

All of the 22 crew survived the stranding, having been rescued on December 9 by the wooden Hall steamer HECLA, but the SHARPLES wreck was abandoned to the underwriters and lay on the shoals long enough that any possibility of salvage might well have been dismissed.

However, the April 1915 issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World" reported that "the s.s. JOHN SHARPLES, wrecked on Lake Ontario about three years ago (sic) has been salvaged by Reid and sold to the Atlantic coast". No, re the Atlantic coast, but Yes re the involvement of the renowned Reid Wrecking Company of Sarnia and Port Huron. The wreck had been acquired for \$8,500 by Capt. Tom Reid, the famous salvor, who apparently was backed in the venture by Harris W. Baker, of Detroit. Reid crews eventually were able to get the SHARPLES off the shoal and she was taken to the yard of the Buffalo Dry Dock Company, where repairs were put in hand. The work involved was substantial, about which we shall say more shortly.

In 1916, the SHARPLES was acquired from Reid and Baker by the Charcoal Iron Company of America, which had been formed in a 1915 reorganization of the Lake Superior Iron & Chemical Company, which owned the Yale mine on the Gogebic Range. The company manufactured pig iron at plants located at Ashland, Wisconsin, and at Manistique, Newberry and Boyne City, Michigan. Most of its product was shipped by vessel to Buffalo, where it was unloaded at the Lehigh Valley docks for eastern distribution. The SHARPLES, renamed (b) CICOA for the new owner (CICOA being an acronym of the company's name), was one of only two steamers the company owned. In 1918, it also acquired the 1891-built GRIFFIN (37), (b) JOSEPH S. SCOBELL, which in 1923 was fitted with special deck cranes and lifting magnets for handling pig iron.

We have only one photo of CICOA. It shows her wearing somewhat unusual colours, which we can only attempt to describe because we have never seen a contemporary report of them. She had a white forecastle and cabins, but her hull definitely was not black. Considering that she carried pig iron, the hull may well have been red. The foremast was buff while the main was black. The stack was a dark colour, again possibly red, with a lighter band (perhaps grey or dark yellow) at the top. Just below the "smokeband" was a logo which appears to have featured a large letter 'C', inside of which was a slightly smaller 'C', and inside of that, a smaller shape that may have been a stylized 'I' although it cannot be well seen because of the angle of the photo. The letters comprising the logo appear to have been the same colour as the band above them.

CICOA's career for the Charcoal Iron Company was short. It has been said that, in 1917, with the entry of the United States into World War One, CICOA was acquired by the U.S. Shipping Board, that her three deck cranes were removed in order to make her more suitable for salt water service, and that she then was sent eastward. However, if that was the case, then why does our Young photo of CICOA at the Soo in 1917 show her with no cranes? In fact, there is ample reason to believe that CICOA was not acquired by the Shipping Board until 1918 (when Charcoal Iron bought GRIFFIN as a replacement), too late for her to be sent east before the end of the war. This leads us to question whether CICOA actually went to the coast, and we opt for the suggestion that she never left the lakes at all at that time.

We also think that the suggestion that the three deck cranes were removed by the Shipping Board lacks any credibility. Not only do we have the Young photo to prove that she carried no cranes as CICOA in 1917, but why would the Shipping Board remove equipment that might prove useful when contemplating coastal service? As well, the fact remains that when she was lying wrecked and exposed to the elements on Galloo Island, the cranes likely would have suffered severe damage. We'll bet that the cranes either were lost when the ship was lying stranded, or that Reid and Baker had them removed when the ship was repaired at Buffalo.

In addition, certain other changes seem to have been made before the steamer started running for Charcoal Iron, likely all done at Buffalo. The CICOA photo shows the steamer with a much fatter smokestack than she had as the SHARPLES, and there is only one whistle on the face of her funnel instead of the original three chimed whistle chambers. And a check of subsequent shipping registers shows that she had been refitted with two coal-fired Scotch boilers that had been manufactured by the American Ship Building Company, Lorain, in 1910. They measured 11'0" x 11'0", had two furnaces each, and had a total of 66 square feet of grate surface and 2,500 square feet of heating surface. Steam was produced at 180 p.s.i. which was quite a reduction from the pressure which the earlier watertube boilers had produced.

Some sources have indicated that CICOA was acquired in 1919 from the Shipping Board by the