

relief that she once again, on Monday morning, settled comfortably (back) into her accustomed place.

"Perhaps. But the 'trip' made history in more than one respect. It was climaxed by the old meeting the new, for the old MAJOR of former days was docked, with her escort, the LUCKNOW, at the new government dock. The government tug MURRAY STEWART tied up at the new (wharf) extension last week, but the floating drydock - the MAJOR, if you will - has the distinction of being the first privately-owned craft to dock at the extension."

Another clipping, dated May 14, 1939, was headed: "More Than 50 Working on Ship Repairs; Georgian Bay Shipbuilding Co. Yards Full of Activity". It went on thusly: "Over fifty men are at work down at the yards of the Georgian Bay Shipbuilding and Wrecking Co. Everywhere gangs of men are busy preparing and generally overhauling a number of craft in preparation for the summer's activities. In the drydock (MAJOR) is the tug HARRISON owned by the Harrison Lumber Co. of Owen Sound. It is undergoing a face lifting process. Its planking above and below the waterline is being carefully examined and many of the planks are being torn off and replaced by new ones. It will be on the stocks for some time before the repairs and general overhaul are completed.

"Lying in the water alongside the drydock are a drill scow and a dump scow owned by the Canadian Dredging Co. These are undergoing a general overhaul, and Preston's supply boat has just come off the marine railway and repairs on it are now being completed. In the slip below the railway is a dredge scow and two dump scows belonging to the Consolidated Dredging Co. There are also a number of other repair jobs in progress.

"The whole place is humming with activity, and the happiest man of all is Ganton Dobson, the proprietor. 'It is good to be able to put so many fellows back to work,' said he. 'We have enough ahead to keep us going at top speed for the next two months, and there is other work in prospect. It looks as if we shall have a good season.'"

But as useful as MAJOR was as a floating drydock at Ganton Dobson's shipyard, she eventually would fall victim to fire, that great scourge of wooden ships. A press report of September 1st, 1941, indicated that there were plans to overhaul MAJOR and tow her to Owen Sound, but this never occurred and, less than a month later, MAJOR burned at Midland. The cause of the fire was not determined, but MAJOR was severely damaged by the flames on September 27th, 1941. The remains of MAJOR were pulled away from the shipyard and scuttled in Midland Bay.

Twenty-one years later, in April of 1962, the wreck was raised by means of the tanks from old railroad tank cars, used as air chambers. It then was towed out into Georgian Bay, and was again sunk, this time in a position between Brebeuf Island and Giant's Tomb Island. There the remains of the old MAJOR lie to this day, although when the Coast Guard exploration vessel CORMORANT was in the lakes several years ago, she identified the wreck of MAJOR and discovered that one of the railroad tanks is still lying in the wreck.

\* \* \*

**Ed Note:** We are grateful to member Christopher Dunn, of Midland, for providing us with several Midland newspaper clippings concerning the MAJOR when she was used as a drydock. We also received assistance from Ron Beaupre. Also helpful were the writings of John O. Greenwood, particularly in Volume Four of The Fleet History Series. And as usual, the notes of the late John H. Bascom and James M. Kidd concerning the ship and her various owners were most helpful.

What we do not have is a photo of the steamer when she bore the name JOHN MITCHELL, which is odd since she ran for more than a decade as such. We will be most grateful if any member can supply us with such a photograph.

\* \* \* \* \*