

MAUNALOA

In the years following the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the Upper Lakes Shipping fleet embarked upon a major programme of renewal. Gone were the canallers that had served the fleet so well, and coming aboard were a number of newly-constructed vessels, as well as others converted from salt-water service. As well, in the mid-1960s, the company began to buy up some of the better idle U.S.-flag upper lakers then coming onto the market, and these were used to replace the group of upper lake steamers and barges which had been the backbone of the company since the 1930s and 1940s.

We had grown comfortable with these handsome, long-serving old "friends", the steamers JAMES B. EADS, JOHN ERICSSON, L. A. McCORQUODALE, HOWARD L. SHAW, VICTORIOUS, DOUGLASS HOUGHTON and MAUNALOA II, together with the barges they often had towed, and we did not really pay much attention as these relics of another century began to slip away to the scrapyard. Almost before we knew it, there was only one of them left, and then she, too, was gone. But she had lived a long and successful life, and she was the very last operating vessel from amongst the many that had served the company that was her first "real" owner.

What seems so difficult for Ye Ed. to comprehend is the fact that come next June, the MAUNALOA II will have been gone for thirty years. She was one of our all-time favourite lakers and yet we never have featured her story in these pages. We will now attempt to right that oversight. Many years late...

The Minnesota Iron Company was formed during the 1880s by Charlemagne Tower, Jr., Colonel James Pickands, Samuel Mather and Jay C. Morse. Its purpose was to develop the Vermilion Iron Range of Minnesota, and its holdings later were expanded to include the Mesabi Range. The company prospered for many years and in 1900 was merged into J. Pierpont Morgan's Federal Steel Company, which in turn was consolidated during 1901 into Morgan's United States Steel Corporation. The Minnesota Iron Company's lake shipping arm was the Minnesota Steamship Company, of Duluth, which eventually would own twelve large bulk freight steamers and ten big consort barges.

The Minnesota Steamship Company was formed on September 3rd, 1889, in order to carry the iron ore mined by its parent firm. Its incorporators were J. H. Hoyt, C. A. Neff, H. S. Sherman, A. C. Dustin and J. M. Shallenberger. The members of the first Board of Directors were Jay C. Morse, C. P. Coffin, C. W. Hillard, Col. James Pickands, J. H. Chandler, H. H. Porter and William R. Stirling. The first officers were Jay C. Morse, president; Col. James Pickands, vice-president, and C. P. Coffin, secretary and treasurer, while the executive committee was comprised of Messrs Morse, Porter and Stirling. Somewhat later, Samuel Mather succeeded Morse as president, while J. H. Chandler became vice-president.

Pickands Mather & Company assumed the operation and management of the fleet of the Minnesota Steamship Company in 1890 and, during that year, Minnesota took delivery of its first owned vessels, the four sistership steamers MANOLA, MARISKA, MARUBA and MATOA. Thereafter, over the next ten years, new ships were added to the Minnesota fleet on a regular basis, the last in the series being the 436-foot consort barges MADEIRA and MARSALA, which were built in 1900. The last three steamers added to the Minnesota fleet were MAUNALOA, MATAAFA and MALIETOA, all of which joined the company during 1899. The largest of these was MALIETOA, which was 454 feet in length and 5229 Gross Tons.

There was, however, something rather different about these three steamers than about any of the other Minnesota Steamship Company vessels, and that is that none of the three was built to the company's order. All three of them were built on speculation by the shipyards, MATAAFA and MALIETOA as Hulls 33 and 36, respectively, of the Cleveland Shipbuilding Company, and MAUNALOA as Hull 37 of the Chicago Shipbuilding Company. We suspect that the builders