

WORKIN' ON THE RIVER SPECIAL WATERCRAFT ON THE FOX RIVER WATERWAY

TWIN LOBSTER BOATS BORN 126 YEARS APART

QUARTERLY MAINSTAYS

BELOW DECK

News from the Collections Vault

COBIA CORNER

The latest events of our WWII sub

THE CURRENT

Highlights and milestones, by-the-numbers





• ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT • Ralph C. Huston, Jr.'s Purple Heart



75 Maritime Drive Manitowoc, WI 54220 (920) 684-0218 museum@wisconsinmaritime.org

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENT Jamie Zastrow WCE PRESIDENT Alex Allie WCE PRESIDENT Stephen Dudek TREASURER Tim McTigue SECRETARY Margaret Heffernan, Ph.D. Rebecca Abler; Ph.D. Jerry Clusen Dr: Robert Cornwell Thomas Griesbach Rich Larsen Philip Maples Jason Ring Logan Rooney William Schlei Howard Zimmerman

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Brendan Baillod Richard Boyd Abigail Diaz Cathy Green Tamara Thomsen Edward Warner

MUSEUM STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Cathy Green DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION & PROGRAMS Abigail Diaz OPERATIONS MANAGER Amy Fettes SUBMARINE CURATOR & EVENTS MANAGER Karen Duvalle REGISTRAR Hannah Patten GROUP SALES & RENTALS Caitlin Seguin YOUTH ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR Shane Lee MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR Emily Shedal MAINTENANCE Paul Rutherford

THE PILOTHOUSE

A Light in the Dark...

There is a phrase that keeps going through my mind this year, "Life's roughest storms prove the strength of our anchors." Of course, it evokes elements of the seas and ships. It certainly has been a rough year, having to constantly adjust to connecting with you all during the global pandemic. It has made us focus on what we do and who we are as an organization when many of the "normal" things we do are off the table. I believe the reason our anchor has been holding fast in the storm of 2020 is that the Wisconsin Maritime Museum is many things. **We are...**

...a window to both the past and present through which we can see the best of who we are.

...a door to our own history — a proud, resourceful, patriotic people who, time and again, have overcome the challenges we have faced.

...a safe harbor that protects and preserves the stories of the shipbuilders, mariners, skilled workers and families who made us who we are.

...guardians who preserve records and memories of our history, so they can continue to help us stay true to who we are— and guide our futures.

...a theater for people who have made and lived our history to tell their stories to families, friends and neighbors — and to the nation.

...a gathering place for young people from every background and visitors from every state and nation — to learn about the importance of adding their own threads to the tapestry of our story—and to appreciate the richness of the other stories that have made us who we are.

The Anchor (Volume 50, Issue No. I)

...a memorial to the

bravery and self-sacrifice of the American sailors, engineers and workers who overcame war, weather and hard times to prepare us to meet the challenges of today.



And, while we are holding our own, we are a treasure that needs your support so we can continue giving more to our community than we draw from it. Please use the envelope inserted in this issue, or go to wisconsinmaritime.org to help us at this critical time with a gift to our annual fundraising campaign. In this issue of the Anchor, you'll find how to stay connected with us, how we reach out to students and educators, and exciting additions to our collection and enhancements to our exhibits and programs. What you'll also find when you return to the museum in-person are a resilient staff, dedicated volunteers, and an incredible historic resource ready to welcome you

- Catherine M. See

Catherine M. Green



2020-21-1 Awarded to Ralph C. Huston, Jr. on June 19, 1945 "FOR MILITARY MERIT AND WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION."

The Anchor newsletter is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, 75 Maritime Drive, Manitowoc, WI 54220; tel. 920-684-0218; e-mail museum@wisconsinmaritime.org

Comments and suggestions regarding The Anchor may be directed to the editor at 920-684-0218 or e-mail: editor@wisconsinmaritime.org. The submission of articles and other material for publication is welcomed. Copyright 2020 by the Wisconsin Maritime Museum. The Anchor is designed by Freelance Artist, Remington Cleve.

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum is a private non-profit organization located in Manitowoc, WI, founded in 1968 as the Manitowoc Submarine Memorial Association, Inc., the Museum is dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of local, state and regional maritime history. The Museum has a membership program and distributes *The Anchor* quarterly to its membership. Other membership benefits include; unlimited free admission to the Museum and USS *Cobia*, discounts for purchases in the Museum Store, research services, and special events.

Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Wisconsin Maritime Museum is also a member of the Association of Midwest Museums, Wisconsin Federation of Museums, Association for Great Lakes Maritime History, Council of American Maritime Museums, International Congress of Maritime Museums, Historic Naval Ships Association, and the American Association for State and Local History, and is a Smithsonian Affiliate.



CATHY GREEN, EXECUT<u>IVE DIRECTOR</u>

CONTENTS

VORKIN' ON **HE RIVER BY DR. RICHARD J. BOYD**

TWIN LOBSTER BOATS BY SHANE LEE

INKED INTO HISTORY BY ABIGAIL DIAZ

2 THE ART OF THE POSTCARD BY ABIGAIL DIAZ

13 PRETTY GOOD NEWS SHANE LEE

The Pilothouse

1

The Manifest

15 **Below Deck**

16 Cobia Corner

17 The Current

Back cover Coming Events

| | THE WISCONSINMARITIME.ORG | |
|---|--|--|
| IN 2020 | NATE TODAY | AT WISCONSTITUTE |
| • ONLINE TICKETING | YOUR GIFT WILL BE MATCHED, DOUBLING TOOM | |
| for USS Cobia | \$8000 | Will underwrite our Sensory Friendly Mornings program for a year |
| • SOB BNB VIP overnights | \$4,000 | Will cover the Museum's utilities for one month |
| RECORD-BREAKING Sub Pub summer | \$ <mark>2,000</mark> | Will fund a new "Hands on History" cart |
| • VIRTUAL FIELD TRIPS and activities | \$1,000 | Will support two USS <i>Cobia</i> engine starts in 2021 |
| | \$500 | Will finance a ½ day Museum field trip for a classroom, including transportation |
| • "PRETTY GOOD NEWS" video series | \$ <mark>25</mark> 0 | Will cover the cost of a "Pretty Good News" video segment |
| • ONLINE MUSEUM STORE | \$100 | Will subsidize annual museum membership for a local family in need |
| ENHANCED ACCESS | | |

The museum is grateful for a transformative \$100,000 matching grant from the West Foundation. The museum is not a line item in any government budget Your support sustains our museum and our mission. Visit WisconsinMaritime.org

SUB BNB

MAKE HISTORY WITH A STAY ON USS COBIA

- Once-in-a-lifetime experiences for groups & families
- All bedding provided

for learners of all abilities

- Exclusive after-hours access to the Museum & submarine
- Behind-the-scenes sub tour
- Breakfast & coffee in the morning
- Extensive cleaning protocols

STARTING AT \$500 PER NIGHT AIRBNB.COM/H/USSCOBIA



- Check wisconsinmaritime.org for the latest updates, including hours of operation and safety protocols.
- Ask us about booking a private visit today



The history of early transportation in Wisconsin is truly one of "travel by water." Dependable roads and widespread railways would not be prevalent until after the Civil War, so most early commerce depended on Wisconsin's 84,000 miles of lakes and rivers. Certain waterways, such as the extensive Wisconsin-Fox River System, gave rise to some special watercraft, customized for efficient river travel or for very select purposes. Interestingly, as time marched forward, these specialized boats became victims of advancing technologies and today are relics known only in history books!

Long before Wisconsin was a territory or state, the fur trade was arguably the dominant business of that era. This enterprise was almost totally dependent water travel to move significant quantities of product and supplies in and out of the wilderness. Fur traders had to move trade goods into remote areas to barter with the Native American hunters who supplied the desired furs. Likewise, the acquired pelts had to be shipped back to collection centers like Green Bay, Prairie du Chien, or Mackinac Island.

The commercial vehicle of the fur trade was the large French bateau and to a lesser extent, smaller trade canoes. Bateaux were about 5 - 8 feet wide, and 30 feet long, although occasionally reaching 50 feet in length. They had a planked, flat bottom with no keel, and were V-shaped at the bow and stern. When fully loaded, a bateau would draw 2-3 feet of water and could carry a maximum of 10 - 12 tons of cargo. Bateaux were propelled by poling in shallow conditions, or by rowing and sailing in deeper waters. It usually required 3 - 8 strong men to operate these boats, depending on the craft's size.

In the early 19th century, the Lower Fox River was without dams or locks, and consisted of a series of rapids, interspaced with areas of deep water and shallow mud flats. In the 1820s, a new craft called the Durham Boat appeared on the river, and readily displaced the bateau as the primary commercial vehicle. John P. Arndt, who had owned a shipyard out east, brought its unique design to Green Bay. Arndt and his son, John Wallace Arndt, built and sold these special craft for several decades for widespread use in fledgling Wisconsin. Historically, the Durham Boat had evolved during the 18th century and was in regular use on eastern rivers long before appearing in Wisconsin.



Design drawing of a Durham Boat. [Courtesy of Voyageur Magazine]

A curious boat, the Durham was 45 - 60 feet long, 10 – 12 feet wide and 2.5 feet deep inside. It could transport up to 30 tons, or about three times the capacity of a large bateau. Flat-bottomed with almost no chine, it remarkably drew only 18 - 20 inches of water when loaded. Like the bateau, the vessel was propelled by poling, rowing or sailing. It was especially constructed for the harsh treatment often encountered when traversing river rapids. The bottom was made of heavy 1.5" oak planks, which continued one strake up the vessel's side. The prow was V-shaped, but the stern transom was a blunted-V configuration with raked (tilted back) construction to better handle a following sea that often flooded boats in rapids or rough water.

Special features of the boat included a short enclosed deck on each end of the vessel. A 2-foot wide, cleated "walking board" along the inside of the hull allowed easy movements by the crew while rowing or poling the craft. Both Durham Boats and bateaux had a stern oar to act as a steering tiller or rudder, but those on Durhams were rather singular. Made of pine, this oar was 20-feet long with a bladed end, measuring about 3-feet long by 12-inches wide. At a pivot point 11-feet from the bladed end, the oar engaged a metal swiveling pin driven

> into the boat's sternpost. This provided a well-balanced steering apparatus that moved freely in all directions.

Even the "push poles" of the Durham Boat were unique. Called a "socket or pike pole," they were 18-feet long, made of 1.25-inch diameter white ash with a slight taper toward the upper end, where a cupped, wooden, "button" acted as a shoulder pad during pushing movements. The lower end of the pole had a pointed, iron socket

to provide better contact on rock bottoms and lessen damage. A typical crew would consist of 8 -10 polemen. The vessel also had a mast located amidships that held two square-rigged sails. Each boat was equipped with a long towline and a heavy block and tackle.

Portaging a Durham Boat upstream through rapids was a grueling process. All cargo was unloaded and portaged to the upper end of the cascade. The boat was essentially dragged and lifted through the rapids by the crew assisted by local hired laborers, often 50 – 60 in number. In addition, the block and tackle rig was fastened to an eyebolt in the boat's stem and the line was fed through another block secured to a tree on shore. The rope was continuously drawn tight, providing a mechanical advantage to help the laborers in moving the boat forward and arresting any backward surges. In addition, boatmen frequently modified specific areas in the

rapids by removing or rearranging rocks, thereby creating chutes to ease the transit of these bulky vessels.

The Durham Boat became very popular with commercial fur trading firms, such as the American Fur Company and Daniel Whitney's enterprises, both important dynasties in early Wisconsin. However, technological improvements in steam engines, boilers, and propulsion systems soon made the steamboat the king of river travel. The opening of the Fox River Waterway with its many locks and dams eliminated the hassle of portaging rapids and poling across mud flats. Manually propelled boats like the Durham could no longer compete for commercial purposes and were steadily phased out by the late 19th century. Today there are no surviving Durham Boats in Wisconsin and they can be found only in the historical literature.



Steamboat routes on the upper Fox & Wolf Rivers in 1880.

From early times on, visionary businessmen had dreamed of connecting the Wisconsin River to the Fox, which would effectively link both to the Mississippi, and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes. After considerable construction problems and political haranguing, that waterway became operational in the 1850s. It was now possible to travel via the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers down the Fox to Lake Winnebago and on to Green Bay, reaching all the "river-towns" along the way.

Notably, significant boat traffic was present on the Lake Winnebago Basin long before the waterway locks became operable. By 1845, several small steamers and some sailboats were transporting people and cargo to various small ports around that lake, including those on confluent lakes and rivers as far north as

the upper Wolf River. Oshkosh was the primary boat-building center, although craft were also constructed in some unlikely places along the waterways. From 1844 to 1874, about 80 steamboats were cruising the Winnebago Basin Waterway and the Fox River System. Sailing vessels were also common by the 1850s: Schooners Trader, Coquette, Algoma, Star of Oshkosh, and Can't Help It were a few of those seen daily along the waterways.

The first steamboat on Lake Winnebago was the *Manchester* in 1844. Historically, there is some debate as to the exact origin of the boat. One version says that the disassembled vessel was portaged up the Lower Fox River from Green Bay and reassembled at the lake. An Indian legend claims it was built entirely by the Stockbridge Indians at Brothertown. Whatever the truth, the 75-foot steamer plied the lake for many years, transporting goods and passengers to various lake ports. For example, regular round trips between Oshkosh and Fond du Lac were offered, which took two days and cost 50-cents per person. Cargo was also carried:The charge for a barrel of whiskey was 25-cents, a barrel of flour I 2-cents, and any grain at 6-cents. The *Manchester* also made the first recorded trip from Lake Winnebago through the adjoining lakes up the Wolf River all the way to Shawano.



Typical features of Mississippi Steamboats with flared, open bows and flat waterlines with little freeboard. [G. Kent Image]

Remarkably, the typical "Mississippi Steamboat" often encountered certain problems when venturing into this inland system. The size of all the locks had been standardized at about 145 x 36 feet, so a larger boat could not enter any of them. Many steamboats had side-wheel propulsion units, where the large paddlewheel cages prohibited entrance to the locks; a few vessels were simply too long to "lock through." Three solutions were employed to resolve these deficiencies: (1) Cut down or remodel existing vessels to fit the locks; (2) custom-build a boat sized to fit the locks; and (3) assign a boat that could not lock through to a route that avoided the locks. For example, the run from Oshkosh on Lake Winnebago to New London on the Wolf River would not encounter any locks. All three of these methods were successfully used.

Creating a boat to fit the locks was no difficult task, although over time doing so tended to favor use of stern propulsion systems. With the stern paddle or a propeller, the greatest allowable ship width could be maintained, thereby providing maximum carrying capacity. Side-wheel design meant that the power plant was usually amidships, which reduced valuable cargo space. In reviewing the dates during which Fox Riverboats were built, one sees



Typical features of Fox Riverboats with upswept waterlines, narrow bows and high bulwarks. [G. Kent Image]

that after 1880 stern propulsion systems slowly became favored. For example, from 1840 to 1879, about 110 vessels were built along the waterway, but only 30 were stern-drives (27%). From 1880 to 1925, 40 more vessels were constructed, and 26 were stern propulsion (65%). Stern paddle wheels remained popular due to the multitude of snags and deadheads in the rivers that frequently damaged underwater propellers. Of course, many side-paddle wheelers were still operating.

Beyond vessel size, another interesting problem was encountered. Mississippi Steamboats operated on rivers where wide expanses of open water were fairly rare. Fox Riverboats, on the other hand, often ventured onto big Lake Winnebago where stormy conditions were very common. Winnebago is a large body of water; measuring 30×10 miles, with a north-south orientation on its long axis. However, the lake is quite shallow, averaging about 16 feet. A modest wind from the north or south can generate 2 – 3 foot waves; wave heights can reach five feet with stronger winds. The shallow nature of the lake generates a violent chop, where the crests of the waves are close together, producing an incessant pounding on boats cruising offshore. Mississippi Riverboats typically had very little freeboard (often only 1-foot or less) and

would get swamped or structurally damaged when caught in "Winnebago heavy weather."

Making Fox Riverboats more resistant to heavy weather required a redesign of the ship's bow from earlier river vessels. Builders employed what today might be considered a modified "Down-East Style," wherein the prow of the vessel is gradually swept upward beginning somewhere forward of amidships. The finished bow is "v-shaped," to better slice through choppy waves. Bulwarks

were frequently added, which

created topsides above the gunnels in the forward section of the boat to act as effective "anti-splash baffles." In some boats, the forward section was covered, nearly encapsulating that entire area. In contrast, a Mississippi Riverboat had a nearly flat waterline profile, sometimes with a swept or flared bow extending out over the main hull. If we compare photographs of a typical Mississippi Riverboat to a Fox Riverboat, these differences are readily apparent.

The common design in the Fox Riverboat was not entirely without occasional problems. All river steamboats had an extremely shallow draft with a highly rounded chine on their hulls, yet supported rather massive topside superstructures. With a draft when loaded of less than two feet, it is said that they "could sail on the morning dew."The accepted ratio of length to width was roughly 5:1. If too narrow, the vessel could be unstable and prone to capsize. If too wide, it tended to be slow and sluggish to control. The O.B. Reed was a problematic passenger vessel measuring 80 x 12 feet, which demonstrated this nautical engineering glitch. The Reed was a side-wheeler with a single crankshaft that drove both paddles, a rather unusual mechanical arrangement. When under power, the craft was so unstable that it literally lay over on its side and frightened passengers so badly that they refused to ride her. Several large outriggers were eventually attached to upright the hull, giving her an unflattering nickname... the "Bustle Boat."

Another troubled craft was the A. Neff, a twin propeller steamer built in Oshkosh in 1870 for the passenger and excursion trade. The vessel had a massive superstructure, but her length / width was 86 × 16 feet, barely meeting the 5:1 ratio. She was so top-heavy that the hull would list badly when passengers congregated along one side or the other to view noteworthy onshore features. To compensate for this, extra crewmen would roll barrels of water to one side or the other as needed to stabilize the vessel!

As suggested, Fox Riverboats could have a touchy center of gravity. This unfortunate feature was demonstrated in May 1910, when the well-known steamboat *Paul L*. capsized at an Oshkosh dock. Built there in 1907, it measured 126 × 21 feet. The boat had been heavily loaded, but when the cargo was removed unevenly, vessel stability was upset, provoking a "turn-turtle" event. The steamboat was promptly righted, repaired, and returned to service.

Various factors, besides old age, caused the demise of many riverboats. As noted, some craft were built at unlikely places along the waterway, such as Omro, Berlin, Shiocton, Eureka, and Packwaukee. These settlements did not have formal shipyards and the workers were a far cry from professional shipwrights. Occasionally the vessels they built turned out to be "nautical lemons," and were retired or scrapped after only a year's service. Instances of boiler explosions or ship fires doomed some vessels, and others were done in by



The excursion steamer A. Neff, which exhibited top-heavy properties. [Neff Collection at Wisconsin Maritime Museum]

treacherous conditions along the waterway. Reefs, submerged snags and floating deadheads sunk a few craft, as did collisions and ice shoves. Many boats also left the Fox River Waterway to be used on profitable routes along Green Bay and the Mississippi River. Others were conscripted during the Civil War, never to return to Wisconsin waters.

Steamboats occasionally underwent interesting modifications for other special purposes, such as dredges or excursion boats. Perhaps the most unusual was that of the "Horse Boat." In the 1840s and 50s, the most consistently lucrative maritime business was towing huge rafts of logs to sawmills. Gigantic assemblies of floating timber were formed at Boom Bay on the northern end of Lake Poygan, but the sawmills were in Oshkosh or Omro. Unfortunately, the small side-wheel steamers and tugboats of that era were woefully underpowered and could not easily pull these massive rafts.

To answer this problem, the Horse Boat appeared in the late 1840s. These side-wheel vessels underwent some truly strange modifications: Sizeable vessels, they were about 80 – 100 feet in length. In the stern, a large spool or drum winch was installed linked to the boat's drive system to provide a mechanical advantage, but powered by four horses via a treadmill apparatus. In effect, this created a power-takeoff winching system to turn the drum. Horse-powered boats were not an entirely new concept; ferryboats driven by horses on treadmills had been in use on eastern waterways for many decades.

The bow of each craft held a device called a "Grouser," which was a 40-foot long timber with a metal spike on its end that could be deployed through a port in the steamer's hull. This apparatus was tantamount to the "mooring spuds" seen on modern dredges or work barges and could be clearly visible protruding high above the deck when not in use. The name "Grouser" apparently came from the noise the spud made as it was lowered. The craft often had a "horse barn" enclosure near the stern, providing shelter for animals and man alike.

Horse Boats were mostly unnamed and were definitely considered the "low boat on the maritime totem pole." Masters of a Horse Boat were not considered as equals by their peers, yet these seamen were equally proud of their specialized vessels, as relayed in the following story: A Horse Boat captain was applying for renewal of his license to operate on the shallow lakes and rivers of the Fox Waterway. "Suppose your boat lost power and you were drifting toward a reef...what would you do?" asked the inspector. "I'd drop the Grouser," was the reply. "What if you were caught in a wild storm on Winnebago and could make no headway?" was next question. Again, "I'd drop the Grouser," was the answer. "What would be your action if an unstoppable leak occurred and your vessel was sinking?"The Horse Boatman retorted: "I'd climb the Grouser!"

A Horse Boat would reel out a towline, about 2,000 feet long, from its spool to the log raft. The Grouser was dropped into the bottom to firmly anchor the boat and the winching gear was

Dr. Richard J. Boyd

is a director of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association and author of the book, *A Pirate Roams Lake Michigan: The Dan Seavey Story.*



The steamer Paul L lies capsized behind the Fox Riverboat Dixie at Oshkosh. [Kaukauna Public Library Image]

coupled to the vessel's inactive propulsion system. The treadmill pinion, operated by the walking horses, would wind in the towline, slowly drawing the raft to the boat. This procedure was repeated until the logs were delivered to the sawmill, obviously a long and tedious operation...but it worked. As steamboat power plants improved, the Horse Boat became another extinct maritime artifact. Curiously, "Rafting Tugs" with more powerful engines replaced them, while still retaining some of the technology of the old Horse Boats, particularly the Grouser. Some Rafting Tugs were even one-man crafts, cheap to operate, but still profitable when moving small log rafts to nearby sawmills.

By the mid-20th century, commercial use of the Fox River Waterway had greatly declined due to the availability of reliable roads and extensive railroads. The Wisconsin River and Upper Fox required so much maintenance and dredging that its use became impractical. Much of the system had been mothballed by the 1980s, with the canals and locks inactivated. The system is now being rejuvenated as a recreational complex called the Fox River Heritage Parkway. The lock system on the Lower Fox will again be fully operational for recreational boating, with the waterway adjoined to the State's Bike and Canoe / Kayak Trails.

Today replica paddlewheel boats are offering sightseeing and dinner cruises around Lake Winnebago and north to the Wolf River. Sport fishing, sail boating, and paddle sports are all popular along the waterway. By 2020, passage through the refurbished locks will allow boats to once again reach Green Bay, continuing upon a foundation laid by historic craft such as Durham Boats, side-wheel steamers, and Horse Tugs. Perhaps the new Fox River Heritage Parkway might revive the glory days of this storied inland waterway



Specialized river workboats: [top] rafting tug (possible horse boat) towing logs with its Grouser raised; [center] horse- powered ferry on the Wisconsin River; [bottom] one-man steam tug for moving logs at sawmill impoundments. [G. Kent Image]



erhaps the word "twin" does not really define the two Irish lobster boats *Fiona* and *Hanorah*. The boats were built 126 years apart, after all. Burger Boat Chief Designer Don O'Keeffe has sailed both of them, and is the owner of *Fiona*, a replica of a lobster boat from his childhood.

"Fiona's exactly like *Hanorah*, so that's the wonder of the whole thing," O'Keeffe says.

O'Keeffe sailed *Hanorah* around Carbery's Hundred Isles in Roaringwater Bay during his boyhood on the south coast of Ireland. In his new home, *Fiona* bobs up and down on the waves of the Manitowoc Marina. O'Keeffe visits her every day.

"A lot of people admire the boat tremendously because she is easier to sail," O'Keeffe says. "You have to be an acrobat to sail some of the faster boats that are available today of that size."

As a replica, *Fiona* exactly follows the draft of the Irish-built *Hanorah*. The Irish government digitized the design of several old boats to promote the preservation and possible replication of traditional vessels. *Fiona* and *Hanorah's* dimensions are identical at 25 feet, 6 inches long and 6 feet and 11 inches in breadth. *Fiona* differs slightly in that she is lighter and contains strip planking. Dayle Ward made the sails and Rick McDonough built the boat over a seven year period in Kewaunee, completing the project in 2019. McDonough is one of the few wooden boat builders left in the area.

"When I went to build *Fiona*, I looked all up and down the coast," O'Keeffe says. "There's nobody who builds boats that way anymore. I am very pleased with Rick's work."

Fiona is named after O'Keeffe's granddaughter, exemplifying the family's close bond with boating. O'Keeffe's uncle Paddy taught him to sail, which he did with great frequency with his eight brothers and sisters.

"We all grew up with boats as a young people," O'Keeffe says. "Nowadays, you give a child a bicycle. We had a boat, so we spent a lot of time boating, and that's what everybody did."

O'Keeffe learned boat craftsmanship from his boat designer and builder grandfather Maurice O'Keeffe. Not far from Maurice's home in Derreennatra Manor, Richard Pyburn built *Hanorah* in 1893 on Heir Island. Cormac Levis writes about both the boat and the island in *Traditional Boats of Ireland*. Lobster fishing was a common sight in Roaringwater Bay as early as the mid 1700s, but the Great Famine of the mid 1800s interrupted the trade. Lobster fishing saw a small and concentrated resurgence in the late 1800s.

> Don O'Keeffe visits Fiona in the Manitowoc Marina every day of the boating season.

Top: Don O'Keeffe's Fiona floating in the Manitowoc Marina under the clouds of an October sky

Bottom: Don O'Keeffe with his hands on *Fiona*'s rigging in the Manitowoc Marina in October

"Yet while many other fishermen from all over the bay concentrated on the mackerel fishery, Heir Island remained a stronghold of the lobstering tradition," writes Levis (2008, p. 239).

A PART

BURGER BOAT CHIEF DESIGNER

In the district of Baltimore, there were 211 fishing boats, 40 of which were lobster boats. About 75% of those belonged to Heir Island, which was home to 45 families in 1891. That means about two-thirds of Heir Island's population was in the lobster business, despite the difficulty of the trade. The average catch per week was about 280 fish.

"There was no engine, of course. They rowed or sailed, and the men used to sleep on board these boats at night," O'Keeffe says. "They'd put a little canvas covering over the bow, and they would lie on the sole of the boat and sleep. They stayed out fishing for up to seven weeks, so men were tough in those days."

The Heir Island lobster boats worked steadily until the 1940s when World WarTwo decreased the demand for lobster. The lobster demand surged in the 1950s, leading to the building of more advanced and comfortable boats. Many of the old crafts were abandoned, but a few still remain today. One of them is Hanorah.

"I remember sailing *Hanorah* when I was a young boy," O'Keeffe says. "Now, it is wonderful to have *Fiona* here."



From the ancient Egyptians to the Māori people, many cultures have used tattoos for expression, spiritualism, identification and as symbols of status. The earliest evidence of tattoos are found on a five thousand year-old mummy from the Italian Alps. Ötzi, also called the Iceman, has more than 60 tattoos that were created using ink made of ash. X-rays show that the prehistoric tattoos were located over areas of arthritis and worn joints. Archaeologists think that these tattoos were a form of pain relief, like acupuncture.

Despite their long history with indigenous and prehistoric groups, sailors are credited with making tattoos visible around the world. Captain James Cook and his crew are often credited with popularizing the trend after they observed the tattoos on the residents of the Tahitian Islands in the 18th century. Even the word 'tattoo' has Tahitian roots. It's derived from 'tatau', which means 'to mark'. Members of the naval crew received tattoos and as they sailed from port to port throughout the British Empire, the trend grew.

The tattoos of sailors soon became a language all their own. It was dangerous and painful to get a tattoo during the 18th and 19th centuries. Infection was common and the process was unpleasant. Because of that, tattoos were seen as a commitment to seafaring life. Meaningful dates, initials and simple symbols were marked on their skin. Gradually, the tattoos became more complex and tied to the maritime landscape. Mermaids, anchors and fish grew in popularity.

According to the Naval HIstory and Heritage Command, by the late 1700s, one third of British and one fifth of American sailors had at least one tattoo. Military records began documenting the 'distinguishing marks' of sailors for identification purposes. Wartime successes and landmark battles were documented on the skin of sailors in the Civil War and War of 1812. There were also symbols that could communicate your position on a ship, where you had traveled or ward against bad luck on the open seas. For every 5,000 nautical miles traveled, a sailor would get a tattoo of a swallow. A chicken and pig would be tattooed on the feet of seafarer to protect the individual from drowning.

A rope tattooed around a wrist would indicate a deckhand whereas a harpoon would refer to someone in a fishing fleet. A fully rigged ship tattoo was reserved for sailors that had rounded Cape Horn and a shellback turtle was for mariners who crossed the equator.

The US Navy's records say that more than 65% of sailors had a tattoo during World War II. During this time, prolific artists like "Sailor Jerry" became popular. During the war, he was based out of Honolulu and tattooed dice, wildcats, snakes and bottles on sailors at port. His distinctive style is well-known and has been replicated often.

Today, many of us carry tattoos that echo those of sailors or have looked to the water for inspiration when we've selected art to permanently add to our body. The seafaring tradition has been inked into history. The Wisconsin Maritime Museum is looking for sailors and landlubbers alike to share their maritime-themed tattoo along with the story of what inspired you to get it. We will be featuring different tattoos every week in our social media series called, "Inked into History."

An abridged version of this article originally appeared in the Herald Times Reporter.

If you'd like to respond to this article, write **Abigail Diaz** at **adiaz@wisconsinmaritime.org** or send a letter to 75 Maritime Drive, Manitowoc, Wisconsin, 54220 We've always been compelled to write things down. Researchers now believe that systems of writing developed independently across three continents (Asia, Africa and South America) thousands of years ago. Gradually, these glyphs, symbols or images used to communicate, evolved into scripts and alphabets. Handwritten notes on parchment became missives drafted with quill and ink. For a brief time, postcards filled postal workers' bags and mailboxes. The history of this simple form of communication is fascinating.

The earliest postcards were sent in the 1860s and 1870s. When they were first produced, the government placed restrictions on them that made them expensive to send. They became popular in the US around the turn of the century when Congress finally allowed the private printing and sending of postcards for a reduced rate. During this time, adding a personal message to the back of a postcard was not allowed but you can sometimes see messages scrawled around the image on the front. Because the back was not meant for anything except an address, there was no dividing line down its center. It wasn't until 1907 that personal notes were allowed and thus, postcards with an undivided back date to 1907 or earlier.

The golden age of postcards, when they peaked in popularity, occurred right before World War I. From around 1905 to 1915, millions of postcards were mailed. According to Fred Bassett of the New York State Library, the US Post Office reported that by 1908, 700 million postcards had been mailed in our country. By 1913, more than 900 million were sent.

From the mundane images of everyday activities to graphic pictures of disasters and from scenic views of downtown and storefronts to holiday greetings, every aspect of American life was captured in postcards. Postcards were used as advertisements for fashion, political movements and budding industries.

It was also during the Golden Age of Postcards that Real Photo Postcards, sometimes shortened to RPPCs, began to emerge. Using a Kodak "postcard camera", these were images of families, weddings, homes and more that were printed with a postcard's backing. Consumers no longer needed mass produced postcards and were instead able to send personal pictures instead.

During this entire time period, German printers dominated the market but other publishing houses cropped up in major cities like Detroit and New York. By the outbreak of World War I in 1913, postcards had already begun to decline in popularity and importing cards from Germany was no longer an option. American printers began adding a white border around their postcards to save on ink and labor. Postcards with this white border usually date from 1915-1930.



Design-Your-Own Postcard at WisconsinMaritime.org

New printing methods in the 1930s enabled inexpensive postcards to be manufactured with a linen-like appearance. You might see the names of prolific printers Curt Teich or Tichenor Brothers on these cards along with a fabric texture on the front. Linen postcards sometimes have the white border but the colors are much more vibrant. Linen postcards can be dated from around 1930 to 1945.

Photochrom postcards first appeared in 1939 according to the Smithsonian Institute. These cards were realistic in style and looked like photographs, but were actually colorized prints. Many of the photochrom postcards you see were printed by the Detroit Publishing Company, which was granted exclusive access to the printing photochroms in the US. Wartime certainly affected production and consumption of postcards but the industry survived and continued to be printed into the 1970s.

We can date postcards using these styles, but there are other ways to play detective as well. The first and most reliable way is to look for a postmark which would say the location and date mailed. But we can also look for stamps. We know how much postage costs in the US throughout history and by looking at the stamps on a postcard, we can date them to a range of years quite easily. Other clues might be the size of the postcard, its glossiness, clothing that figures are wearing in the image, stamp design or postal codes used.

Certain postcards are worth much more to collectors than others but to me, each postcard is a moment frozen in time depicting what was popular or important to someone. I enjoy reading the messages hastily written or painstakingly transcribed. These glimpses into past conversations and relationships are fascinating and a reminder of a bygone era.

The way we communicate is always changing. Postcards are purchased now as souvenirs and rarely sent. A handwritten note is even more rare. Technology makes communication instantaneous and constant. Even as I write this article, I'm checking my email, texting my sister and dodging calls from my boss. (Just kidding, Cathy!) I hope together we can bring back the simple act of sending a postcard (or letter). This rich history deserves to be remembered and continued

PRETTYGOODGOODNEVS

BY SHANE LEE

ewspapers and television news broadcasts often seem to contain stories about tragic events. I majored in broadcast journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. An early lesson from professors was the simple saying, "if it bleeds, it leads." After five years of working in television

news, I was finished with journalism, or so I thought. As of August 17, I have produced 16 episodes of the Museum's very own mini-newscast called "Pretty Good News."The return to the news desk is something I never saw coming, so I'll tell you how I got here.

I was hired as the youth engagement coordinator at Wisconsin Maritime Museum in January, 2020. I learned how to book, schedule, and lead multiple educational programs. I loved teaching student visitors lessons about World War II, submarines, shipwrecks, immigrants, the environment, underwater remotely-operated vehicles, and more. I was just hitting my stride when the coronavirus came to town, and the Museum closed its doors to the public on March 15. A single school group has not visited between that closure and my writing this article on August 17.

The Museum's mission is to connect all people with Wisconsin's Waterways. A closed museum made that mission much more difficult to accomplish. Like many people, I started working from home and looking for ways to reach kids remotely. I tapped into my old videography skills and began producing educational videos. I started with a tour of U.S.S. *Cobia* and a few other informative clips. Then, I started to think that watching videos of something kids would normally get to visit in person, might be kind of depressing. It is just another reminder of a fun activity that is no longer available. I wanted to go beyond showing people what they were missing. I realized I could fulfill the Museum's mission by connecting people with water-related activities they could actually access. I could also give people new information not provided at the museum.

I admit being influenced by John Krasinski's "Some Good News."The actor's YouTube series shared good news and upbeat stories with humor and smiles. I found the show charming and compatible with my own goals, and I thought, "I can do that.""Pretty Good News" was born.



Shane Lee on the "desk" of "Pretty Good News"

The series premiere was just slapping together a fun subject, a knowledgeable and enthusiastic source, and a few puns. Thankfully, the staff loved it and approved continued production of the series. I am so happy for their support and their willingness to participate in the show. One or two brave coworkers join every show by delivering a joke or describing their favorite artifact at the Museum. I have since expanded the cast to involve one of my sisters-in-law, my parents, and my grandmother. More family members are sure to follow.

The biggest challenge was building a show formula. Each episode of "Pretty Good News" contains a maritime-related news story, a featured artifact from the Museum, a water-themed joke, and lasts 4-6 minutes. The first episode features Connor Siemers, the administrator of the Manitowoc, Wisconsin Boatnerd Facebook page. Siemers shares his experience photographing vessels in Manitowoc, and he tells people how they can get started with a similar hobby. That was a key ingredient for me: introducing people to an activity they can do despite the closure of schools and businesses. Two episodes inform viewers about shallow shipwrecks and how people can explore them. Another episode includes a family of model shipbuilders and provides some "how's" and "why's" for people considering that hobby.

Then, things got serious, while still being humorous. Museum Executive Director Cathy Green and Education and Public Programs Director Abigail Diaz thought the show could serve a higher purpose than entertaining and educating. They wrote a grant proposal to the Wisconsin Humanities Council, and sent a link to the show. I am so honored and proud that the Humanities deemed my little program worthy of their funding. Now, the show shifted to highlighting some voices that are often absent or at the very least overshadowed. I completed stories of farmers, artists, fishermen, military veterans, American Indians, and a female captain. I am currently working on stories about Chicago teens, a brave man's escape from slavery during the Civil War, historic canoes, and the young Sea Cadets. The generosity of the Wisconsin Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities really allowed me to improve the show. My new tripod really helps my ability to shoot quality video, and the new microphones capture audio so much more clearly than what I used in the beginning. The grant also funded my travel costs so I could broaden the diversity of people whose stories I could tell.

It probably sounds like I am "tooting my own horn," but these stories are not mine. The stories belong to other, braver people. Those generous souls have shared their stories with me so that I can retell them to the viewers. My favorite example of such a story is the grandson of a soldier who died on Manitowoc-built submarine U.S.S. *Robalo*. Kevin Ivey shared his grandfather Holly Berry Ivey's letters home during his service in World War II. To hear Kevin's voice reading Holly's words created a true personal connection for me. Holly Berry Ivey was no longer a war statistic. He was a family man who made the ultimate sacrifice. Holly could not tell his story, but with Kevin's help, I could. To me, that is what the humanities is all about: making connections and sharing them to give people the best understanding of those around them and those who came before.

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum opened its doors to the public again on June 4, and "Pretty Good News" continues to reach people in their own homes with what I hope are upbeat, fun, and informative episodes. You can find the videos on Wisconsin Maritime Museum's YouTube channel. There are also links on the Wisconsin Maritime Museum's Facebook page. Both in my show and at the Museum, I aim to educate, entertain, and tell a few jokes. I want to remind people that even in a pandemic, life can still be "pretty good."



2007-34-8720

Wisconsin Maritime Museum Black and white postcard of lifesaving efforts from the wreck of passenger steamer *Eastland* in Chicago. In 1915 the S.S. *Eastland* was chartered to take 2,500 Western Electric Company workers from Chicago to a company picnic in Indiana. Before the ship could depart, the S.S. *Eastland* capsized in the Chicago River resulting in the deaths of 844 passengers.



P83-20-2

Wisconsin Maritime Museum Wrecked and ice covered steamer *Mataafa* in Duluth harbor after a storm, November 28, 1905.



P82-37-4-61B Wisconsin Maritime Museum Black and white postcard of the wrecked Cherry Street bridge in Toledo, Ohio after being struck by the whaleback steamer Yuma. Partial stern view of damaged vessel in background, with wreckage of bridge littering the afterdeck, crowds standing on shore in foreground. March 6, 1908.



2007-34-8611

Wisconsin Maritime Museum Black and white postcard of whaleback steamer *Christopher Columbus* after sustaining damage from a fallen water tower in Milwaukee. The upper cabin shows considerable damage. Port bow view with a tug on her port side. June 30, 1917.

Sources

"Wish You Were Here!: The Story of the Golden Age of Picture Postcards in the United States," Fred Bassett, New York State Library.

"Greetings from the Smithsonian A Postcard History," Smithsonian Institution Archives, accessed August 22, 2020.

BELOW DECK

Disaster Through Post: Maritime Disaster Postcards in the Wisconsin Maritime Museum's Collection

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum's Archives includes thousands of postcards dating from the late nineteenth century to the modern era. These postcards feature historic ships, lighthouses, images of seascapes, Great Lakes ports, waterfront resorts, and most curiously scenes of disaster on the water. Our collection includes postcards that feature photographs and renderings of wrecked ships, search and rescue attempts, stranded vessels, the aftermaths of collisions, and damaged locks and bridges. These images of death and destruction are a far cry from the renderings of tourist destinations and landscapes we associate with postcards today. To understand how these macabre images came to be printed, sold, shared, and collected on 4"x6" cards, we must delve into the history of the postcard.



Before the creation of postcards, people could send cards containing a short message through the mail in an envelope, often printed with an image and attached postage. The first postcard was copyrighted by John P. Charlton in 1861. These cards were similar to the modern postcards we are familiar with. One side of the card was for a short message which sometimes also included an image. The other side of the card was for the recipient's address. Unlike modern postcards, messages were not allowed on the address side of the card.



Picture postcards were first sold at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Because they proved popular, other publishers began producing and selling cards featuring depictions of resorts, landmarks, and cities across the country. These cards were not only bought to be sent to friends and family but also to add to collections kept in albums. The demand for these privately printed postcards was so high that in 1898 Congress agreed to lower the postage rate to just one cent.



At the turn of the century when postcards were peaking in popularity, the fronts of most postcards contained images with no room for a message and messages were still not permitted on the address side of the card. This period in time is known as the Undivided Back Period. In 1907 the Universal Postal Union passed a decree allowing for messages on the left half of the address side of postcards. The period from 1907-1915 became known as the Divided Back Period and as the Golden Age of Postcards due to the greater variety of postcard types available.

NEWS FROM THE COLLECTIONS VAULT BY HANNAH PATTEN, REGISTRAR

One type of postcard popularized during this period were "real photo" postcards. In 1903 Kodak introduced a camera designed for



postcard sized film that could be directly printed onto postcards backs. These "real photo" postcards did not solely communicate the messages written on their backs; the images on the fronts were also a way to document and share important events. During the early twentieth century the average American had limited access to cameras and photographs. Even newspapers at that time included very few photographs. Postcards became an affordable and accessible way to visually record American life.



Postcard photographers documented everything from commonplace events like parades and celebrations, to political movements, the exploits of famous Americans, and disasters both natural and man-made. Maritime disasters were no exception. That these postcards were often collected and preserved rather than disposed has helped them find their way to our collection. Today, these postcards are one of the best resources we have for visual representations of early twentieth century misadventures on the water

Hannah Patten is the Registrar at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum. She can be reached at (920) 684-0218 x111 or hpatten@wisconsinmaritime.org.

COBIA CORNER

COBIA CORNER



It All Began with Lagarto

Ralph Clark Huston, Jr. was born in Parkersburg, WV on September 27, 1925. His parents were Ralph Sr. and Myrtle, and he had four

siblings Betty, Mary, Harry, and Ora. A few months after graduating from Parkersburg High School, Ralph enlisted in the Navy on October 1, 1943, and received his naval training at Newport, RI before attending sub school in New London, CT. He shipped out on July 21, 1944, and was assigned to *Cobia* in February 1945.



19-year-old Ralph reported aboard on February 12th, ready for adventure on *Cobia's* fourth war patrol. Just two weeks later, *Cobia* was engaged in a surface gun battle with two armed Japanese trawlers. Ralph was busy loading the 20 mm deck gun when he was hit by

crossfire. His shipmates quickly lowered him below deck where Chief Pharmacist Mate Herbert "Doc" Starmer frantically did everything he could to save Huston. At 5:25 a.m. on February 27th, Huston died of his wounds. A ceremony was held on deck later that day and his body was committed to the deep in the Java Sea. Ralph Clark Huston Jr was one of 3,505 submariners that did not return from the war.

"Huston was a very sharp, intelligent young man. He had been cleaning in the after battery and as he came by me, word passed down for the gun crew to wear foul weather jackets. Huston couldn't find his, or it wasn't available, and I handed him mine to wear topside. I could hear the gunfire and I heard the OOD [Officer on Deck] say that a man had been hit. I waited for him to be lowered through the conning tower at the end of the control room. He looked at me and said, 'Look what those bastards did to your jacket, Doc!' ...and he never uttered another word after that."

-CPhM Herbert "Doc" Starmer

After his death, his belongings were packed in a box and returned to his family who later donated the collection to the museum in 2008. The collection included Ralph's Purple Heart certificate, but not the medal. The certificate and some of Ralph's personal belongings are on display in the *Cobia* Below the Surface exhibit.

USS *COBI*A NEWS BY KAREN DUVALLE SUBMARINE CURATOR



"The Doc knew he was beyond help with what he had to work with. The Doc felt helpless and we all had tears. Ralph was a nice kid. He was only 19. The Captain conducted a Christian burial service that couldn't have been any finer had it been at Arlington National Cemetery. Although it didn't bring Ralph back. When he died, something in me died. For me, the war was over. It was a shame he was one hell of a nice kid. I felt like an old man."

-MoMM2 Ray Mahanes

In September, we were contacted by David Sleeper, a Purple Heart and military memorabilia collector who runs the World War Collector web page. The website features his collection of Purple Hearts and other war medals with relevant biographical information about the recipients. Sleeper purchased the Purple Heart from another collector in Chicago many years ago and when he found out Ralph's boat was still around, he decided to donate the medal to the Museum.

On October 8, 2020, David visited the museum with his grandson and great-grandsons and reunited Ralph's medal with the certificate and Ralph's belongings. We are grateful to David for preserving this small piece of history and allowing us to complete the Ralph C. Huston Collection

"The death, of course, caused an emotional situation among the crew members. That was understandable of course. I don't think I would ever attend a funeral as sad as that one. He was a young man just like me."

-SI Charles Stewart



2008-15-41 Wisconsin Maritime

Museum Ralph Clark Huston, Jr.

2

2008-15-44 Wisconsin Maritime Museum Ralph C. Huston burial at sea 2/27/45



2008-15-43 Wisconsin Maritime Museum Ralph C. Huston on deck of *Cobia*

THE CURRENT

Passengers waiting to board the North Shore, one of the Washington Island Ferry Line's original vessels. Photo courtesy of the Ferry Company Archives.



The Madonna. the company's newest ferry, under construction at Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay. Photo courtesy of Jim Legault.

3

The Robert Noble was built for the Washington Island Ferry Line in 1979 by Peterson Builders in Sturgeon Bay. Photo courtesy of the Ferry Company Archives.

SALE CURRENT

Washington Island Ferry Line Exhibit Opening Fall 2021 by Hannah Patten

The story of the Washington Island Ferry Line is the story of two communities; the people of Washington Island who needed a reliable ferry service linking them to the mainland, and the shipbuilders in Sturgeon Bay who made this possible.





The development of the Washington Island Ferry Line helped turn a once remote and inaccessible island into a popular tourist destination.

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum is pleased to announce a new exhibit about the Washington Island Ferry Line opening Fall 2021. The exhibit will cover the history of the company from its beginnings in 1940 with the purchase of two wooden ferries, the North Shore and the Welcome, following its growth into a year-round operation with a fleet of locally-built ice breaking vessels, to the construction of the company's newest ferry, the Madonna.

The exhibit, developed by renowned photographer Jim Legault for the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, will feature Legault's own work documenting the construction of the Madonna at Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay as well as historic images from the Washington Island Archives and the Washington Island Ferry Line's Company Archives



In Rememberance of Erich Pitz

On October 14 th of this year we lost a longtime supporter, donor and friend of the Museum, Erich Pitz. Erich's personal and professional interests gave him the opportunity to help the museum in many creative ways!

Erich was an avid duck hunter and loaned most of the artifacts that are on display in our duck hunting exhibit in the Wisconsin-Built Boat Gallery. His skiffs and decoys draw a lot of attention and often inspire visitors to reminisce about their own experiences on the water.

As president of the McMullen & Pitz Construction Company, Erich had the knowledge and equipment to help with various projects involving our USS Cobia, donating time and materials, heavy lifting equipment, and pontoon boats to paint the sub. We could always count on Erich to help us out when needed.

Beginning in 2003, Erich donated his time and tug boat, Dauntless, as our Christmas Tree Ship bringing Santa and trees for Manitowoc families, Erich stored the Christmas trees at his construction yard until the day of the event and provided a safe place for Santa to embark on his icy trip

on the river. Even after Dauntless could no longer make the trip, Erich continued to store, load, and unload the trees with friends from Susie Q Fish Company to keep the tradition alive in downtown Manitowoc. Each year he asked Drumm's Trees for the biggest tree they could cut to put atop his crane next to the Eighth Street Bridge as a symbol of Christmas cheer.

Erich had a big heart and was one of Manitowoc's gems when it came to community spirit. We are so fortunate to have called him a friend.

He will be missed

EXCITING EVENTS & EXPERIENCES BY ABIGAIL DIAZ DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Abbie Diaz is the Education Director and at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum. She can be reached at (920) 684-0218 x 115 or adiaz@wisconsinmaritime.org.

Staff Updates



Big welcome to our newest intern, Kendra Lawrence. They are a long time resident of the Great Lakes region and a passionate sailor and scuba diver. Kendra received their Masters degree this fall through the Program in Maritime Studies at East Carolina University.

Online Resources



Stay engaged with local maritime history with our online offerings. Brush up on the AB-Seas with **Maritime Alphabet** or experience my personal search for a Great Lakes ship captain on my family tree using the Museum's extensive archive in the short film **Searching for Captain Blaney**. Check our website WisconsinMaritime.org for more.

Last Manitowoc-Built Freighter Departs Manitowoc

BY EMILY SHEDAL, COMMUNICATION MANAGER



Manitowoc has a long and beautiful history of shipbuilding. One chapter in Manitowoc's rich shipbuilding heritage closed on July 28, 1960. On that date Manitowoc Shipbuilding's last lake freighter, the *Edward L. Ryerson*, left its berth at Manitowoc Shipbuilding about to embark on its lifetime on the lakes. This July [marked] sixty years since *Ryerson* departed Manitowoc shipbuilding.

The Edward L. Ryerson was the last lake freighter built by the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company and it was the largest at 730 feet long and 75 feet wide. At the time of its departure from Manitowoc it was the largest bulk carrier ever built to operate on the Great Lakes. The vessel was built to hold a total of 26,600 tons with a top speed loaded of sixteen-and-a-half hours.

People from Manitowoc and the surrounding area gathered down by the river to watch it depart Manitowoc Shipbuilding on July 28th, 1960. It was estimated that around a few hundred people from the surrounding areas gathered to watch the vessel leave.

Moving Ryerson from Manitowoc Shipbuilding to the lake was only supposed to take two hours with work

starting at 5am and finishing at 7am. Delays caused moving the vessel to take until close to lunch hour. The whole ordeal ended up lasting four hours. A Manitowoc Herald Times article from July 28, 1960 described getting *Ryerson* out to the lake as "like building a cruiser in the basement and then engineering it through a door too small for its shortest dimension."

Ryerson took thirty-six minutes to get through the Tenth Street bridge and twenty minutes to get through the Eight Street bridge. The reason the vessel took longer to get through the first bridge was because it needed to have its back end lined up and aimed at the Eight Street bridge. The process appeared smooth and seemingly simple to the public, but it was anything but that for the crews assisting the vessel.

Preparation for *Ryerson* to depart Manitowoc began very early on when *Ryerson* was still on the drawing board. The summer before *Ryerson* was set to depart Manitowoc survey crews went up and down the Manitowoc River laying the groundwork for what was set to happen a year later.

Dredging was done at points in the river and the dock line had to be extended in an area. Part of the shoreline had to be dug out at one point in order for the vessel to pass through. *Ryerson* had to be squeezed through the 80-foot draw of the Soo Line bridge with only inches of clearance which were left for the hull to pass through.

Sea trials for *Ryerson* were scheduled for just a few days later on August 3rd and her first load was scheduled to be picked up the next day. Shortly before midnight on August 4th, 1960, the *Edward L. Ryerson* departed the Manitowoc harbor.

Currently the *Ryerson* is in long-term layup at Fraser Shipyard in Superior, Wisconsin

Originally published in the Herald Times Reporter on July 21, 2020.



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION US POSTAGE PAID MANITOWOC WI ZIMMERMANN COMPANY

75 MARITIME DRIVE, MANITOWOC, WI 54220 (920) 684-0218 • WISCONSINMARITIME.ORG museum@wisconsinmaritime.org





