

firm, and from which the ship took her name.

Early in 1977, GUARDIAN CARRIER was sold Canadian. She sailed from Nelson, N.Z., on April 16, 1977, via Tahiti, registered under the flag of Singapore for the delivery trip. She made her second and last Panama Canal transit on the way to her new home on the Great Lakes. Upon her arrival, she was extensively refitted, most likely at Hamilton, Ontario. It was at this time that her mizzen mast and the lifeboats were removed. St. Lawrence Cement Company Ltd., the new owner, had the vessel registered (C.187688) at Toronto as (c) ROBERT KOCH. The ship was manned by a Canadian Maritime Union crew and began service carrying cement from Clarkson to Buffalo.

Under her new ownership, the KOCH had her hull painted grey while her cabins were a slightly lighter shade of grey. Her bridge rails and pilothouse face and sides remained varnished teak. The masts were buff, while the stack was black with a large white disc on which appeared the St. Lawrence Cement logo. This logo at first was very complicated and included the company's name in both English and French, and the image of a tall-stacked factory beside some water. The ship retained her heavy foremast for at least the first year she was on the lakes, but later it was removed and replaced by a very short and thin pipe mast stepped just abaft the pilothouse.

After her first year of lake service, ROBERT KOCH was laid up for the winter of 1977-1978 at Hamilton. It was at that port where she was to spend every winter of her lake career, at either Pier 10 or Pier 11, at the foot of Wellington Street, until her untimely demise.

The KOCH had a few unusual trips in 1979, as problems at the St. Lawrence Cement plant at Clarkson prevented her from loading there. On August 13th, she was at Picton, Ontario, loading for Buffalo, and her next trip took her briefly to Clarkson and then on to Picton, where she loaded. She took this cargo all the way to Thunder Bay, Ontario, passing upbound through the MacArthur Lock at the Soo on August 21, and arriving on the 22nd at the St. Lawrence Cement dock in the Kaministiquia River at Thunder Bay. As far as we are aware, this was the first and only trip to Lake Superior for the KOCH, as she returned to her Clarkson-Buffalo "trolley run" on her return to the lower lakes.

On September 9, 1979, the KOCH suffered an engine failure whilst entering Welland Canal Lock 3 upbound, and she landed heavily on the portside shoulder. Temporary repairs were done on the wall below Lock 4 and further repairs were completed at Port Colborne. More engine trouble was encountered on September 14, and the KOCH had trouble turning as she departed Buffalo. She must have hit something because, on her arrival at Port Colborne, a diver was sent down to inspect the lower hull. Apparently, no damage was found, and the ship continued on her way to "Koch Harbour".

The KOCH's 1980 season began on April 10, when fit-out was commenced, and she departed Pier 10, Wellington Street, Hamilton, on April 15. She proceeded to Port Weller, where she went on the drydock with the assistance of the tug JAMES E. McGRATH, her entry into the dock delayed as a result of a water leak in the main engine head. She was floated off the drydock on April 30, and then went to Clarkson to load for Buffalo.

It is noted from her logs that the KOCH frequently was involved in tandem lockages at the Welland, as she was so small that she could fit easily in with other less-than-maximum size vessels, and at Lock 8 she could fit in even with a 730-footer. She made so many such tandem passages that we could not even begin to name all of those other vessels with which she locked, and which were mentioned in her log books.

Cement operations on Lake Ontario in the late 1970s were carried out by ENGLISH RIVER, which loaded at the Canada Cement dock at Bath, Ontario, usually discharging her cargo at the same company's dock at the Polson Street slip in Toronto - a trade which she continues to this day for Lafarge. All of the