

? Vol.1, No.1  
September 1984

# THE CANADIAN



WHAT TITLE DO YOU SUGGEST?

KEITH MATTHEWS

In Memorium

Dr. Keith Matthews, founder and chairman of Memorial University's Maritime History Group, died on May 10, 1984. As many people knew for several years, Keith had a long history of disabling illness ~~yet~~ his death came as a shock and surprise. Keith always seemed to be one who prevailed over his physical misfortunes and carried on despite them. Shortly before his death he had been an active participant in a conference in Bermuda.

Keith was instrumental in setting up the Maritime History Group archive which is today one of the largest such archives in the world. It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that he single-handedly obtained for the archive the Crew Agreements which make up the bulk of the collection. One of the other major portions of the archive, the unique and monumental Newfoundland name files, was entirely Keith's work. He also directed the acquisition of the many and varied other collections in the archive.

The Maritime History Group as Keith envisaged it was not only an archival board, it was also an active research group. The large number of research reports and papers that have been produced by the Group all in a sense reflect Keith's drive and inspiration.

Keith was as well an extremely active teacher at Memorial. He taught courses from the first year to the most advanced graduate level. He advised many graduate and honours students, while still finding time to discuss endlessly his vast range of learning with any and all students who came along. He was a good teacher.

Keith will be sadly missed by his colleagues here and throughout the world.

Jim Tague  
Chairman, Maritime History  
Group

We of the Canadian Nautical Research Society, the result of more of Keith's efforts, will also miss him. He was a good friend and shipmate, and I suspect that when we make a success of our Society he will be well satisfied.

Editor

## NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Number 1

September 1984

Sterile name besides, we are now under weigh: We are starting modestly enough - but beware those who think that our ambitions are modest. They are not, and readers should be prepared to see proof of the urgency to establish a first-rate marine history journal in Canada. They should recognize from the items collected for this newsletter the diversity of our resources, and the great amount of work going on in the field, quietly, unobtrusively, throughout the country. It is time to bring them into the open.

It was a tonic to spend three excellent days in Kingston with over thirty like-minded souls discussing various ramifications of Canada's nautical heritage. We report more fully on this elsewhere; it was most refreshing to see the scope and variety of work that is going on. This feeling was reinforced when, on returning home, two more examples of our diversity were discovered - Volume 1, Number 1 of Jib Gems of the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes, and volume 1, number 2 of Sextant, the newsletter of the Nautical Heritage Society in Vancouver. Every indication is that the interest is there, if it can be mobilized, and that if we collectively and singly make a concerted effort we can be successful.

This is true in French Canada too, as the attached notice of an international symposium on "Maritime Traditions in Quebec" attests. It is to be regretted that this was received too late to Publicize. but it is expected to be well-attended. As it is intended that our Newsletter will act as a clearing-house for such information we hope that we will be given ample notice in the future to announce such efforts.

It is our aim to produce the Newsletter quarterly - 30 September, 30 December, 30 March and 30 June - with copy deadlines thirty days in advance. Articles, notes book reviews. whatever are earnestly solicited. Readers need not be told how crucial membership support is to endeavours such as ours.

At the head of this Newsletter readers will find our un-inspired title. The enigmatic gentleman on the cover - Canada's Kitchener? - is to be seen exhorting all readers to put on their thinking caps and come up with an appropriate name for this document. In keeping with the practice of all good committees your editor was given copious indications of the members' wish for a snappy title, along with the suggestion that a competition be held for a suitable name, without a concurrent determination of what the prize should be: Trust us, start thinking - and send us your ideas for a title.

Lest members think we are being too general, perhaps even repetitive, in this issue, we would just like to make the point that, as part of our mammoth membership drive we are circulating this Newsletter as widely as possible, beyond our as-yet small membership. Members **are** therefore urged in the strongest terms to publicize the Society within their range of contacts. We cannot achieve our aim of a first-class journal without a solid and numerous membership. Get out there and proselytize.

As decided by the majority of those present in Kingston a definite decision on the appearance of the aforesaid "Journal" was postponed until our next annual general meeting. To those of us committed to this aspect of our Society's programme this was but as a goal we intend to present to the membership at that time concrete plans for the "Journal". Included will be a time schedule and a first date of issue - 30 March 1986. This date is crucial, as it coincides with Expo '86 in Vancouver, a World's Fair the theme of which is transportation and communications. There will be no better **opportunity** to get a running start at our goal than this, and we seek your cooperation and **help** to make it so. **Again**, plan contributions for it. We intend **its** general theme to have some west coast **bias**, so plan accordingly.

We publish an article describing the journal now known as Canadian Transportation, but which in an earlier incarnation, as The Canadian Railway & Marine World, was full of information that is now invaluable to historians. It is not generally well-known, and complete runs are **very** rare\*, but as Walter Smith points out its facts were unimpeachable. Your editor can attest to Acton Burrows assiduity in verifying his facts! in no less than four entirely disparate sources he has located letters from that editor literally to the 'horse's mouth' to verify the accuracy of stores he was about to publish.

John Mills' article came as a result of finally being able to put a face to a pen, having corresponded fleetingly in the past, with the Kingston meeting as catalyst. It was a delight to meet the erudite author of Canadian Coastal and Inland Steam Vessels, 1809-1930 and to obtain from him a contribution that draws on his vast research for his list. Look for more titbits from John in the future. Incidentally, his excellent book is available through the publishers at H.C. Hall Building, 345 Blackstone Blvd•• Providence, RI, USA 02906. Please note that this is a new address.

\* Almost complete runs are available at CN & CP libraries in Montreal, the library at the National Museum of Science & Technology, Ottawa, and the Rare Book Room at the University of Toronto. There is an effort being made to have a complete run microfilmed.

We are tentatively planning a session for the Canadian Historical Association meetings in Montreal in 1985 in addition to our own conference. We have set its theme as the Maritime History Oral Tradition. A major part of our motivation in doing so is to indicate our attention to make our Society of interest and value to all, not just academics. **Again**. Members, please participate.

## RAILWAY AND SHIPPING WORLD

by

Walter Lewis

At this summer's conference of the Canadian Society for the Promotion of Nautical Research, comments were made about the value of the files of Railway & Shipping World as a source of marine history. The use of trade journals such as this one in the writing of business history in the last few years has led to the fundamentally different conclusions of Michael Bliss and Tom Naylor.(1) In part, their controversy stems from a fundamental disagreement regarding the role of the trade publishers. Were they simply hired hacks functioning as apologists for the misdemeanours of their clientele or did they sincerely reflect the ethics of a broad range of their readers? Do we, as marine historians need to approach Railway & Shipping World with questions regarding the credibility of the information and the representativeness of the editorial opinion?

For most of its career, Canadian Transportation & Distribution Management (the fifth title assigned to the journal) reflected the vision of its founder, owner, and first editor, Acton Burrows. Already a veteran of Canadian journalism when the first issue appeared in 1898, he had emigrated from England at the age of twenty and was first employed as a circulation agent for the Desbarats firm of Montreal. The next quarter century saw him canvassing subscriptions, as a reporter, editor, author, newspaper proprietor, Conservative and the first Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Statistics and Health in Manitoba. By 1898 he was living in Toronto, publishing a periodical promoting the settlement of the west (the chief subscribers of which being the Dominion government and the C.P.R.) and acting as a broker for display advertising within the C.P.R.'s stations. Those 25 years left Burrows with some capital, a plethora of personal contacts, an interest in statistics, experience in the sales of subscriptions and advertising and a passion for accuracy. Just as important, he had secured the patronage of the C.P.R.(2)

Too canny to concentrate on railways when ancillary interests had been ignored as well, the Railway & Shipping World offered itself as "Devoted to Steam & Electric Railway, Shipping, Express, Telegraph & Telephone Interests."(3) This order of presentation subtly indicates Burrows' priorities and the likelihood of subscriptions. When the first issue was released in March 1898, Burrows claimed that among others, the journal reached "every manager of a steamboat line in Canada & every manager or owner of every steamboat carrying passengers & freight for hire in Canadian waters."(4) By 1914 he could claim that 90% of transportation officials with "buying power" or an average of 4341 copies were sold monthly.(5)

While the transportation fields have always been controversial, with their massive subsidies, rate regulations and labour disputes, the journal kept a relatively low editorial profile. But nothing gave Burrows more apparent satisfaction than gathering the evidence from his contacts in the transportation companies and quashing rumours that had been circulating elsewhere in the press. This passion for accuracy led the

Railway & Shipping World to conduct an extensive correspondence with officials in virtually every operating company and relevant government department in the country, making the files a goldmine of information on company policies and intentions.

At its peak about the beginning of World War I, the journal claimed to have "the largest editorial staff in Canada devoting itself entirely to one publication".(6) These editors occasionally contributed a major "state-of-the-art" piece on technology, management systems or even on supervisory style. But for the most part, the Canadian Railway & Marine World (as it became in 1912) was a periodical devoted to news. A regular feature was company information. The files are a goldmine of data about corporation finances, operating statistics and developments. Although the most expansive coverage was given the major railways, the marine columns were always very strong, with regional coverage regularly being given B.C. and the Yukon, the Maritime Provinces, Ontario and the Great Lakes, and Quebec. Complementing the company information was a digest of Notices to Mariners, government policy statements and regulations, as well as trade association activities. One of the most important features was the mass of biographical data: birthdays, lengthy career summaries and portraits. Every spring featured the vessel officer appointments, featuring captains and engineers of most of the major lines (particularly on the Great Lakes). Moreover, scattered throughout the files were maps, photographs, and architectural and equipment blueprints.

As I have already suggested the journal hit a peak in 1914 in terms of subscriptions and in terms of the volume and value of its content. Circulation halved in the next five years in the wake of company takeovers and the competition of Montreal-and Vancouver-based firms for marine subscriptions.(7) In the ensuing years, the quality of the paper declined, the size of the pages was reduced, type was enlarged and much less news was published. Editorial policy and format changed little after Acton Burrows' retirement from the editorial chair in 1935. His successor appears to have remained in awe of the man who would still be chairman of the board until his death over 10 years later.(8) And it would not be until after the sale of the journal to H.C. MacLean (itself sold to Southam) that the journal entered the twentieth century era of "disposable" trade journalism, when for example, the annual indexes so faithfully compiled since their introduction in 1907, were dropped.(9) Previously it had been assumed that subscribers would get their back issues bound and that the index would be inserted at that point. Perhaps more important would be the journal's new emphasis on "shippers", the emerging profession of distribution managers who unlike the managers of the transportation firms constituted an expanding market.

Over the years the journal has rarely acted as an industry apologist, although it has certainly shown little faith in the competence of those outside its circle of readers. What it has provided is a platform where members of the industry could state their case and outline their ideals. This accords the researcher a useful but limited perspective of the transportation debates of the century. At the same time, given the general reputation of Acton Burrows as a stickler for accurate information, the early files remain a treasure trove of industry "facts". Almost as exciting for the scholarly researcher is the fifty years of indexing. Combined with subsequent coverage in general periodical indexes this makes the material in its files far more accessible than any other volume of its type.

(Citations are on p. 6).

## EARLY SHIP REGISTRATION IN CANADA

By John Mills

For many years there was no Canadian registry system as such. Registration procedures under the Imperial Merchant Shipping Act applied to Canadian ports on tidewater and all vessels were considered to be British-registered. This applied to ports that could be reached by ocean-going ships, i.e. coastal ports plus Quebec and Montreal, and these were the only points where the appropriate officials were to be found.

I am not qualified to state what the situation was with respect to sailing vessels, but some small steamers below Montreal appear to have escaped Imperial registration, presumably on the grounds that they could not conceivably go to sea.

All these procedures ended at the Lachine Rapids. Boats on the Great Lakes system, and tributaries, were simply ignored, since it was necessary for them to be physically present at the Port of Registry in order to be measured. This non-registration continued even after the first small canal was opened at Lachine.

Concern over the rapidly-growing number of fires, wrecks, explosions etc. in the 1840's resulted in attempts to create order from chaos. The first to do so were the underwriters, who set up a sort of registration system of their own, but it was neither compulsory nor universal.

The catalyst in creating something better seems to have been the SHAMROCK boiler explosion of July 9, 1842. This little canal boat, one of the first of the "Ericsson propellers" on her fourth trip, was so crowded with deck passengers that almost 70 were killed. An investigation found that the boat was overloaded, that the boiler had leaked ever since it left the builder's yard, that it had been tested to less than 30 P.S.I. over the nominal operating pressure of the engine, <sup>and</sup> that the weight-actuated safety valve could be, and was, adjusted by the engineer, who turned out to have no particular training. The attempts to escape responsibility by everyone connected with the boat persuaded the government of the Province of Canada to pass the Inland Navigation Act in November 1845. This legislation set rudimentary standards for training and equipment, and finally set up a registration system for inland vessels.

For this purpose, Collectors of Customs at and above Montreal also acted as Registrars of Shipping. (Montreal was the only port at which both Acts were in force, except for a very short period at Kingston, Ont.) Records were maintained only in the Customs offices and, for reasons best known to the government of the day, tonnage calculations were based on a unique formula, commonly called "Custom-House Measure", having no relationship to the Imperial formula in use at the same time. It counted less of the space above the main deck, producing very small figures for large passenger steamers.

Since the Inland Act applied only to Canadian-built craft, those built abroad were registered at Montreal or Quebec under the Imperial regulations as if they were ocean ships, even though they might be only the smallest of harbour tug (which quite a number actually were). Boats registered under both systems might sometimes be operating in the same trade, in which case the owners of "I and" vessels had a considerable cost advantage because of lower

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and operating above Lachine

tolls etc. payable on their smaller tonnage figures. This caused considerable annoyance, but the two systems operated in parallel from 1846 until 1874 when all new registrations came under a universal Canadian system based on the current Imperial rules. "Custom-House measure" was abolished in 1877 and all its boats re-surveyed in the next two years. Passenger-boat figures increased greatly, to the point where one boat's tonnage more than tripled overnight. The year 1878, therefore, is the first of which it can be said that all Canadian vessels were registered on a common basis.

Only a very few Custom-House registry records have survived, and these largely by accident. Some of the vessels appear on the first Canadian List of Shipping (1873-74) but apart from these there is a complete lack of reliable data on a large number of sail and steam boats over a 60-year period\*.

Imperial Official Numbers had been used since 1855, but were not used in Custom-House registrations. Such vessels continued without numbers after 1877 unless rebuilt; in such cases numbers were sometimes assigned and sometimes not. The last "numberless" boats operated until well after World War I.

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**\*It is this period that has been the object of the author's most recent research.**



#### Notes to "Railway & Marine World", by Lewis.

1. Michael Bliss, A Living Profit: Studies in the Social History of Canadian Business, 1883-1911, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974) and R.T. Naylor, The History of Canadian Business, 1867-1914, (2 vols., Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1975).
2. Howard Allan, "Burrows, the Indefatigable", MacLean's Magazine, 15 June 1929, pp. 14, 82, 85. The Canadian Who's Who, 1936-1937, (Toronto: Murray Printing, 1936) pp. 152-3. Canadian Transportation, December 1948, pp. 647-8.
3. Railway & Shipping World, March 1898, p. 14.
4. Ibid.
5. Canadian Railway & Marine World, January 1914, p. 25.
6. Ibid.
7. The Canadian Almanac and Miscellaneous Directory for 1915 (Toronto: Copp Clark Company, 1915), p. 301; 1920, p. 296.
8. Canadian Transportation, December 1948, pp. 647-8.
9. Canadian Transportation, January 1955, p. 21; August 1958, p. 21; May 1957, p. 59.



The Canadian Society for the Promotion of Nautical Research

Minutes of a meeting held at the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ont at 0900 on Saturday 23 June 1984.

Professor Gerald Panting, acting President, was in the chair. The following were present:

Alec Douglas (Secretary-Treasurer)  
Emily Cain  
Lewis R. Fischer  
Dan Harris  
Faye Kert  
Kenneth S. Mackenzie  
Marc Milner  
R.L. Schnarr  
Maurice Smith  
Dugald Stewart  
Glenn Wright

Professor Panting proposed the agenda. Moved by Harris, seconded by Wright that the agenda be adopted. Carried.

1. The minutes of the last meeting, dated 6 June 1983 at the University of British Columbia, were accepted as read.

2. Professor Keith Matthews

The chairman expressed his regret at the recent death of Professor Keith Matthews, first President of the ~~CSPNR~~. Glenn Wright then tabled a letter, (Annex A), from Stephen Salmon, absent owing to illness, concerning a proposed Keith Matthews award. It was moved by Wright, seconded by Milner, **"that** the society adopt in principle a proposal by Stephen Salmon to strike the Keith Matthews Award for the best publication each year in Canadian nautical history, or nautical history by a **Canadian"**.

Discussion: There was general approval of the motion. Dan Harris raised the matters of method and substance. How the society was to make such an award depended on the state of the finances.

Moved by Harris, seconded by Kert to table the motion until finances were reported on. Carried. (Owing to the press of other business the meeting did not come back to this point, which will be the subject of further discussion in the coming year.)

3. International Commission for Maritime History

Gerald Panting reported he had been talking to David Proctor about Canadian representation on this commission following the death of Keith Matthews. He will ask David Proctor to raise the question at the executive session of the ICMH.

4. Financial Report

Alec Douglas submitted the financial statement, attached.

Discussion: Douglas pointed out that the Canadian Historical Association, with whom we are affiliated, cannot any more, under the terms of its incorporation, accept monies on behalf of the society. Consequently, if we are to expand, and to seek financial support, it would be advisable to incorporate. Several members supported this, observing that incorporation would preserve the name of the society and permit the use of a charitable tax number. The best way to incorporate seemed to be through federal rather than provincial channels, although Emily Cain noted the advantages of affiliating with the Ontario Historical Society and incorporating under provincial law. Dan Harris, Emily Cain and Alec Douglas will investigate the problem.

Moved by Harris, seconded by Wright, that the financial statement be adopted. Carried.

In a related matter, Douglas obtained approval from the meeting to reimburse one conference participant, who had no institutional support and had responded to our invitation to give a paper, for travel and registration.

5. Nominating Committee

Gerald Panting asked for nominations for this committee, to prepare the slate for next year's elections. Some discussion followed about the need to achieve a balance between academic and industrial or other non-academic executive officers. Cain and Mackenzie both emphasised that the executive must have a genuine interest in the aims of the society, and not be nominated simply because they belong to corporations. It was generally agreed that the committee should have three members. The nominations were:

Alec Douglas (Cain/Harris)

Dan Harris (Mackenzie/Wright)

Gerald Panting (Fischer/Stewart)

Nominations being closed, the committee was elected unanimously.

## 6. Newsletter

A great deal of advice to the potential editor of the **newsletter** was tendered by members present. Dan Harris urged the acceptance of a name less likely to be associated with the mining profession than "Precambrian", (the name of **Ken Mackenzie's** first newsletter), and made some useful suggestions about content. Rick Schnarr pointed out the value of incorporating "tidbits" from members, and Maurice Smith reflected on the need to bully a newsletter through by constantly pressing members for items. Skip Fischer advocated sending a newsletter out to a wider audience than the membership as a recruiting measure.

Moved by Harris seconded by Fischer that a quarterly newsletter **with** an appropriate name, to be edited by Ken **Mackenzie** for the first year, be instituted by the society. Carried.

## 7. Proposed Activities

### a) Membership drive

Dan Harris talked of the need to prepare a brochure showing the **purpose** of the society, its activities and requirements, with an attachment to facilitate cash donations. He announced that he himself was prepared to make a substantial donation on behalf of Det Norske Veritas to support the production of such a brochure, and to identify a printer in Renfrew, Ont. who would be able to do the work quite reasonably. If someone were appointed to design the brochure we could **and** should get about 1000 copies made for distribution. The suggestion was made that the society should incorporate first, but the consensus was that time being of the essence we should go ahead with both initiatives at the same time. Faye Kert offered to produce camera ready copy, and Maurice Smith wondered whether Emily Cain would not be a suitable author of the text in view of her experience. She however pointed out the problems of coordinating text and design between Hamilton and Ottawa and proposed that Faye Kert prepare the brochure with assistance from Douglas and Harris. These three being willing to offer their services, there was general approval of the proposal, and the chairman ordered this to be placed on record.

Having decided on the object and method, members discussed the need to carry the message to Quebec in bilingual format, to set up a mechanism for mailing lists (the Maritime History Group will offer theirs and the Company of Master Mariners

should be approached). It was agreed that the brochure had to be ready for distribution by the end of August to reach the right audience at the right time.

b) Cooperation with other organisations and institutions

The subject raised some discussion but no specific decision. The brochure would help to fill this need.

c) Journal

Skip Fischer raised the question and Maurice Smith observed it was a function of membership. He tabled an estimate of expenses (Annex B) which showed that four 72 page issues a year at about \$4000 an issue, and with other expenses, could run to as much as \$25000 a year. All agreed that without a solid membership base a journal was out of the question, but Fisher did observe that a gradual movement towards such an objective, for instance by building on the newsletter and publishing biannually instead of quarterly, was possible. Emily Cain volunteered, should we have the necessary financial support, to look after typography. Mackenzie emphasised that we should be making a positive move towards a journal, and Fischer agreed, but thought such a move should begin with a membership drive and a newsletter. Moved by Fischer, seconded by Kert, to table the idea of a journal to be discussed next year. Carried.

c) Maritime Ethnology

Dan Harris, who had placed this item on the agenda, noted that the question had been dealt with in part by the programme of the conference just completed. In particular, the paper read by Gerald Panting and prepared by Eric Sager, which included the tape recording of an old Welsh sailor, showed that we appreciated the importance of the sUbject. Harris drew attention to Basil Greenhill, Olof ~~Hassl~~øf et. al., Ships, Shipyards, Sailors and Fisherman: An Introduction to Maritime Ethnology, a copy of which **was** passed around. Fischer felt these observations should be made in the newsletter, and that we should encourage groups to continue this line of investigation, but wondered how the society itself could do it. It was agreed by all that the subject should be raised in the newsletter. Furthermore, **it** was moved by Fisher and seconded by Harris that the CSPNR sponsor a session at the CHA meetings in Montreal in 1985 on "Oral traditions in nautical history". Carried.

8. Other business

a) Schnarr suggested and Mackenzie agreed to include the membership list in the next newsletter.

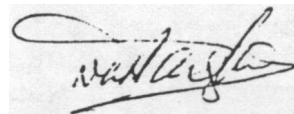
b) Fischer moved and Milner seconded a motion instructing the secretary to write to the Dominion Archivist requesting that one person be devoted to maritime and shipping archives. *Carried.*

c) Acting on information from Gerald Morgan, passed on by the secretary, and enthusiastic support from Mackenzie, about the possibilities of Vancouver for a 1986 conference, and on the urging of Smith and others that there was a need to build on success by having a separate conference in 1985, Cain moved and Milner seconded a motion that the Executive plan a conference in both years, the second to coincide with the Tall Ships visit and the Transportation conference sponsored by Canadian National in Vancouver during the month of July, 1986. *Carried.*

d) Harris moved and Wright seconded a motion of thanks to Douglas and Matthews for organising the 1984 conference. *Carried.*

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Harris seconded by Milner the meeting adjourned from the sun dappled steps of the Sawyer Building, where the weather had so pleasantly facilitated the proceedings, at 1105 AM.



W.A.B. Douglas  
Secretary-Treasurer

Gerald Panting  
Acting President

## NOTES & QUERIES

### Elder Dempster's Lakers

When war broke out in 1939 two ships named Oxford and Knowlton had been plying the Great Lakes for many years. These unlovely, coal-burning, smoke-belching steamers, with their high obtruse bows, had a bridge perched on the forecastle head. Aft the forecastle there was no break in the maindeck until the after accommodation reared up at the stern. They were approaching the end of a useful life. In the course of ensuing events the Mulberry Harbour was conceived, and expendable vessels were needed to serve as foundations and breakwaters for this venture. Both Oxford and Knowlton appeared ideal candidates. Consequently they were brought across the Atlantic and prepared for flooding and sinking at the appropriate time. For some reason their services were not required and it looked a certainty that both would end up at the shipbreaker's. However, a chronic post-war shortage of tonnage fortuitously extended their working lives.

Coal deposits had been mined at the Udi Colliery, in the eastern region of Nigeria, for many years. Both the Gold Coast Harbour & Railway authorities and the Ijora Power Station at Apapa relied on coal for their operations. Coal from the Udi mine was exported by rail to Port Harcourt, twenty miles up the Bonny River from its mouth. At that time there was a draught limitation of 22.06 feet across the Bonny bar, so shallow-draft tonnage was required.

On the cessation of hostilities Elder Dempster (ED) set about re-establishing its previous dominant position in the West African trade. Part of its programme was centered on its former intercolonial and main line feeder services which operated out of Lagos and was commonly referred to as the 'Branch Service'. It was at this juncture - 24 October 1946 - that ED acquired Oxford and Knowlton, for five thousand pounds apiece.

The sse Knowlton had originally been laid down and completed in August 1922 for the George Hall Coal & Shipping Corporation, Montreal, which operated her under the name N.H. Botsford. Built by Fraser Brace Ltd. at Trois Rivières, she was of 2066 gross register tons, on dimensions of 251.02 x 43.00 x 18.01. Her engines and boilers were provided by the Worthington Pump & Machinery Corporation, Buffalo. Of triple expansion design, with cylinders 19" - 32" - 56" in diameter, their stroke was 36". Two single-ended boilers with a grate area of 126 square feet and a heating surface of 3908 provided steam at a working pressure of 180 psi. Her service speed was eight knots. During 1926 she was sold to the Canada Steamship Lines, which company renamed her Knowlton, after the town of that name in the Eastern Townships of Quebec.

The sse Oxford was similar in design to Knowlton but was built at the Sunderland yard of Swan Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd. in 1923 to the account of Glen Line Ltd., a James Playfair enterprise. Her name at christening was Glenorvie. Her engines were from McColl Pollock of Sunderland and were also triple expansion, with the three cylinders being 16", 27" and 44" respectively, with a 33" stroke. With the same working pressure as Knowlton, she could also manage the same speed. After several years she too had fallen into the CSL fold and been renamed Oxford.

After ED acquired them in 1946 they were placed on the intercolonial main line feeder services. There they proved most useful in carrying large quantities of Udi coal from Port Harcourt to the Gold Coast and Apapa. Then, in late 1950, having chalked up about fifty years' service between them, they were offered for sale. Knowlton was towed to the UK and sold for demolition at Milford Haven in July 1951. Oxford, with no buyers, was dismantled and towed some twenty miles south-east of Lagos Harbour and scuttled.

James E. Cowden, England.

## NOTES & QUERIES

### The decline of the Canadian merchant marine

In an otherwise illuminating article on "The History of Shipping Law in Canada. The British Dominance". its author raises the hoary question of the extinction of a Canadian deep-sea merchant marine. This he attributes in part to "British influence over Canadian merchant shipping legislation", particularly after 1931. After a suitable discussion he cites other authorities who hint it was Canadian subservience to **British** legislation that was the dominant factor in this matter.

But this is very much an ex post facto argument that hardly seems tenable in the light of **recent** research into the overall topic of the Canadian merchant marine. The Canadian merchant marine died a natural and a largely-unlamented death decades before 1931. Not even the foray into a nationally-owned fleet, the Canadian Government Merchant Marine (which at one time numbered 66 vessels) was sufficient to revive it. The demise occurred long before anyone chafed over restrictive maritime legislation of any type. let alone British. Nowhere in the crucial earlier period, before World War I, are there to be found in the Canadian record any complaints as to the effect of legislation in hindering the existence of a Canadian merchant marine. Now here can Canadian shipowners be found beating down doors to **obtain** nationalistic legislation; nowhere are Canadian legislators or bureaucrats to be discovered deploring Canadian subserviency in such **matters**. The plain fact is that most Canadians had long since lost interest in a national-flag merchant marine, for good and **ample** capitalistic reasons. They were simply interested in **obtaining** the most effective and inexpensive way of transporting imports and exports.

### The Merrilees Collection of Transportation Photographs - Public Archives of Canada, National Photograph Collection, accession 1980-149.

Railway historians have long awaited the opening of this enormous collection of images to general study. Now at the PAC, it is now available to researchers, and a superb source it is. There is a general finding aid to it which, paradoxically, is of greater advantage to marine than to railway historians. One of our ilk has compiled an index to ship names for much (though not all) of the material. It is a source not to be missed. Those interested in more information should contact the PAC at 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, K1A 0N3•

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\*Theodore L. McDorman, "The History of Shipping Law in Canada. The British Dominance", Dalhousie Law Journal, Vol. 7. No.3, October 1983, pp. 620-652.

## COMING EVENTS

In this section we will publicize activities within our field - and obviously, within our ken. Again, we depend on you to keep us informed.

17-20 SEP 1984	International Symposium on The Shipowner in History	NMM, Greenwich
10-12 OCT	International Symposium, Maritime Traditions in Quebec	(See attached
3-4 NOV	Marine Forum, Kingston	(See attached
25-30 JUN 1985	Halifax '851 NOAC Reunion	(More next issue)
?	Annual Conference, Canadian Nautical Research Society	
?	CSPNR Session, CRA Conference, Montreal	

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Apologia. -Readers are asked to bear with the typing, specifically the different type faces. However, in this case our first contributors spoiled your editor by producing nearly-perfect copy that he could not bring himself to retype it.

Potential contributors need not feel, though, they should produce 'camera-ready' material; we have a long way to go yet before we reach that plateau, and in the meanwhile we will accept anything that is legible. After all, "consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds".

-Please bear with the repeated pleas throughout the Newsletter for contributions. They are our lifeblood, and without them we will languish.



## BOOK REVIEWS

William W. Warner, Distant Waters: The Fate of North Atlantic Fishermen, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1983. 338 pp., xii, charts, photos.

Modern maritime historians frequently give little attention to the fishing industry. This is particularly true in Canada, where much of our fishery is prosecuted inshore; such studies as we have tend to ignore sea-based activities in favour of examinations of life on shore. But in 1977 Silver Donald Cameron gave us a superb, if highly polemical, account of the lives of Canadian trawlermen. In The Education of Everett Richardson, he devoted a chapter to surveying the harsh and perilous conditions under which east-coast deep-sea fishermen wrest their livelihoods from the ocean.

Now we have an even richer portrait of life at sea aboard North Atlantic fishing vessels. William W. Warner, whose saga of Chesapeake Bay fishermen, Beautiful Swimmers, won a richly-deserved Pulitzer Prize in the mid-1970's, has produced a cross-national survey of shipboard life which should serve as at least a partial corrective to Cameron's bleak characters. Based primarily upon more than a year's first-hand observations, Distant Waters captures not only the hardships but also the unique lifestyles and camaraderie of North Atlantic fishermen.

The majority of the volume is given over to describing conditions and life on the factory trawlers and other large vessels in the "distant water fleets" which ply the North Atlantic in search of protein. Warner spent time on American, British, Spanish, West German and Russian vessels while conducting his research, and his descriptions of these various fleets help us to understand the varying degrees of success that each nation has had in prosecuting the North Atlantic Fishery. The regimented Russians, the coldly-efficient West Germans, the proud but troubled British, the anachronistic Spanish (the only nation which still engages widely in 'pairs trawling'), and the beleaguered Americans all come alive in Warner's evocative prose. While one could have wished for a description of life on Canadian trawlers, at least as a partial corrective to Cameron's portrait, his examination of the small American fleet can be taken as illustrative of conditions on most Canadian vessels.

Even if the Canadian offshore fishing fleet is ignored in these pages, we do learn a great deal about foreign perceptions of Canadian ports and fisheries officials. Citizens of St. John's, for example, would do well to compare the views of fishermen towards their city with comments on hospitality in St. Pierre when pondering the growing tendency to use the French port as a base for refitting. And believers in the efficiency of Canadian bureaucracy should ponder the perceptions held by outsiders of personnel from the Department of Fisheries & Oceans, who come across as inefficient nuisances. Lacking sufficient staff to enforce regulations and quotas adequately, fisheries officers are generally viewed as capricious in their actions.

Most of the book is compiled from personal interviews conducted at sea and from first-hand observation. It is thus largely an oral history of the kind that historians who wish to preserve reminiscences should emulate. And the timing is particularly important as well: the shipboard research was conducted in 1976, just as the introduction of the Canadian two-hundred-mile limit was beginning to doom many of these vessels like dinosaurs. The number of factory trawlers in particular has declined precipitously in the interim, and the author has thus performed the additional service of capturing for us the final days of a doomed form of maritime life.

Throughout the book Warner explicitly disclaims analysis. Yet for those who wish to comprehend the problems of the east coast fishery, Distant Waters is essential reading. It shows clearly the relationship between the proliferation of efficient foreign fishing vessels and the decline of the inshore fishery. As these monsters consumed species with amazing rapacity, the volume of fish available to inshore fishermen declined linearly. If from this perspective the Canadian move to a two-hundred-mile limit appears more rational, Warner also has an implicit message: nations, like Canada, which refuse to modernize their fleets and fishing techniques, are likely to fall even further behind in international competition, regardless of the way in which they attempt to regulate their own resources. It is a sobering and important warning, especially to Atlantic Canadians, as they strive to analyze the recommendations of the Kirby Report.

Distant Waters is a model of the kind of work that needs to be done on the fishery. No one even vaguely interested either in this industry or in life at sea in the last quarter of the twentieth century can afford to ignore it.

Lewis R. Fischer, Maritime History Group.

The Lady Boats, Felicity Hanington assisted by Captain Percy A Kelly, MBE, Halifax, Canadian Marine Transportation Centre, 1980, maps and photographs.

The subtitle of this most readable book, "The Life and Times of Canada's West Indies Merchant Fleet", describes its contents in a few words. The historic introduction only goes back to "the most well known of these operators...Pickford & Black of Nova Scotia", unfortunately overlooking the fact that Samuel Cunard, also of Halifax, had pioneered a Halifax-Bermuda-St. Thomas, V.I. steamer service in 1854, to link his transatlantic service to Liverpool with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. service between Southampton and the West Indies. When the Cunard service was discontinued in 1886, Pickford & Black purchased his steamers and began their service two years later. However, this is only ancient history, which is noted for completeness of the story, which is that of the Canadian National (West Indies) Steamships.

Much of the interest in the book comes from the personalities discussed, whether they be the wives of the admirals for whom the ships were named or war brides; the captains who commanded the vessels in war and peace; or some of the passengers, such as the Cuban dictator Machado y Morales and Sir Harry Oakes, who travelled on them.

The chapter "Ports of Call" catches the atmosphere that affected the voyager on these delightful ships, and at the same time includes some of the unusual incidents which occurred over the years. This is followed by a succession of humorous anecdotes about the smuggling of liquor into Nova Scotia in the days of near-prohibition.

The largest part of the text is devoted to the 1939-45 war years, during which the Ladies Drake, Hawkins and Somers were sunk at sea and the Lady Nelson torpedoed at the dock at Castries, St. Lucia in February 1942. The latter was salvaged, towed to Mobile, Alabama for repairs, and returned to service a year later as a hospital ship, while the Lady Rodney served as a troopship from June 1942 until November 1946.

The story of the postwar years includes the VE-Day Riots in Halifax and the subsequent explosions at the Bedford Naval Magazine in July 1945, the return of war brides, and the final agonies of the company.

By 1947 Canadian National Steamships had sold the old cargo vessels, replacing them with wartime Park ships, and had added three large new diesel ships in order to reestablish the West Indian trade. Much of this effort was thwarted by the rise of the Canadian Seamen's Union and the resultant escalating labour costs and lack of discipline. The events leading to the switch to the Seamen's International Union is given in some detail. However, after a few years of retrenchment and careful planning, which gave promise of a profitable future, the latter union called a strike on 4 July 1957, and the vessels never carried another Canadian cargo. The government announced on 21 May 1958 that the steamship service was finished and that the ships would be sold, as they subsequently were to Cuba.

During this period the Lady Rodney had been sold to the united Arab Line of Egypt and renamed Mecca. After fourteen years of serving North Africa, Egypt and Jeddah, she was scuttled in the Suez Canal in 1967 during the Six-Day War to hinder Israeli shipping. When the USN task force cleared the canal in 1974, the ship was cut into pieces, which were hoisted onto the bank to be carted off for scrap. The Lady Nelson was sold to the Khedival Line of Egypt at the same time as the Rodney and renamed Gumhuryat, and later Alwadi. A few years ago, the Alwadi was still listed in the Lloyd's Register, representing a good fifty years of merchant service.

Eleven appendices give some technical and other data to complete the account, while a large collection of photographs allow the reader to follow the course of the Canadian National (West Indies) Steamships operations from the beginning to the end visually.

Having travelled on the Lady Boats in the 1930s, I found reading this book a nostalgic journey and commend it to anyone interested in the life aboard and around the merchant marine.

J.C. Arnell, Bermuda.

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**STOP PRESS!** A new member - with excellent credentials (like us all):-

Harland, John H.

Author of Seamanship in the Age of Sail -  
and see the review of it in The  
Mariner's Mirror, AUG 1984, p. 336.

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The Lady Boats can be bought from Dalhousie University, 1321 Edward St.,  
Halifax, NS., B3H 3H5, for \$17:95

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The Hamilton-Scourge Project - stand by for a full report next issue.

## BITS A D PIECES

1. The Marine Forum to be held at the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes at Kingston **3** & 4 November is described as followss  
Amateur historians, divers and professionals will gather in Kingston•••for the Third Annual Marine Forum sponsored by S.O.S. (Save Ontario Shipwrecks). This popular event is being held at the Marine Museum for the first time. For information contact the **Museum** at 542-2261, or Rick Jackson, 22 Erindale Ave., Toronto **M4K 1R9**.
2. Sounds **like** this group and the Vancouver-based Nautical Heritage Society should get together. The latter's address is 252 East 1st. Street, North Vancouver, BC., V7L 1B3. **IT** is holding its AGM on Saturday, 27 October at **1330** at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. Some of the works of the maritime artist, Peter Robinson, on the theme of "The History of Canada's North West Passage", will be on display for this event.
3. From these events it would seem that our Marine/Maritime Museums are serving their populations **well**; can we have reports from the others?  
Halifax - Bernier - Toronto - Victoria ?
4. CONTRIBUTIONS ARE SOLICITED FOR VOLUME I, NUMBER 2,; PLEASE GET **THEM** TO YOUR EDITOR BY **30** NOVEMBER.  
his address **is**:  
78, Prince Edward Ave  
pte. Claire  
Quebec  
H9R 4C7                      697-4264
5. A "list of Publications" - two pages long - is available from the Dalhousie Ocean Studies Programme.
6. Six of our members attended the International Shipowner in History symposium sponsored jointly by the National Maritime Museum and the International Commission for Maritime History. It was held at Greenwich mid-September, and a full report will be in our next issue.
7. The form of the Society's Keith Matthews Award will be announced as soon as **it** is known.

