

CASCO

Over the years, we have featured in these pages an assortment of the canal-sized steamers that were built for lake trade during the 1920s and 1930s, many of these having been built in the United Kingdom, where shipyards constructed them in great numbers. Indeed, it often was said that some of those yards "built canallers by the mile and cut them off by the foot" because of the fact that they built so many almost-sistership vessels for certain fleets. Occasionally, however, a "one-off" canaller was built by a yard to individual plans for a specific lake operator, and these could be very interesting ships. One such vessel is the one we have chosen to feature in this issue, and she is even more interesting in that, for the majority of her career, she was the sole member of a one-ship fleet.

It was back about 1858 that the Edwardsburg Starch Company was founded. This was a firm that milled corn to produce cornstarch. If its name sounds unfamiliar, it is because, rather than its old name of Edwardsburg, we more frequently think of the Village of Cardinal, Ontario, which is a port on the upper St. Lawrence River. Cardinal is located in what once was known as the Township of Edwardsburg, in the County of Grenville. Today, the local municipality is known as the Township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal, for which the municipal offices are located at Spencerville.

For many years, the company received incoming shipments of corn to its Cardinal mill via whatever ships it could contract for the work. In 1905, however, the company purchased the 1895-built, wooden-hulled schooner-barge ALFRED (C.103343) and the 1875-built, wooden steamer CARDINAL (i)(C.92681), (a) MAYFLOWER (05). Under usual circumstances, CARDINAL would have towed ALFRED in the company's service.

Early in 1906, the company took on a new name, becoming the Canada Starch Company Limited, with head office at Montreal, although this change did not affect its vessel operations. In 1909, the company acquired the 1873-built, wooden schooner-barge FLORA CARVETH (C.71167) and, in 1911, it purchased the 1898-built, wooden steamer RALPH T. HOLCOMB (C.116400), (a) ISAAC LINCOLN (05)(U.S.100653).

Of these various vessels, the ALFRED was abandoned in 1915; CARDINAL was cut down to a barge in 1913 and was dismantled in 1916; FLORA CARVETH was sold in 1917, and RALPH T. HOLCOMB was transferred to a separate affiliate of Canada Starch early in 1927 and, somewhat surprisingly, lasted until 1933 when she was abandoned at Cardinal. Her remains still lie buried there.

Well before the transfer of ownership of the HOLCOMB had been made official, the Canada Starch Company had contracted with Earle's Shipbuilding & Engineering Limited, of Hull, England, to build a steel-hulled, canal-sized steamer for the company, and she was constructed as the shipyard's Hull No. 670. The vessel was launched into the River Humber during the spring of 1927 and we think our readers would be interested to see what "Canadian Railway and Marine World" had to say about her in its issue of July, 1927.

"Canada Starch Co., Montreal. - The s.s. CASCO, built for this company under instructions from Walter Lambert, naval architect (of the firm of Lambert & German -Ed.), Montreal, for trading on the Great lakes and River St. Lawrence, was launched by Earle's Shipbuilding and Engineering Co. at Hull, England, (Tuesday) May 17. Her general dimensions are: - length b.p., 253 ft.; breadth, 43½ ft.; depth moulded, 20 ft. Her capacity is 138,500 cu. ft., equal to a deadweight of 2,450 tons. The holds are free from all obstructions and 7 hatches are arranged for rapid loading and unloading of cargo. She has two masts and four derricks for 3-ton lifts.

"Arrangements are made in the forecastle for the accommodation of the linesmen and officers, also a special suite for the owner, the captain's accommodation and small deck saloon being above; the pilot house is built on the flying bridge above this erection. A large deck house is fitted aft on the quarter deck enclosing the machinery casings and with accommodations for the