FREIGHTERS

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Edition #49 – January-February 2020
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American Steamship Sold to Rand Logistics

- Shepler's new ferry William Richard nears completion
- Burns Harbor ends 2019 season
- USACE awards contract for Phase 1 of new Soo Lock construction
- Work continues to clear obstacles for Port of Monroe

Assorted News

Various happenings from around the Lakes

Burns Harbor ends 2019 shipping season

January 16, 2020

The 1,000'-long *Burns Harbor* was the final vessel to pass through the Soo Locks for the 2019 season on January 15, 2020. She passed through at 6:44 AM under command of Captain Terry Heyns. She was headed upbound for Superior, Wisconsin where she would lay up at the Elevator M dock for the winter.

The *Burns Harbor* was built in 1980 for the Bethlehem Steel Company. She was purchased by American Steamship Company in 2005. She was involved in the sale of American Steamship to Rand Logistics this past month. ◘

The M/V *Burns Harbor* Photo by Isaac Pennock

Nevada contractor awarded $53M contract for phase 1 Soo Lock construction

January 31, 2020

The Contract for the first phase of construction on the new Soo Lock was awarded to Trade West Construction of Mesquite, Nevada. The $53 Million contract is for dredging the upstream approach channel to the new lock to a depth of 30 feet. Phase 1 should take approximately two years to complete.

"This is an exciting time for the Corps and the Great Lakes. We look forward to working with the contractors and meeting all the milestones in this first phase of the project, which is critical to the success of the entire project," said Lt. Col. Greg Turner, the District Engineer for the Detroit District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The entire project will be done in three phases, those being the upstream approach dredging, the upstream approach wall construction, and the lock chamber and downstream approach ➲ Construction. The estimated total cost of the project is $1 billion dollars, and as long as funding is approved on time, it should take about seven years to complete. The new lock will be a twin of the Poe Lock at 1,200 feet long and 110 feet wide and will be constructed in the place of the retired Davis and Sabin Locks. ◘

Work continues to clear obstacles for Port of Monroe

February 1, 2020

U.S. Representative Tim Walberg spoke with President Trump about Port of Monroe's ongoing battle with U.S. Customs (CBP) while onboard Air Force One on a flight to Detroit.

The CBP Detroit Office puts restrictions in place for foreign trade at Michigan's seaports. The restrictions currently in place severely limit Port of Monroe's international trade.

"It's not fair, the (Monroe Port) is being given challenges that others aren't," said Rep. Tim Walberg. Other ports on Lake Erie, which are regulated by the Chicago CBP office, have much more lax restrictions than in ➲ Michigan. CBP Detroit's restrictions are inconsistent with other CBP agencies across the board. Other ports across the nation are not being held to these high restrictions.

CBP Detroit requires shipping containers to be scanned and x-rayed before being opened up after entering the state, a requirement that none of Michigan's ports can meet. A University of Michigan study noted that these restrictions cost millions in potential money brought in, as well as hundreds of jobs lost.

Just last year, Ford Motor Co. wanted to ship a load of new Mustangs out of the Port of Monroe bound for Germany. CBP shut the operation down because Monroe could not meet the requirement for the x-ray scanning of the containers.

President Trump indicated that his administration would further discuss the issue at a later date. Representative Walberg set up a meeting for Paul C. LaMarre III, the Director for Port of Monroe, and Peter Navarro, the Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, at the White House in late February. ◘

New agricultural product export facility coming to Milwaukee

February 13, 2020

Port of Milwaukee announced plans to build a $31M agricultural product export facility on Jones Island. Port of Milwaukee is working with the DeLong Company to construct and operate the new terminal that will handle dried distillers grain and other products for international markets.

The project is partially funded by a $15.9M U.S. Maritime Administration Grant.

"This investment adds a new dimension to Port Milwaukee's role as a connector of Wisconsin's businesses and farmers to world markets," said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett at a formal announcement.

Construction will begin in August 2021 with a completion goal of June 2023. It will be the first intermodal bulk export agricultural transload facility on the Great Lakes. ◘

Port of Toledo awarded $16M grant

February 14, 2020

The Port of Toledo was recently awarded a $16 Million Federal Grand by the United States Maritime Administration. The money from the grant will be used as part of a $75 Million Investment plan by the Port of Toledo to repair and replace current infrastructure.

"The Last time our nation's ports saw major investment was during the war years," explained Mark Buzby of the U.S. Maritime Administration. Most of the infrastructure at the port is nearly 70 years old. The Port of Toledo plans to rebuild the dock wall at the General Cargo Terminal, which was originally constructed in the 1950's.

"We're going to do it correctly, and we're going to work with our partners to make sure it comes to fruition in the right way," said Thomas Winston, the CEO of the Toledo-Lucas County Port Authority. ➲

➲The port also plans to construct a new liquid cargo transloading facility to help become more competitive in cross-Atlantic markets. The Port Authority is currently working on a $4 Million local match to help support the projects as part of their 10-year plan. ◘

Point Betsie Lighthouse threatened by high water levels

February 17, 2020

High water levels and fall storms have damaged the seawall that protects the Point Betsie Lighthouse near Frankfort, Michigan. A crack in the concrete seawall was noticed recently, and has been monitored frequently. It has reportedly been getting wider after each winter storm.

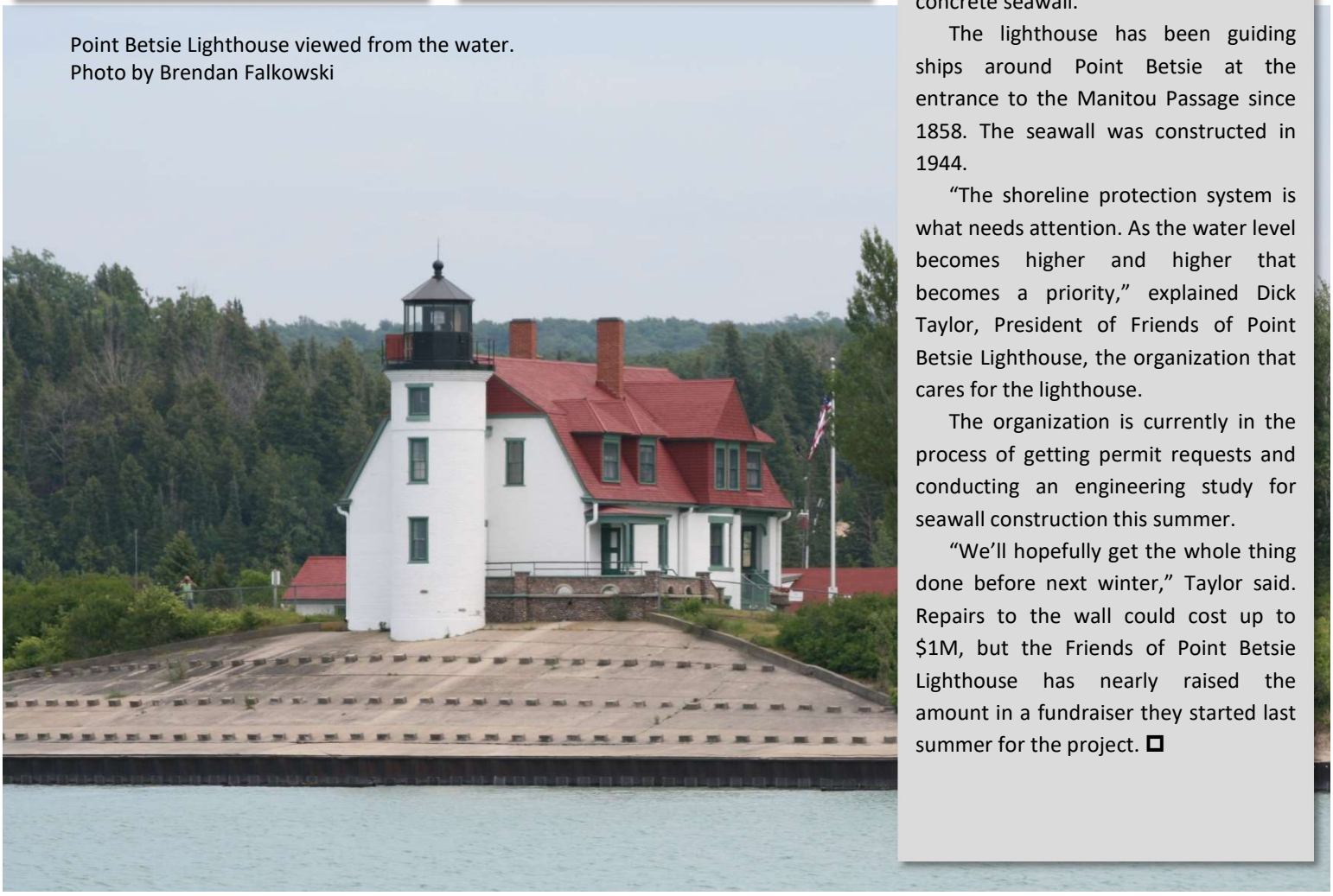
Cracks in the concrete can let water underneath, allowing it to undermine the base material and destabilize the concrete seawall.

The lighthouse has been guiding ships around Point Betsie at the entrance to the Manitou Passage since 1858. The seawall was constructed in 1944.

"The shoreline protection system is what needs attention. As the water level becomes higher and higher that becomes a priority," explained Dick Taylor, President of Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse, the organization that cares for the lighthouse.

The organization is currently in the process of getting permit requests and conducting an engineering study for seawall construction this summer.

"We'll hopefully get the whole thing done before next winter," Taylor said. Repairs to the wall could cost up to $1M, but the Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse has nearly raised the amount in a fundraiser they started last summer for the project. ◘

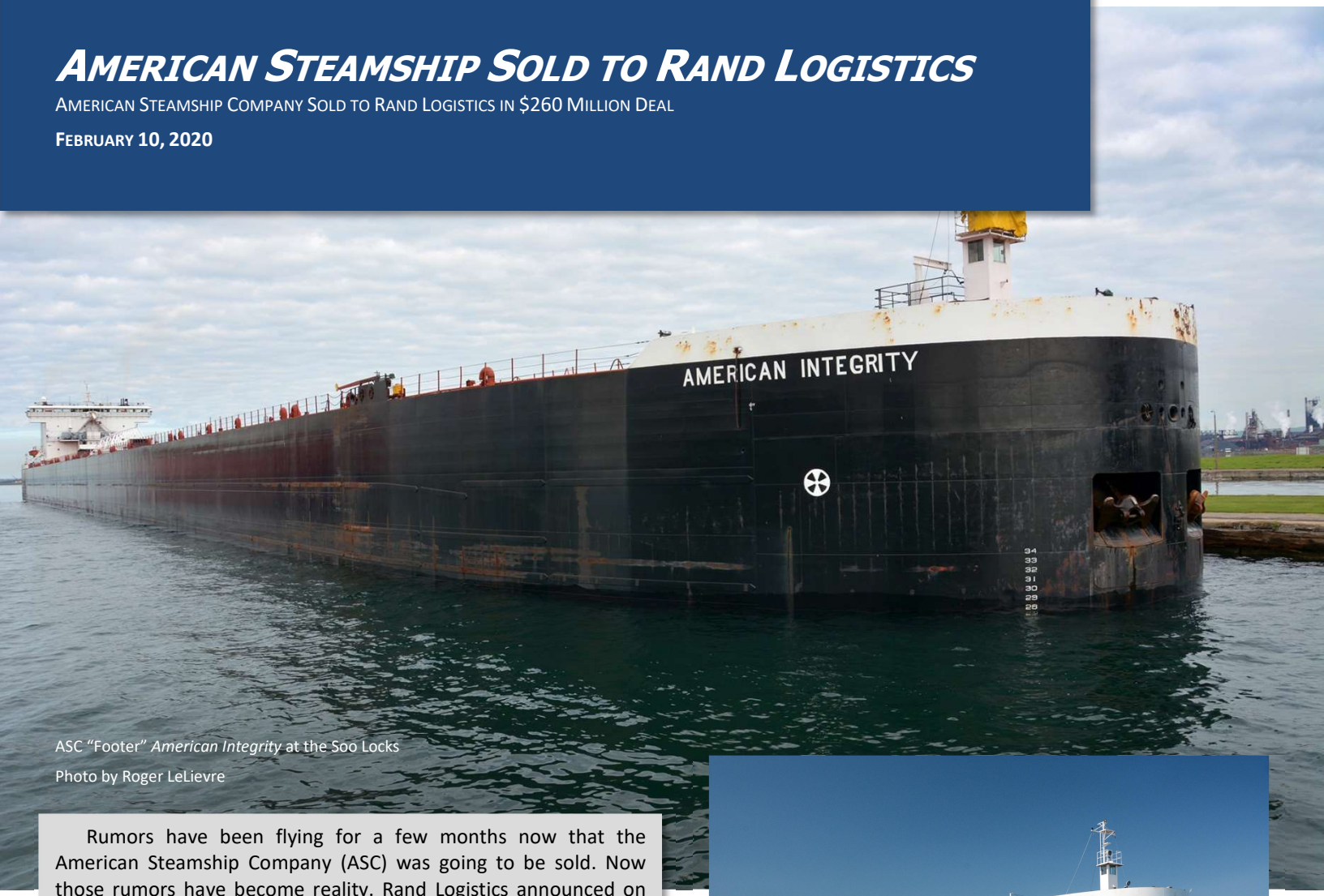


Point Betsie Lighthouse viewed from the water.
Photo by Brendan Falkowski

American Steamship Sold to Rand Logistics

American Steamship Company Sold to Rand Logistics in $260 Million Deal

February 10, 2020



ASC "Footer" *American Integrity* at the Soo Locks

Photo by Roger LeLievre

Rumors have been flying for a few months now that the American Steamship Company (ASC) was going to be sold. Now those rumors have become reality. Rand Logistics announced on February 12 that they had entered into a stock purchase agreement to acquire ASC from GATX for $260 million. The combination of the Rand and ASC fleets will create the largest and most diverse fleet on the Great Lakes. Rand Logistics is an affiliate of American Industrial Partners.

"We are excited about this transformative combination of two leading vessel operators on the Great Lakes. This strategic union will create significant additional shipping capacity through network efficiencies and repositioning of the respective fleets. All of which will allow the resulting company to further improve its customer service and offer additional flexibility and shipping capacity to its customer base," said Peter Coxon, CEO of Rand Logistics.

"ASC's asset quality and track record of reliability, safety and service in moving raw materials for its customers is world class and we look forward to integrating these two great companies into a new and larger platform for growth under our ownership." stated Jason Perri, partner of American Industrial Partners and Rand board member.

The ASC fleet transports over 27 million tons annually, and was the largest U.S. flag fleet on the Great Lakes. The ASC ships range from 634' in length to 1,000' long. Following the merger, Rand will now operate 25 active vessels on the Great Lakes. The entire ASC fleet is set to fit out as usual in March in preparation for the 2020 season. ☐

ASC's *John J. Boland* Photo by Roger LeLievre

ASC River Class freighter *American Courage* Photo by Isaac Pennock

113 Years of Sailing

A brief history of the American Steamship Company

Belle River, ASC's first 1,000-footer, during the 1980's. Photo from Matt Miner collection

American Steamship Company (ASC) was incorporated on March 11, 1907 in Buffalo, New York by founders John J. Boland, a shipping broker, and Adam E. Cornelius, a stenographer. The company quickly grew, and embarked on its first fleet expansion program in 1908, adding 6 vessels between then and 1912. Also during this period, the company formed a board of directors.

American Steamship equipped its vessels with radio telegraph sets that were reclaimed from U.S. Navy vessels after World War I. The company purchased four vessels from Mitchell Steamship in 1922, adding to the growing fleet.

During the early years of the Great Depression, Adam E. Cornelius proposes a transition from a fleet of gearless bulk carriers to a fleet of self-unloaders. In 1931, three of the company's vessels were converted. This action ultimately carried the company through the depression. Business in the self-unloader industry continued to increase throughout the 1940's, as the company shifted from iron ore and grain cargoes to those of coal and limestone.

In December 1950, American Steamship announced a major shipbuilding program as Boland and Cornelius' sons get involved in the family business. The *John J. Boland* (III) was christened on May 9, 1953 at Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. She was the first of three new self-unloaders being constructed there for ASC

In the early 1960's, ASC began fitting its vessels with bow thrusters. Fleet improvements continued throughout the 60's. In 1966, the *Detroit Edison* was lengthened 72' by Fraser Shipyards as part of their fleet modernization program. ASC purchased the Oswego Shipping Company in 1967.

In 1973, General American Transportation Corporation (GATX) purchased American Steamship from the Boland and Cornelius families. That same year, ASC begins their third fleet renewal with assistance of the Merchant Marine Act of 1970. The first vessel out of the yards from the program was the *Charles E. Wilson,* being built at Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Bay Shipbuilding would go on to construct nine out of the ten vessels built for ASC under this program. In 1977, the company launched its first 1,000' supercarrier, the *Belle River*, at Bay Shipbuilding.

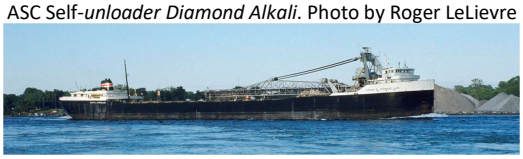
During the 1980's, shipboard computer systems were installed on the fleet's ships, helping to increase efficiency and productivity. Electronic Chart/Precise Navigation systems were installed on the ships in the 1990's to help with navigation efficiency.

On June 9, 1996, the ASC vessel American Republic had the honor of carrying the Olympic flame from Detroit to Cleveland, on its way to the Atlanta games. In June of 2006, ASC announced that they had purchased the six remaining vessels of the Oglebay Norton fleet for $120 million. This sale increased the fleet to 18 vessels. American Steamship Company celebrated their centennial in 2007 with 100 years of innovation. In December 2017, ASC sold four vessels to Algoma Central Corporation.

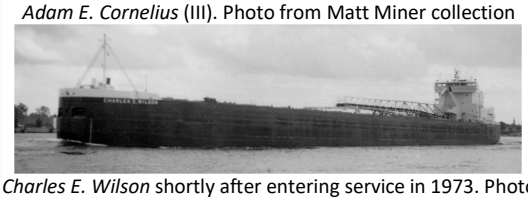
In February of 2020, Rand Logistics announced that they had purchased American Steamship Company from GATX in a stock-purchase agreement for $260 million. The 11 vessels of the ASC fleet will operate as normal for the 2020 season. It is unknown what is in store for the future of this historic fleet. ◻

Reiss Brothers after purchase from Reiss Steamship. Photo from Matt Miner Collection

ASC Self-*unloader Diamond Alkali*. Photo by Roger LeLievre



Adam E. Cornelius (III). Photo from Matt Miner collection



Charles E. Wilson shortly after entering service in 1973. Photo from Matt Miner collection

Launching of *American Mariner*. Photo by Roger LeLievre

American Integrity in transition colors after purchase from Oglebay Norton. Photo by Matt Miner

Shepler's New Ferry Almost Complete

Shepler's New Ride *William Richard* is Nearing Completion at Moran Iron Works

March 4, 2020

William Richard under construction at Moran Iron Works
Photo courtesy of Shepler's

A welder works on the framing on the cargo deck

Detail on the HamiltonJet Waterjets

Waterjets mounted on the stern of *William Richard*

Photos courtesy of Shepler's

Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry is welcoming a new member to the fleet this spring. The *William Richard* is currently under construction and should be ready for duty in May.

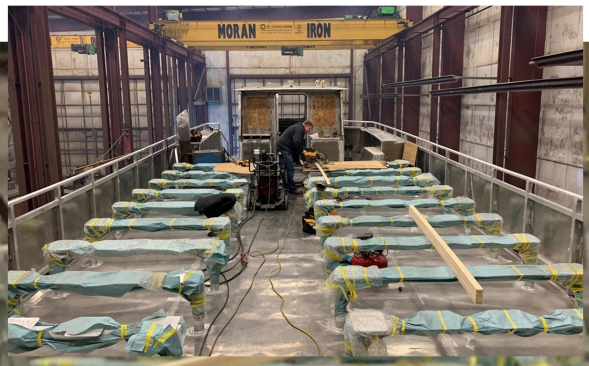
The aluminum-hulled ferry is being built by Moran Iron Works of Onaway, Michigan. This is Moran's second new-construction project for Shepler's ferry, the first being their *Miss Margy*, constructed in 2015. The *William Richard* was designed by Mark Pudlo and will be 84' long.

When asked about what prompted them to construct a new ferry, Shepler's stated that the main reason was growth. They need more seats and more capacity during peak times of the day. Building the new ferry comes with other added benefits, such as a wheelchair accessible cabin. Aboard other boats in the fleet, wheelchairs cannot access the cabin, requiring them to stay on the cargo deck in the aft end of the boat.

The main thing that sets the new vessel apart from the other boats in the Shepler's fleet is its propulsion. Rather than being a traditional propeller-driven vessel, the *William Richard* has ➲ Four jet-drives that push her through the water. Other new features on the new vessel include a more robust HVAC system, a lesson learned after building the *Miss Margy*. When plugged into shore power, she will run on higher amperages. Otherwise, there are not very many noticeable new features to the vessel.

The jet drives on the new ferry will create a new sailing experience for the crews and the passengers. The jet drives pump air at fast speeds, propelling the vessel. The boat will maneuver differently in the water than the other boats in the fleet because of the jet drives.

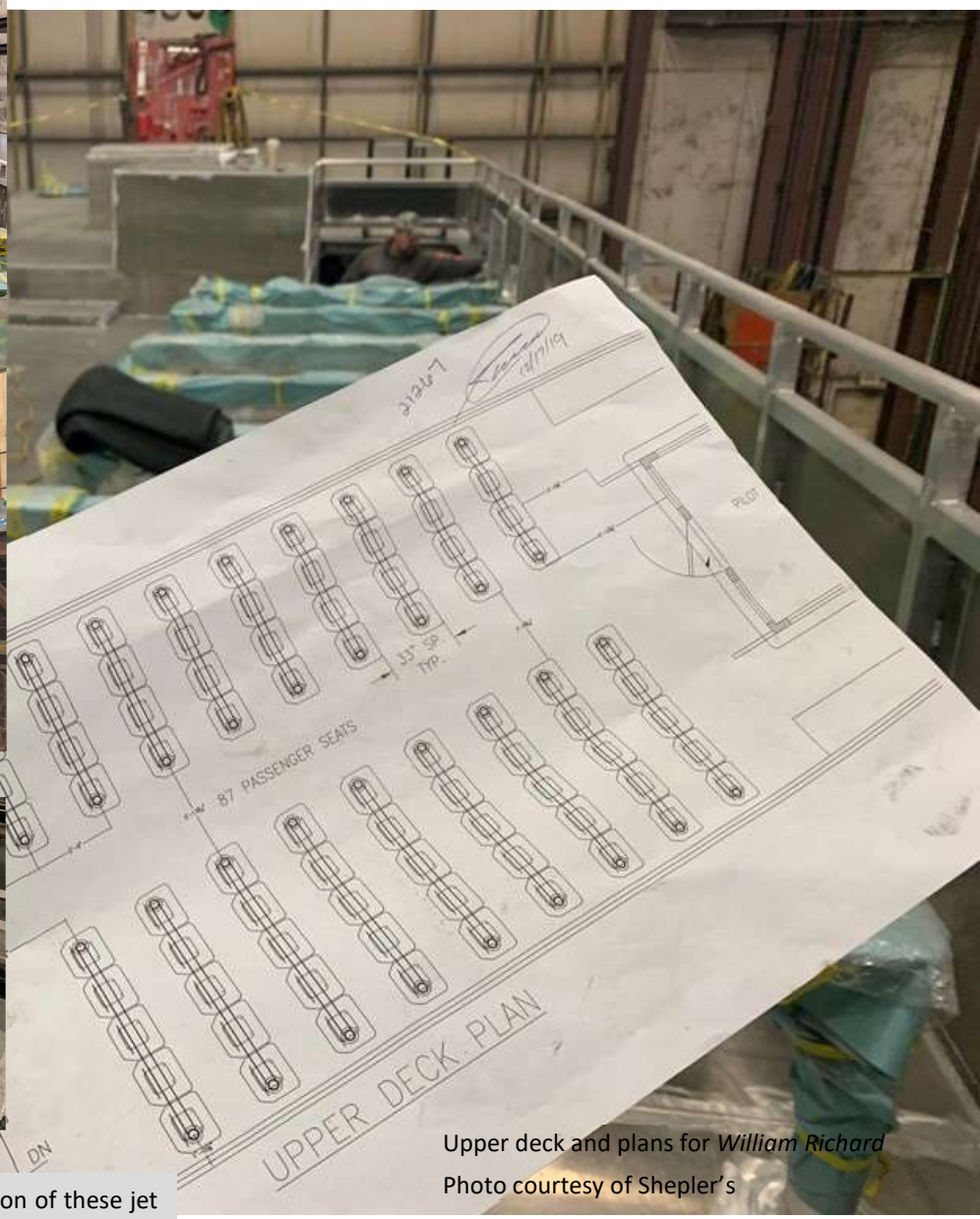
"It will be a big learning experience that we are very excited about," stated Chris Shepler, President of Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry. The *William Richard* has a slightly more v-shaped hull beneath the waterline, which should give a smoother ride in a 1-2 foot chop in the Straits, but otherwise will be mostly unnoticeable. The jet drives increase efficiency and speed, and she will be able to reach up to 45 mph when empty and 35 mph when loaded.➲



Looking forward on the upper deck

William Richard's waterjets

Interior view of the waterjets - Photos courtesy of Shepler's



Upper deck and plans for *William Richard*
Photo courtesy of Shepler's

➲ "The jet drives are the first commercial application of these jet drives in the Great Lakes, so we are setting precedents," remarked Shepler.

The new ferry will have a slightly smaller carrying capacity than the *Miss Margy*, the largest boat in the fleet. *Miss Margy* can carry up to 280 passengers while *William Richard* will be able to accommodate up to 210.

Painting the new ferry at the Moran Iron Works fabrication shop was started the last week of February, and should take a little over a month to complete. Construction at Moran's facility in Onaway should be completed around April 1st, after which she will be trailered 24 miles to Calcite, a deepwater port that serves as the loading facility for Carmeuse Lime & Stone's Rogers City Quarry, where she will be launched.

Once weather permits, *William Richard* will be sailed up to Mackinaw City where she will be hoisted out of the water at Shepler's dock for finishing work. While she is out of the water, she will undergo the certification process by the U.S. Coast Guard for carrying passengers.

A formal christening ceremony is currently being arranged and will take place sometime in May. The *William Richard* will be ready for service Memorial Day weekend. ◘

STATS

Builder: .....Moran Iron Works
Designer:.....Mark Pudlo, Seacraft Design
LOA: .....84' Rub Rail
LWL: .....77' Water Line
Beam:.....20'04''
Draft:.....8'
Engines:.....4x Yanmar, 6 AYEM-ET Tier 3 Diesel
Jets:.....4x HamiltonJet HM461 Waterjets
Speed: .....30 kts. Fully loaded
Capacity: .....210 Passengers
Fuel Capacity:.....900 Gallons

LOA: Length Overall
LWL: Length at Water Line
Statistics courtesy of Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry

CASON J. CALLAWAY

Photo by Roger LeLievre

HISTORY

In the summer of 1950, the Pittsburgh Steamship Company announced plans to construct three new ships. Two of the ships, the *Philip R. Clarke* and the *Arthur M. Anderson*, would be built by American Shipbuilding Company (AmShip) of Lorain, Ohio, leaving the final ship, the *Cason J. Callaway*, to be built by Great Lakes Engineering Works (GLEW) of River Rouge, Michigan. These ships were designated the AAA Class, which was a continuation of Pittsburgh Steamship's class system for differentiating ship size. Nicknamed the "Pittsburgh" Class, eight vessels total were constructed to the lines of the AAA class plans.

The AAA Class ships were designed with refined hull streamlining and an asymmetrical stern to help improve water flow to the propeller. Adding to this, the rudder was slightly offset for more efficiency. All vessels of the class were originally 647' long, 70' wide, and 36' deep with a cargo capacity of about 21,000 tons. The AAA ships were outfitted with oil fired boilers that provided steam for a large Westinghouse geared steam turbine, giving them around 7,000 HP. These engines pushed the ships along at around 16 MPH, making a round trip in just over 5 days, an improvement over the 6-7 day passages by older vessels. There were also some minor differences between the AmShip and GLEW units, those being that the GLEW ships had a slightly larger pilothouse but a slightly lower gross registered tonnage.

Construction on Hull#297 began in mid-1951 at the GLEW yard. She was christened and launched as the *Cason J. Callaway* on March 22, 1952. The final of the three AAA Class ships built for Pittsburgh Steamship Company, she sailed on her maiden voyage on September 16, 1952 bound for Duluth, Minnesota. Common unloading ports for the *Callaway* consisted of Gary, Indiana, and Conneaut, Ohio. On August 21, 1955, the *Cason J. Callaway* was involved with a head-on collision with the *B.F. Jones*. Both vessels suffered heavy damage with the *Jones* being retired after the incident.

Starting in 1962, the *Callaway* and a dozen of her fleetmates carried ore from the Labrador Mines to the U.S. Steel mills on the lakes. Minor modifications to the vessels were made in order for them to run in saltwater, such as the installation of extra water tanks for the crew. Mates were assigned to sail on Canadian ships to become familiar with the eastern part of the Seaway system so they could apply for Coast Guard pilot licenses for the region. The Seaway runs continued until the early 1970's. ➲

Photo by Roger LeLievre

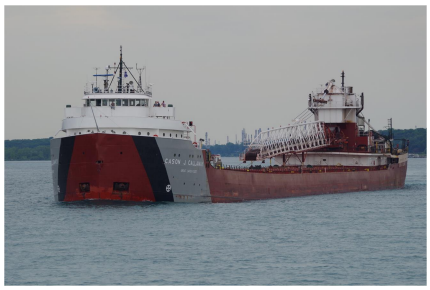


Photo by Isaac Pennock

Photo by Isaac Pennock

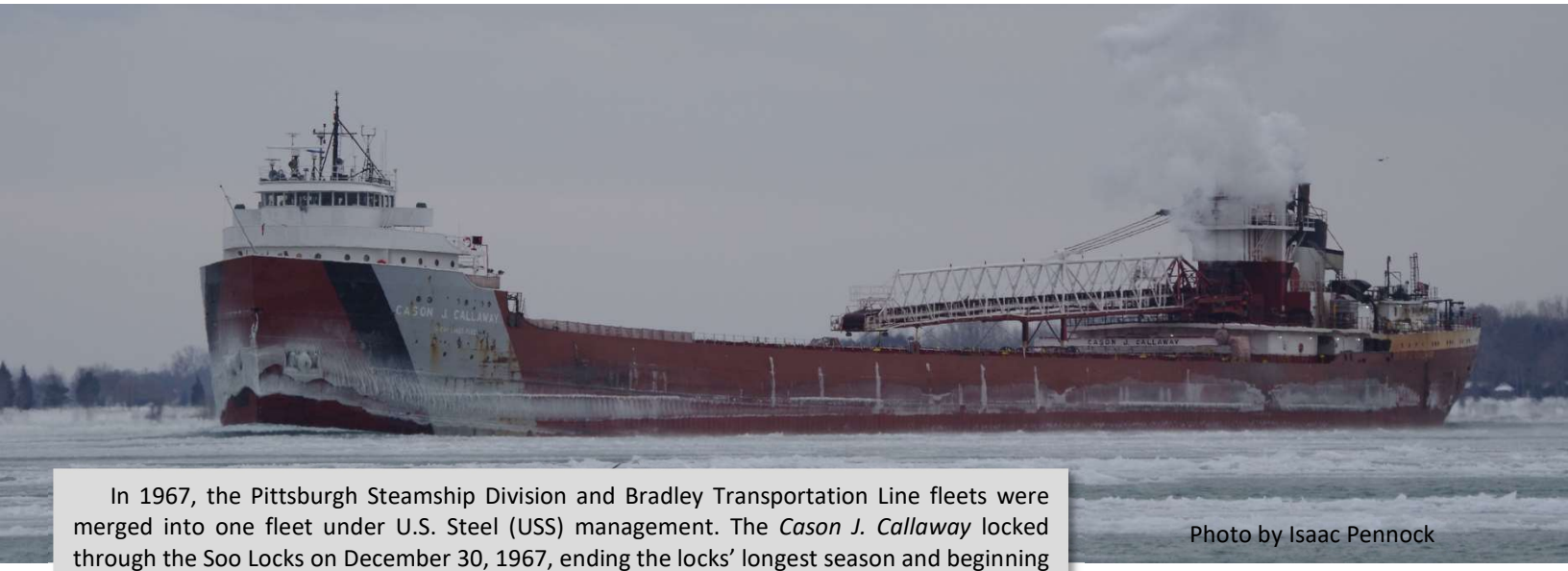


Photo by Isaac Pennock

In 1967, the Pittsburgh Steamship Division and Bradley Transportation Line fleets were merged into one fleet under U.S. Steel (USS) management. The *Cason J. Callaway* locked through the Soo Locks on December 30, 1967, ending the locks' longest season and beginning the first phase of U.S. Steel's Extended Navigation Project. The project was a cooperation between U.S. Steel, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Coast Guard to test the efficiency of keeping Great Lakes shipping open year-long. By 1974, the Soo Locks were running year-round, with the experiment concluding in 1979 with the institution of an annual closing date and off-season for the Soo Locks.

In early 1974, USS approved a project to lengthen their AAA ships by 120'. The *Cason J. Callaway* was the first boat to enter the drydock at Fraser Shipyards on April 13, 1974. She was then cut in half just aft of midship, and her stern section floated out of the drydock. The new mid-body was floated in and lined up with the bow, followed by the stern section. The sections were then welded together and a new, larger rudder was installed to handle the vessel's larger size. She was pulled from drydock on May 26, returning to service a few weeks later. After this modification, the *Callaway* could no longer navigate the Welland Canal as she was too long to fit in the locks.

In August 1981, the *Callaway* entered the drydock at Fraser Shipyards for a conversion to a self-unloader. Prior to her arrival, 23 sloped cargo hold bottom sections were prefabricated with the conveyor structure and utilities in place to be installed. Once in drydock, her cargo hold bottom was removed and the new sections were lowered through her cargo hatches and welded together. Her above-deck equipment was installed just forward of the aft deckhouse with a 250' cargo boom to deliver the cargo to the dock. The *Callaway* was the first of the trio out of the yard at the beginning of the 1982 season, departing on April 20 to test her unloading system at the ore docks across the harbor. After testing she finished loading and headed on her way. The estimated cost for the project was $11 Million. The conversion cut her unloading time from 17 hours using shoreside gear to 6 hours using her own equipment. Due to economic recession, she laid up midseason in 1982. In 1987, the *Callaway* entered the Fraser drydock once again to have a stern thruster installed to increase maneuverability.

In June 1988, USS sold the majority stake of the Great Lakes Fleet to Blackstone Capital Partners. Diagonal black and gray strips were added to the ships in 1990 to signify the change in ownership. Over the winter of 1989-1990, her cargo holds were rearranged, giving her seven cargo holds to increase flexibility when carrying different cargoes. The *Cason J. Callaway* was involved in a ship-to-ship transfer when the *Edgar B. Speer* unloaded into the *Callaway*, which unloaded onto the dock at the C & P dock at Cleveland. The *Speer* was unable to unload at the dock because her boom was too short. Sometime in the mid-1990's, the *Cason J. Callaway*'s self-unloading boom was lengthened to 262'. During the winter of 2000-2001, the engine room was automated by Fraser Shipyards, allowing direct control from the pilothouse and implementing a one-person watch in the engine room. She returned to service on May 15, 2001. ➲

Stats

Length: ..... 767'

Breadth: ..... 70'

Hull Depth: ..... 36'

Capacity:..... 25,300 Tons

Mid-Summer Draft: ... 27'

Home Port: ..... Duluth, MN

Builder: Great Lakes Engineering Works, River Rouge, Michigan, 1952, Hull #297

Owner: Great Lakes Fleet Inc., Duluth, Minnesota

In late 2003, Canadian National Railway purchased Great Lakes Fleet from Blackstone for $380M. The fleet would continue to operate as U.S. flag vessels under the direct ownership of Great Lakes Fleet, Inc. Management of the ships was taken over by Key Lakes, Inc.

The *Cason J. Callaway* was the first commercial vessel to transit the Soo Locks for the 2008 season on March 25. She collided with the *American Republic* a few days later in the Straits of Mackinaw while in heavy ice.

The *Cason J. Callaway* continues to be a busy member of the Great Lakes Fleet every season, carrying numerous loads of taconite, coal, and stone. ◻

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Brendan Falkowski

Is a Great Lakes ship enthusiast who shares his passion for the freighters through his newsletter and his artwork. He is currently pursuing his high school education in mid-Michigan before graduating and moving on to college, where he plans to attend to the University of Michigan to study Naval Architecture and Mechanical Engineering. Brendan is an avid musician and enjoys sailing and spending time with his friends and family.

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Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry

Cover photo: Burns Harbor downbound on the St. Marys River.
Photo by Roger LeLievre

Featured Vessel Inset: Cason J. Callaway
Photo by Roger LeLievre

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Issue Citations

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