to leak. The North American Steamship Company's 1910-built steel steamer A. M. BYERS (59), (b) CLEMENS A. REISS (II)(70), (c) JACK WIRT (U.S.207504), happened upon the scene, and the BYERS was able to get close enough to take the entire crew off the MAJOR. But the wooden ship herself seemed to be beyond help, and so the BYERS left her in what appeared to be a sinking condition.

On Sunday, November 16th, 1913, however, the MAJOR unexpectedly arrived at the Soo in deadship tow of a steamer which various sources have identified as the steel steamer GEORGE G. BARNUM. There is only one problem with this report, and that lies in the fact that there was no steamer named GEORGE G. BARNUM on the lakes in 1913! The BARNUM was a 504-foot steamer built in 1905 for the Tomlinson interests as (a) SOCAPA, and she is best known for her years as (c) HENNEPIN (II), lasting until sold for scrapping in 1975. But she was still named SOCAPA in 1913, and was not given the GEORGE G. BARNUM name until 1915, two years AFTER the salvage of the MAJOR!

So what ship was it that appeared so unexpectedly at the Soo on November 16, 1913, with the wallowing MAJOR in tow? Perhaps one of our members will be able to locate the vessel passages from the Soo for that date for us; we suspect that the steamer was the similarly-sized JOHN J. BARLUM (II)(U.S. 206279), built in 1909 and operated by the Barlum interests of Detroit until acquired in 1935 by the Algoma Central and Hudson Bay Railway Company, which renamed her (b) ALGOCEN (I).

In any event, the cargo of 1,900 tons of coal was clammed out of the MAJOR, while the ship herself was declared a constructive total loss. It was at this time that she passed into the clutches of James Playfair, of Midland, Ontario. Playfair, having tossed his Inland Lines Limited into the Richelieu & Ontario / C.S.L. series of mergers in the 1912-1913 period, was seeking to build another lake fleet and, in fact, he found two ships available for "the right price" after The Great Storm of 1913.

One of them was the steel steamer HOWARD M. HANNA JR. (I), built at Cleveland in 1908 for the Hanna Transit Company, managed by Capt. W. C. Richardson. On Sunday, November 9, 1913, the HANNA was upbound on Lake Huron with a