

CHARLES R. HUNTLEY

Recent word of the scrapping of the sandsucker BV RAYNA at Matane, Quebec, has brought to mind the fact that, although much altered over the last forty years, she was one of the last surviving original steam canallers. We would be remiss indeed if we did not record her passing in a significant manner. Canallers like the HUNTLEY were so common when Ye Ed. was just a little tyke around Toronto Harbour and the Welland Canal, and her scrapping, reminder as it is of the passage of time, comes to us like a blow to the gut. Another connection to the "Glory Years" is gone.

This canaller started her career in the fleet of the Eastern Steamship Company Limited of Port Colborne and St. Catharines, Ontario. This company had been incorporated on December 5, 1922 (some sources reported that it was "formed" on December 22) by various Buffalo and area grain and investment interests who were headed in the enterprise by Nisbet Grammer and Judge Louis Bret Hart. Grammer was president of the Eastern Grain, Milling and Elevator Company, of Buffalo, but it was reported that the Armour Grain Company, Buffalo, also was interested in the new shipping venture. Hart was a fixture in the Surrogate Court of Erie County, New York, from 1899 until his death in 1939.

In the company's charter, it was stated that John J. Rammacher was president, George J. Grammer was secretary, and Norman B. MacPherson was treasurer, with Fred Wood, of Port Colborne, as Canadian manager. If so, the list of directors did not remain the same for long. According to Canadian press reports, the "original" officers of the company were Nisbet Grammer, president; John J. Rammacher, vice-president and treasurer; Edwin T. Douglass, vice-president, and Norman B. MacPherson, secretary. H. H. Goode of the Canadian Furnace Company, Port Colborne, was the Canadian representative of the firm.

The Eastern Steamship Company was formed to take grain from the elevators at Buffalo and Port Colborne and move it down through the small locks of the old Welland and St. Lawrence canals. The company's owners, however, were not experienced in the running of steamships and, accordingly, the fleet was managed for them by Boland and Cornelius, of Buffalo, which also managed the operation of some U.S.-flag upper lake steamers which also were owned by Grammer and his associates. The Eastern Steamship Company Limited was to own 21 canallers during its relatively short period of operation. The ships spent most of their time taking down to St. Lawrence River ports the grain that had been brought to Buffalo and Port Colborne by upper lake carriers, but they carried significant amounts of coal as well. They frequently returned up the lakes with cargoes of pulpwood.

The first ships owned by the new company comprised a group of ten steam-powered canallers which were ordered from various United Kingdom shipyards on December 22, 1922. The contract price for each vessel was \$330,000 and all of the construction took place under the supervision of A. B. Mackay. This gentleman was an entrepreneur who for many years had been involved in the shipping business at Hamilton, Ontario, but at the time of his involvement with the Eastern Steamship boats, he was a resident of Great Britain. Mackay reportedly dealt on behalf of Eastern with Messrs. H. E. Moss and Company, of Liverpool, who were represented by one Mr. A. G. Jones, and the contracts were let to five British yards, each of which was to construct two steamers. These vessels, named FRANK B. BAIRD, NORMAN P. CLEMENT, WILLIAM H. DANIELS, EDWIN T. DOUGLASS, ALBERT C. FIELD, NISBET GRAMMER, JUDGE HART, WATKINS F. NISBET, ROBERT W. POMEROY and JOHN J. RAMMACHER, all were built during 1923, and proved to be very successful in their designated lake and river trades.

So successful were they that, in 1924, Eastern placed the first orders for what eventually would be eleven more canal steamers to be built in two United Kingdom yards. The October 1924 issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine