

"The Menominee fleet of five steamers is now under charter to the Canada Atlantic Transportation (sic) Co., operating between Chicago and Parry Sound, Ont., but the charter expires with the close of the present season of navigation, after which the vessels will, of course, be turned to the Escanaba ore trade. The Canada Atlantic company had about concluded negotiations a short time ago for the purchase of these five vessels, but the deal fell through on account of a misunderstanding regarding insurance. The Canada company will now be required to look elsewhere for steamers for its service. Both of the mining companies involved in the sale (Chapin and Winthrop) are Michigan corporations."

It would appear that, despite the transfer of ownership to National Steel, both the Menominee Transit and Mutual Transportation fleets continued operation as before and under their original names. However, in 1901, Judge Elbert H. Gary and J. Pierpont Morgan orchestrated a number of acquisitions that resulted in the formation of the United States Steel Corporation and its lake shipping subsidiary, the Pittsburgh Steamship Company. The five vessels of the Menominee Transit Company and the four of the Mutual Transportation Company (the three already mentioned plus the 1896-built CORALIA) were formally acquired by the Pittsburgh Steamship Company on May 23, 1901, although very likely they had operated for the "Steel Trust" from the beginning of the 1901 season.

The ships soon were repainted in the new company's colours, with dark green hulls, straw yellow cabins and all-silver smokestacks. Although black-and-white photos did not do them justice, contemporary reports indicated that the ships looked spectacular in these colours - at least until the green hulls became streaked with red ore dust and coal soot stained the stacks. Crews were constantly having to wash down the ships to keep them clean. Accordingly, a more suitable livery was sought by management. Starting in 1905, the hulls of the company's ships began to be repainted an ore red, while the cabins became white with dark green trim. A broad black "smokeband" was added to the top of each funnel.

In her first year of Pittsburgh ownership, BRITON's penchant for getting into trouble continued. Press reports datelined Two Harbors, Minnesota, September 22, indicated that BRITON had arrived that day with stern damage below the waterline. Considerable ore was loaded into her forward end to raise the damage above water, but examination showed that it would be necessary to take her to Duluth to be docked for repairs.

The 1906 navigation season was not a good one for the former Menominee Transit boats. Originally six and then five, their numbers were reduced to just four in June, for on June 7, GRECIAN grounded on a rocky shore near DeTour, Michigan. Although she had sustained serious bottom damage, she was refloated and some temporary repairs were effected. Bound for drydock at Detroit where she was to be repaired, she departed DeTour in tow of her Pittsburgh Steamship fleetmate SIR HENRY BESSEMER, but during the tow down Lake Huron, heavy weather was encountered. On June 15, GRECIAN foundered in deep water in the vicinity of Thunder Bay Island. Her entire crew was rescued by the BESSEMER, but GRECIAN never was recovered.

BRITON herself had a major accident in 1906. Upbound light in the St. Clair River on the morning of May 22, she suffered a malfunction of her steering gear and ran up on a sandbar at the foot of Fawn Island. She ran so far up on the bar that she was in only two feet of water midships, and her propeller shaft was three feet out of the water! The "Cleveland Plain Dealer" on May 26 ran an item datelined Marine City, May 25, which indicated that at 7:40 that morning, BRITON was pulled off the sandbar after considerable dredging had been done. The steamer seemed not to have been damaged, and it was fortunate indeed that she had grounded on a soft bottom.

An item from Cleveland, dated October 4, 1908, reported that BRITON was ashore at Limekiln Crossing in the Detroit River. Subsequent reports in the "Buffalo Morning Express" said that the accident happened on Sunday night, October 4, at Bar Point, as BRITON was bound up for Milwaukee with coal. The Great Lakes Towing Company's wrecking steamer FAVORITE, tug ABNER C. HARDING (later ARKANSAS and H. J. DIXON) and lighter RESCUE worked on the wreck and BRITON was refloated on the morning of October 6. As she was leaking, she proceeded on her way but was unable to take back aboard the cargo that had been lightered out of her.

The "Cleveland Plain Dealer" of August 11, 1910, noted that on the previous day, when the barge DAVID MORAN was leaving the Cuyahoga River, she collided near the Lake Shore railroad bridge with BRITON, as the latter was arriving with a cargo of iron ore. BRITON was not damaged but the wooden MORAN afterwards hit a nearby wharf. Nobody was injured in the incident. Later that same year, BRITON went on drydock at Cleveland for propeller repairs, on September 14.