When the keel for Hull No. 387 was laid on Tuesday, May 10, 1910 at American Ship Building’s (AMSHIP) Lorain, Ohio yard, few knew how unique and eventful a career this carrier would experience. This vessel survived multiple events, any one of which would have sent other steamboats to their demise by abandonment or the scrapper's torch. The WILLIAM C. MORELAND continued her livelihood for nearly 60 years, until meeting her end at a Spanish scrapyard under her fifth and final name, PARKDALE.

The early 1900s were marked by peaks and valleys in the U.S. economy, however the period was certainly driven by an ever-increasing demand for steel. Steel-producing corporations, such as United States Steel and others, evolved to meet that demand.

The Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation (J. & L.), a major steel producer founded in the 1850s, entered the ship-owning business in 1906 when its fleet arm, Interstate Steamship Company, had the Great Lakes Engineering Works (GLEW) at Ecorse, Michigan, build two 552-foot steamers, the B.F. JONES (1) and the JAMES LAUGHLIN, named after J. & L.’s founders, to carry its raw materials. The fleet colors were green hulls and white cabins with the letters J. & L. in a white diamond on a black stack. This growing Interstate fleet was managed at the onset by W. H. Becker, a prominent fleet manager and owner from Cleveland, Ohio. Due to demand for raw materials, J. & L. decided to expand its Interstate fleet in 1910 when it ordered two new, virtually identical steel steamers, the WILLIAM C. MORELAND from AMSHIP and the WILLIS L. KING from GLEW. Both were to be an identical 600 feet in length overall, with a deadweight capacity of about 12,000 tons. Again, they were to be managed by Becker.

The MORELAND (Hull # 387) was completed first and was side-launched into the Black River at noon on Wednesday, July 27, 1910.
at AMSHIP’s Lorain yard. It was reported that this was the last launching at this yard for the remainder of the year. With much fanfare and many ceremonial flags flying, Miss Esther Moreland of Pittsburgh christened the new J. & L. boat. She was the niece of the vessel’s namesake, a prominent Pittsburgh city attorney who was a vice-president and secretary of Jones and Laughlin.

The WILLIAM C. MORELAND was first temporarily enrolled at Cleveland on August 23, 1910 and assigned a U.S. official number US.207851 for delivery to her new owner, J. & L.’s Interstate Steamship Company. At a cost of nearly $450,000, she fit out at 600 feet in overall length (580 feet between perpendiculars) with a beam of 58 feet and a molded depth of 32 feet and measured at 7,514 gross registered tons and 5,803 net registered tons. The MORELAND was powered by a 2,000 ihp triple-expansion steam engine and two coal-fired Scotch marine boilers. She was of arch construction with three cargo holds and had 36 hatches placed on 12-foot centers.

WILLIAM C. MORELAND completed her sea trials and was delivered to Interstate, departing on her maiden voyage on Thursday, September 1 bound for Superior, Wisconsin, light for a load of iron ore. She received her permanent enrollment on September 6 from Duluth, Minn., under her same official number, US.207851. The MORELAND’s typical cargoes were hauling iron ore downbound from the upper lakes to Ashtabula and coal upbound to Duluth or Superior. Her trips were under the command of Captain Claude M. Ennes with H. J. Reynolds as her chief engineer. Captain Ennes was an experienced captain who had been master on the fleet’s B. F. JONES (1). The MORELAND was the largest vessel in the fleet at this time, but that would be short-lived.

After four rather routine trips with her usual cargoes, coal upbound and iron ore downbound, the MORELAND departed on her fifth cargo trip from Superior during the early hours Tuesday, October 18, 1910 with 10,700 tons of iron ore bound for Ashtabula. The weather on Lake Superior was relatively good with little wind or wave action, but visibility was hampered by smoke coming from numerous wildfires burning on the Keweenaw Peninsula in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Vast stretches of brush and heavily-forested lands were in flame on the peninsula due to drought-like conditions in the region, and the smoke shrouded the lake, causing serious visibility problems.

Approaching the Keweenaw nearly 17 hours after departure the mate, unsure of their position and after seeing an unidentified white light, summoned Captain Ennes to the bridge shortly before 9 p.m. Visibility had become nearly impossible when the MORELAND struck hard on Sawtooth Reef, a series of nearly parallel rocks or shoals less than a mile off shore at Eagle River in the northwest Keweenaw Peninsula (most commonly known as Eagle River Shoals). There was no navigation light here, though there had been a small lighthouse at Eagle River until 1908, when it was extinguished by Congress due to budgetary reasons. This had been the only navigation light between Ontonagon and Eagle Harbor, forcing mariners making their way along this rather

The MORELAND, broken in half on Sawtooth Reef in early November 1910, with the Reid tug MANISTIQUE. Inset shows the wreck, again attended by the MANISTIQUE, in spring 1911. Photos / Dowling collection
dangerous coast to run blind at night. Ten vessels were wrecked in this area during the time the light was extinguished, which prompted Congress to build a Life Saving Station at Eagle Harbor in 1912.

It is difficult to determine whether a lighthouse would have prevented this mishap due to the very poor visibility caused by the forest fires. In fact, the MORELAND, on a course that her crew assumed would clear the peninsula, had been traveling at full speed at night when she struck the outer ridge of the reef. Due to her heavy cargo and momentum she careened over the first outcrop of rock and on to the shoreside ridge, after which she came to an abrupt stop precariously perched on both ridges of the reef. Attempts by the crew to free the stricken vessel were unsuccessful. Realizing their proximity to shore after having briefly seen the unknown light, Captain Ennes decided to take the yawl ashore to make contact for help and report the grounding. Reaching shore by 11:30 p.m., the ship's master was able to notify the Portage Life Saving Station 22 miles to the south for help. The Portage Station crew immediately embarked on the trek north in their 34-foot power lifeboat, arriving on the scene three hours later. Early that same day, on October 19, Captain Ennes returned to the stranded ship with the lifesaving crew standing by. This was fortunate, as a full gale from the north-northeast began to blow by noon, necessitating the entire crew being removed and set ashore in two waves of 12 and 13 men. No fatalities were incurred.

Lake Superior pounded the stranded vessel the remainder of Wednesday, preventing any salvage or repair work. Seas began to moderate on the 20th, allowing the lifesaving crew to return Captain Ennes and four members of the MORELAND (Chief Reynolds, oiler, mate and steward) to the stricken hulk to assess the damage. They determined that the steamer had been driven further on the rocks by the storm. Her forepeak and cargo holds had flooded and there was a pronounced sag in the midsection of the vessel, though the machinery and boilers in the aft section were dry. At about 10 a.m., while Captain Ennes was returning to shore in the powered lifeboat to report the damage and with Chief Reynolds attempting to fire up the boilers and engine, a loud crack was heard. The MORELAND had buckled due to the strain the hull was under as she cracked across the spar deck and down both sides of the hull between hatch 10 and 11.

Realizing the crewmembers aboard the stranded vessel were in danger, the lifesavers returned to evacuate the four left onboard. Further cracking occurred near hatch 23 due to the enormous strain put on the hull by the flooded and loaded cargo holds and the unsupported midsection. The lifesaving crew remained for 36 straight hours before returning to their Portage Station when more vessels, including the first wave of salvors, began to arrive on the scene. The lifesaver's powered lifeboat was the first of its kind on the Keweenaw Peninsula and was put to good use on this occasion.

Captain Joseph Kidd from Duluth, representing the underwriters, and Captain Hill, J. & L.'s shoreside captain, representing the ship's owners, were placed in charge of the salvage operations. Salvors began to arrive from all over the lakes in a mad rush to lighten the stranded steamer to free her and save her hull. The tug JAMES WHALEN and lightering barge EMPIRE from Fort William (Thunder Bay), the tug J.D. MORRISON with lightering barge EMPIRE from Port Arthur (Thunder Bay), Great Lakes Towing's famous salvage tug FAVORITE (2) with eight huge pumps from Port Huron, and others were on scene as early as the 20th. Salvage crews did manage to lighten as much as 7,000 tons of ore, mainly by dumping the ore directly into the lake. But this work went slowly, as the salvagers were frequently forced to retreat to the shelter of the Portage Ship Canal due to the effects of very bad weather the wreck was exposed to on the open lake. This repair process repeated itself, as each time they would make progress pumping and patching, exposure to the elements would undo any repairs with each big blow. This continued until Nov. 2, when it was decided that it was a lost cause to save the ship and
The MORELAND was abandoned to the insurance underwriters as a constructive total loss. By this point it appeared that the stern, with her machinery, was the only valuable part of the ship that was still intact. The fact that she was new caused the insured value to be high and was the main reason so much effort was put into the salvage. The settlement with the owners allowed for her cargo value set at $50,000 and the vessel at $392,000 with salvage costs of nearly $45,000.

As an aside, the Duluth Herald carried an article early in the salvage attempt that stated “Capt. Joseph Kidd, the local representative of the underwriters, left last night for the scene of the accident. One of the interesting features of the accident is the reported fact that the MORELAND was to have been equipped with wireless when she reached the lower lakes. This fact was given out today by Capt. Claude Ennes, in the wireless message to this city (Duluth). Capt. Ennes stated that if the MORELAND had been equipped with wireless, she could have made her plight known many hours earlier and might have been saved, according to the statement of the captain. All last night a heavy sea poured over the big vessel, opening up her seams and filling her cargo hold. The strain on the big vessel became too great and the massive hull of steel broke in two. The spot where the MORELAND struck is almost the same spot where the steamer COLORADO was wrecked 14 years ago. This fact, and the fact that the vessel was to have been equipped with wireless on her next trip out, contribute dramatic details to the story of the wreck.”

Captain Kidd also reported in the Duluth paper that the MORELAND was one of the worst wrecks he had seen on the lakes. Lending some credence to Captain Ennes’ claim was the fact that the year before on Aug. 9, 1909, the whaleback steamer PATHFINDER and her steel barge tow SAGAMORE (ex-DAVID Z. NORTON) had grounded on Sawtooth Reef, but were freed quickly before any big storms blew up, minimizing the damage that both vessels received.

With the decision to pay off J. & L. and the salvagers, the underwriters were most interested in salvaging whatever they could of the wreck as compensation for the big settlement. By many accounts, it was one of the biggest payouts on record. The widely respected Reid Wrecking Company of Sarnia, owned by well-known salvagers Captain James R. Reid and his son Captain Thomas Reid, was contracted on a no-cure/no-pay basis to salvage as much of the stranded vessel as possible and deliver it to Superior. This contract meant that if the vessel was not recovered, then Reid received nothing in compensation. If he were successful, after salvage expenses, Reid would receive 65 percent of the sale of the vessel to new owners. On Nov. 20, he brought his wrecking tugs MANISTIQUE and SARNIA CITY to the scene and restarted the lightering and pumping process. But the story remained the same, with weather forcing operations to repeatedly shut down and sometimes even reversing any progress Reid’s crew did make. This process became so frustrating that the senior Reid suffered a crippling stroke in December, forcing him from the job. The younger Reid picked up the banner and attempted to achieve as much progress as possible into January, which was minimal. Finally giving in to the elements, they were forced to halt operations because it was impossible to operate under such severe winter conditions. The Reid fleet retreated to the Portage Ship Canal and laid up for the remainder of winter.
Vessels collide in Duluth harbor
Nov. 2, 1911 Detroit Free Press – Duluth, Minn.: The steamer MICHIGAN, upbound with a cargo of coal, ran into the steamer L. C. HANNA, downbound with ore, in the inner harbor today. The HANNA had a big hole stove in her bow and was forced to anchor in the basin. The damage is above the water line. The MICHIGAN came out of the collision practically undamaged. No explanation of the accident has been made.

Fire claims steamer City of Kalamazoo
Nov. 12, 1911 Detroit Free Press, Manistee, Mich.: The steamer CITY OF KALAMAZOO, of the Chicago & South Haven Steamship Company’s line, is burning at her winter moorings here tonight and will probably be a total loss. Her stern is already burned to the water’s edge and the cabin is gone. The vessel is reported to have been struck by lightning, as a heavy electrical storm was raging at the time the fire started.

Captain Furtaw had a narrow escape
Nov. 14, 1911 – Duluth Herald: Capt. Fred Furtaw, master of the steamer PENDENNIS WHITE, which arrived in port yesterday 15 hours overdue and covered with ice, had a miraculous escape from death Sunday morning when the fierce November gale was at its worst. … The waves pounded incessantly over the forward part of the boat and one swell wrecked the cabin, smashing the windows and letting the water enter. Capt. Furtaw on learning that the water had run into the cabin, attempted to go below from the pilothouse. He descended a flight of ice-covered steps at the bottom of which he caught on to a lifeline just in time to save himself from being swept overboard. … In the cabin, ice formed a foot thick and the furnishings were ruined. Practically every window was smashed and considerable damage was done otherwise in the forward portion of the steamer.

Broken pipe puts D.G. KERR in peril
Nov. 15, 1911 – Duluth Herald: Ice so thickly coated the whistle and whistle cord on the steamer D.G. KERR, upbound in Sunday’s gale, that the whistle pipe broke off below the valve, allowing steam to escape so fast that the engines were in danger of stopping and putting the lives of the captain and crew in peril. According to the story told by Capt. E. D. Ballentine, the steam pressure fell so low before the steam could be fixed that the machinery almost stopped. Despite the leakage, by hard work the engines were kept going and the KERR pushed steadily forward through the storm. Had the machinery quit work at the time, Capt. Ballentine believes the KERR would have undoubtedly foundered. It is estimated that the KERR when she arrived in Duluth was carrying 1,500 tons of ice.

November gale hampers Soo Locks
Nov. 18, 1911 – Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. (Special to The Duluth Herald): After a three days’ blow of changing winds accompanied by heavy snow storms causing all boats on Lake Superior to seek shelter, the weather began to moderate at midnight when…
preparations were made by the craft lying at this port to get under way again. ... The Steel Corporation steamer REED came down this morning and reported that a big fleet was anchored in Whitefish Bay but so far as known there had been no disaster resulting from the storm, although all boats are from two to four days overdue. The canal force had much trouble yesterday in locking boats, the wind being so strong that it was with the greatest difficulty that lines could be handled on the iced walls. Three men were required to operate the lines instead of one, as is usually the case. It was the worst November day ever experienced on the canal.

Pittsburgh fleet laid up early
Nov. 18, 1911 – Duluth Herald: The Pittsburgh Steamship company has decided to cease navigating Lake Superior for the rest of the year – although it is rather early to lay up the boats – on account of the uncommon severity of the weather. Thirteen of the company’s 105 boats have been at the Duluth ore docks for some time, the intention being to load them with ore and send them on another trip before retiring them for the winter, but that idea has been given up. They will be put into winter quarters at once at the Duluth, Missabe & Northern Coal docks.

THE LOG
A DIGEST OF RECENT GREAT LAKES MARINE NEWS

The 138-berth, 2,354-ton passenger ship YORKTOWN will be operated on the Great Lakes in 2012 by Travel Dynamics International of New York. Completed by First Coast Shipbuilding in Coral Springs, Florida, in 1988 as YORKTOWN CLIPPER, the ship has a 257-foot length and 43-foot beam.

HURON EXPLORER 1, a $2.5-million, Ontario Natural Resources ministry research vessel for Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and the North Channel, was formally put into service at Owen Sound, Ont., in mid-August. She and ONTARIO EXPLORER, a sistership for Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, replace fishing tugs more than 50 years old that have been used to monitor the fishery.

A tornado swept ashore at Goderich, Ontario, on Aug. 21, badly damaging the downtown area and loading facilities at Sifto Salt, and killing one salt company employee. CANADIAN NAVIGATOR was loading there at the time, but was undamaged. Repairs were begun immediately, and vessel loading resumed Sept. 7, with a portable conveyor system putting a cargo of salt aboard ALGOMARINE.

Rand Logistics, Inc. announced in mid-September that it has commenced a public underwritten offering of 2,975,000 shares of common stock. The money will allow for the acquisition of two, as-yet-unidentified dry bulk carriers, one of which is a self-unloader.

After a four-year absence, the German luxury liner C. COLUMBUS returned to the Great Lakes for two cruises in September. She was scheduled to make stops in Duluth on both legs of the Toronto-Chicago route. These are her last visits to the lakes, as she will soon be under new ownership.

The tall ship HIGHLANDER SEAS left Port Huron for the last time on Sept. 11, headed for Gloucester, Massachusetts. The 154-foot gaff-rigged topsail schooner was built in Essex, Massachusetts, in 1924 and acquired by Acheson Ventures in 2002. The vessel last sailed in 2009, and may be used as a charter ship on the East Coast or put up for sale.

A proposal to expand the St. Lawrence Seaway to make way for more cargo ships is likely dead in the water after authorities in Canada and the United States voiced environmental concerns about the project, according to a U.S. military document. A media...
The report published in August suggested the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has officially quashed discussions of expanding the Seaway. The Army Corps report identifies the navigation system as a key economic driver, but says it’s subject to environmental concerns including shoreline erosion and the growing number of invasive species brought over on foreign ships. The system may be better served by maintaining the status quo, the report suggests.

Canada Steamship Lines announced Sept. 7 it is exercising its option for the building of two more new self-unloading vessels, bringing to four the number of ships on order in its major fleet renewal program. The Montreal-based carrier has two self-unloading vessels already under construction at Chengxi Shipyard in Jiangyin, China, scheduled for delivery in the fall of 2012. The new vessels will enter service in the spring of 2013. CSL has also indicated that it has options for four additional vessels for delivery during the 2013 shipping season. The 35,500-DWT self-unloaders will measure a Seaway maximum 225.6 by 23.8 metres, feature custom hull design for increased cargo lift, EPA Tier II compliant main engines, automated cargo-handling equipment and the latest environmental and safety systems.

The upbound tanker SARAH DESGAGNES was overtaking the upbound tug EVERLAST and barge NORMAN McLEOD when they came into contact the afternoon of Aug. 30 between Williamstown and Cornwall, Ontario. The vessels reported their incident and inspections followed.

In a tradition that started in 1955, a Marine Man of the Year was honored on Sept. 16 at the Great Lakes Mariner Hall of Fame Dinner in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Mark J. Rohn, President of the Grand River Navigation Company, is this year’s Marine Man of the Year.

The starboard bow of CASON J. CALLAWAY hit the stern of the docked INDIANA HARBOR Sept. 17 while the former was departing Superior, Wisconsin. No reason was given for the incident. CALLAWAY underwent repairs at Bay Shipbuilding Co. in Sturgeon Bay, while repairs to INDIANA HARBOR were carried out at Superior.

CANADIAN MINER, en route to Aliaga, Turkey, for scrap, broke free from the tug HELLAS Sept. 20 and fetched up on rocky Scatarie Island off the coast of Cape Breton. Initial efforts to free her failed, and by Sept. 29, reports indicated her hull had been breached in several places. Photographs showed a gaping hole in her starboard side forward of the engine compartment, with at least one hatch cover missing. As local fishermen worried about damage to sensitive lobster fishing grounds, HELLAS was seized by the Canadian government.

Caribbean Tugz, LLC, an affiliate of SEACOR Holdings, Inc., Fort Lauderdale, Florida, has awarded Great Lakes Shipyard in Cleveland vessel construction contracts to simultaneously build two new state-of-the-art 50-ton bollard pull ASD tugboats to be used for ship docking and escort operations at the Hovensa Oil Refinery in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. The contracts total price of the new tugs is $23 million. Design and construction are to start immediately, and the tugs are scheduled for completion in early 2013.

After almost 45 years resting in the mud of Lake Kalamazoo, in west Michigan, the cruise ship KEEWATIN could be headed for a new home as early as spring 2012. KEEWATIN owner R.J. Peterson announced Sept. 26 the 350-foot vessel – now a museum in Douglas, Michigan – will be placed into a trust called the R.J. and Diane Peterson Great Lakes and S.S. Keewatin Foundation. That trust, funded through donations from Canadian interests, would pay the estimated $1 million to dredge the lake, prepare the ship and have the vessel towed to Port McNicoll, Ontario.
ON THE BOOKSHELF

“Lost Legends of the Lakes,” Robert McGreevy, 2011: This beautiful, coffee table-style book is subtitled “A Unique Study of the Maritime Heritage of the Great Lakes From an Artist’s Viewpoint,” and that sums things up nicely. McGreevy offers a book that juxtaposes his superb renditions with the stories of the vessel or situation depicted. A diver as well as an artist, a number of his works offer a unique underwater perspective of shipwrecks. With his well-trained eye for detail, McGreevy brings Great Lakes maritime history alive in this volume that touches on the ages of sail, steam, modern shipwreck disasters and the Great Storm of 1913. 128 pages, hardcover, illustrated; $42.50, available at www.mcgreevy.com.

“The Kinsman Lines,” Dick Wicklund and Skip Gillham, 2011: Profusely-illustrated volume traces the history of the Steinbrenner family’s Kinsman fleet from its founding in 1901 to its demise at the end of 2002. The book looks at each vessel, not only during its tenure with Kinsman, but also before and after it became affiliated with the company, in the process touching on the stories of many historic lakers and fleets. 200 pages, softcover; $30 (add $5 postage); Available from Skip Gillham, 3750 King St., Vineland, ON, L0R 2C0.

OUR NEW LOOK

Members may have noticed changes in the way The Historian is being presented and mailed. The new design is an attempt to make our publication more pleasing to the eye and also to take advantage of bulk mailing rates. This has allowed us to not only add two pages, but to also save money on postage and production expenses, which is important as we continue to look for ways to hold dues at our current level. We hope you enjoy the new look.

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