

Their first ship was the 1875-built NORTHERN BELLE (C.71111), formerly but briefly the GLADYS (U.S.85422). They also bought WAUBUNO from the Beattys and, in the process, took James H. Beatty into their firm. It was the tragic foundering of WAUBUNO that led to the company being reorganized as the Great Northern Transit Company.

Great Northern Transit was known for owning such famous vessels as MANITOU-LIN (C.85491) of 1880 (rebuilt after an 1882 fire as ATLANTIC); EMERALD (C.71068) of 1875 (ex OSWEGO BELLE); NORTHERN QUEEN of 1872 (no Canadian number, and formerly as well as latterly the American ROBERT HOLLAND); PACIFIC (C.85323) of 1883; BALTIC (C.92310) of 1867 (formerly FRANCES SMITH); BRITANNIC (C.100188) of 1866 (previously the tug ROCKET); MAJESTIC (C.100950) of 1895, and GERMANIC (C.107164) of 1899 which actually was completed after the company ceased to exist. A number of the Great Northern steamers met unfortunate ends.

The third major antecedent of the Northern Navigation Company was the North Shore Navigation Company Limited, of Collingwood. It was formed in 1890, mainly as a result of dissatisfaction around Georgian Bay with the rates and service provided by Great Northern Transit. Founded by Capt. W. J. Bassett, of Collingwood, W. J. Sheppard, of Waubausheene, and J. L. Burton and Martin Burton, of Barrie, North Shore Navigation painted its steamers' hulls black, and thus it came to be known as "The Black Line". It proved to be Great Northern's strongest competitor in both the passenger and freight trades on Georgian Bay.

North Shore Navigation's first vessel was CITY OF MIDLAND (C.97111) built for the line in 1890 at Owen Sound. In 1892, the line acquired MANITOU (C.74245), built in 1877 as F. B. MAXWELL, and in 1893 purchased FAVOURITE (C.95762) of 1889, renaming her CITY OF PARRY SOUND. Also acquired was CITY OF LONDON (C.92390), built in 1888 as KATHLEEN, while CITY OF COLLINGWOOD (C.94766) was built for the line at Owen Sound in 1893 and CITY OF TORONTO (C.94769) in 1895.

While the Beatty Line enjoyed great success on the route from Sarnia to the Lakehead, the competition between the White Line and the Black Line in the Georgian Bay trade was fierce indeed, with a vicious rate war continuing season after season. It was even said that some shippers actually were paid to send their freight via a particular steamer line. That situation could not go on forever and, early in 1899, North Shore Navigation bought out Great Northern Transit and merged the two lines under the banner of a new company which was incorporated that spring as the Northern Navigation Company of Ontario Limited, Collingwood. The new firm had an original capital of \$350,000 but that very shortly was increased to \$1,000,000. James Scott, Toronto, was president of the new firm, while John J. Long, Collingwood, was vice-president. C. E. Stephens, Collingwood, was treasurer and Thomas Long, also of Collingwood, was secretary, while A. Miscampbell was named manager. Also associated with the company were Charles Cameron, F. A. Lett, Martin Burton, H. E. Smith, E. B. Osler and W. J. Sheppard.

The new company not only tended to established Georgian Bay routes, but also began to send some of its steamers (particularly CITY OF COLLINGWOOD and MAJESTIC, which probably were the best of its ships) into Lake Superior, and so Northern Navigation began to compete with UNITED EMPIRE and MONARCH, the Beatty Line boats. But early in 1900, John J. and Thomas Long (presumably acting for Northern Navigation) managed to gain a controlling interest in the Northwest Transportation Company, acquiring \$153,000 of the Beatty Line's total capital of \$300,000. Accordingly, UNITED EMPIRE and MONARCH became part of the Northern Navigation fleet, the latter thus gaining control of the lucrative Sarnia - Lakehead service. The Northwest Transportation Company Limited was retained as a separate corporate entity for several years, even though the balance of its capital stock was acquired by Northern Navigation during the spring of 1902. The combined Northern Navigation fleet adopted the former Beatty Line stack design, which was orange-red, with a