

for a period of twenty years. In fact, Nicholson Transit was the firm that survived the longest and, having re-entered the auto trade once the ban was over, continued carrying autos by water into the 1960s.

During July of 1928, only a month after Nicholson-Universal acquired both CRESCENT CITY and SONOMA from the Tomlinson fleet, CRESCENT CITY was rebuilt as an automobile carrier. She was fitted with 'tween decks and dual elevators, and her spar deck was plated over so that cars could be carried on it. As a result of the rebuilding, her tonnage was recalculated as 4109 Gross and 3052 Net. By this time, the steamer had been re-registered at Wilmington, Delaware, to achieve a saving in taxes. CRESCENT CITY's hull was painted a very dark green, with her owner's name appearing "billboard-style" down either side in large white letters, as well as in small white letters under the ship's name on either side of the bow. The forecastle and deck-houses were white, while the smokestack was all black. By the 1940s, the black stack had gained a small red and blue flag on which appeared a white letter 'N'.

CRESCENT CITY was involved in a collision during the 1929 season. On June 14th, she had an altercation with the Bethlehem Steel steamer LEBANON near the Detroit River Light. Damage, however, was minor to both steamers.

During March of 1930, a joint tariff agreement was entered into by Nicholson-Universal, the Spokane Steamship Company and the Great Lakes Transit Corporation. This agreement let Nicholson-Universal and Spokane work the automobile-carrying trade on the lower lakes, and permitted Great Lakes Transit, a major operator of package freighters, to carry autos uplakes to Duluth.

A new venture came into being on April 21, 1932, when a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nicholson-Universal, known as the Overlakes Freight Corporation, was incorporated at Wilmington. Its purpose was to start a special service to carry trucks from Cleveland to Detroit. At first, this service was operated by the steamer GRAHAM C. WOODRUFF but, as time passed, other Nicholson-Universal steamers, including CRESCENT CITY, ran this route.

On April 22, 1936, CRESCENT CITY was involved in a minor accident when she stranded near the upper end of Fighting Island in the Detroit River. She was soon refloated with little damage.

Seeking to ensure control of what was considered an essential service during World War Two, the U.S. Government in 1942 arranged for the United States Maritime Commission to requisition all of Nicholson-Universal's vessels. They then were chartered back to their former owner for operation by the Overlakes Freight Corporation. That same year, CRESCENT CITY was reconverted to a bulk carrier by the Nicholson Terminal and Dock Company at Ecorse, Michigan. The conversion involved the removal of the 'tween deck and elevators and the uncovering of the spar deck hatches (which had been plated over).

The 1943 season saw the U.S. Maritime Commission turn over ownership of certain Overlakes-managed ships to the War Shipping Administration, while the ownership of others, including CRESCENT CITY, was returned to Nicholson-Universal, although likewise for Overlakes management. In 1944 and 1945, however, CRESCENT CITY was back under War Shipping Administration ownership, with Overlakes as manager. She was one of five ships thus owned and managed. With the war over and the U.S. government divesting itself of non-combat assets, the five steamers (CRESCENT CITY, CORALIA, FRED L. HEWITT (I), PENOBSCOT and SONOMA) were returned in 1946 to Nicholson-Universal ownership, and they were managed during that one season by Boland & Cornelius, of Buffalo, New York.

In 1947 and through the 1948 season, all seven Nicholson-Universal/Overlakes ships were chartered to a new firm, the T. H. Browning Steamship Company, of Trenton, Michigan, which had been incorporated on August 31, 1946. Captain Troy Herman Browning had served as a manager for Nicholson-Universal from