

FORT HENRY

- by Ronald F. Beaupre -

with the Editor



The S.S. Fort Henry Is Last Word . . .

**IN DESIGN, EQUIPMENT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPEED AND EFFICIENCY
IN HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION OF PACKAGE FREIGHT ON GREAT LAKES**

This is the heading that "Canadian Shipping" magazine used for the article in its issue of July 1955 that celebrated the commissioning of this remarkable steamer. The photo shows her downbound at the Huron Cut on her maiden voyage from Collingwood.

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During the mid nineteen-fifties, the Great Lakes shipping scene was extremely busy, indeed, as the post-war economic boom continued. Very few ships were held in lay-up and, with building materials again readily available, shipping companies were beginning to invest in new ships and new ventures. Canada Steamship Lines Limited, Montreal, was operating an assortment of venerable steamers on its package freight lines, and decided to take the opportunity to expand those services. Accordingly, C.S.L., which then was the largest operator of package freighters on the lakes, took a giant step and ordered the construction of the first new package freighter to be built on the Great Lakes since the 1920s.

The new ship would be a radical change from the typical lake steamer of prior years. Instead of the usual bluff bows, reciprocating steam engine and tall smokestack, the new ship would feature a sharp, deeply raked bow, powerful steam turbine engine and short "coffee-pot" funnel. C.S.L. wanted to develop a faster upper lake package freight service and hoped that introducing such a ship would attract new customers. For at least a decade, the company proved correct in its predictions, but thereafter new economic for-