

U.S.-FLAG VESSEL UTILIZATION RATES

The 2000 dry-bulk shipping season began on February 7 when the self-unloading cement barge SOUTHDOWN CONQUEST (Cement Transit Company) departed her winter berth in Chicago and sailed for Charlevoix, Michigan, where she loaded the first cargo of the season. This is the earliest resumption of the dry-bulk trades on record and reflected the nearly ice-free conditions that characterized the winter of 1999/2000. A second cement carrier, the INTEGRITY (Andrie Inc.), returned to service on February 28.

February 28 also marked the resumption of the iron ore trade. The self-unloader FRED R. WHITE, JR. (Oglebay Norton Marine Services Company) began Cleveland's intraport movement of iron ore pellets from Cleveland Bulk Terminal to LTV Steel's Cleveland Works.

The iron ore trade out of Escanaba, Michigan, resumed on March 13 with the loading of the integrated tug/barge (ITB) JOSEPH THOMPSON, JR./JOSEPH H. THOMPSON (Upper Lakes Towing). The THOMPSON was quickly followed by Central Marine's self-propelled WILFRED SYKES and JOSEPH L. BLOCK.

The first 1,000-footers got underway on March 16. The PAUL R. TREGURTHA (Interlake Steamship) loaded western coal at Superior Midwest Energy Terminal on that date for delivery to Marquette, Michigan. Meanwhile in Erie, Pennsylvania, fleetmate MESABI MINER was departing for the ore dock in Escanaba.

The Soo Locks opened as scheduled on March 25. First to transit (downbound) was the PAUL R. TREGURTHA, again with coal, but this time headed for the Detroit-Edison power plant in St. Clair, Michigan. Bethlehem Steel Corporation's STEWART J. CORT was the first "upbounder." She proceeded to Superior, Wisconsin, and loaded taconite pellets.

Come April 1, U.S.-Flag Lakes operators had 51 of their 69 vessels in service, the same as a year earlier. These hulls represented 83.1 percent of available carrying capacity. By May 1, another nine vessels had returned to service and pushed the fleet's hauling power to 92 percent of capacity.

The June 1 survey found the active fleet at 63 vessels representing 93 percent of available carrying capacity. Included in that total was the grain carrier KINSMAN INDEPENDENT (Great Lakes Associates, Inc.), but weak demand for grain had the vessel in lay-up by July 3. Another vessel whose usage was sporadic during the season was the cement carrier PAUL H. TOWNSEND (Inland Lakes Management, Inc.). The vessel was operated as needed to balance demand and production.

The active fleet peaked at 65 vessels (97 percent of hauling power) on October 1. A trio of small self-unloaders were withdrawn from service in November, their tonnage commitments met for the season. The December lay-up pattern was typical, with again the smaller, low horsepower vessels first to end their season. The 1,000-foot-long integrated tug/barge PRESQUE ISLE (USS Great Lakes Fleet, Inc.) was withdrawn from service in mid-December, but only because it was time for the barge's scheduled drydocking and out-of-water inspection.

January 1, 2001 found 39 U.S.-Flag lakers still in service, a significant decrease (12 vessels) from a year earlier. The bankruptcies of Wheeling Pittsburgh Steel and LTV Steel in November and December respectively played a major role in that development. A general sluggishness in steel likewise weakened demand for iron ore out of Escanaba, Michigan, and so that port concluded its season by January 23. Strong demand for steam coal in Canada kept a number of U.S.- and Canadian-Flag lakers operating into early February, but the Jones Act fleet completed its season on February 5, 2001, when the LEE A. TREGURTHA (Interlake Steamship) arrived at her winter berth in River Rouge, Michigan.

In total then, the 2000 dry-bulk season stretched 363 days. That is the longest on record exclusive to the Year-Round Navigation Demonstration Program of the 1970s. Honors for the longest season went to the self-unloading cement barge SOUTHDOWN CONQUEST. The vessel was in continuous operation for 351 days, from February 7 until January 24.

Representing Operators of U.S.-Flag Vessels on the Great Lakes

2000 ANNUAL REPORT of Lake Carriers' Association

Three U.S.-Flag lakers were never activated during the 2000 season. The large straight-decker EDWARD L. RYERSON (Central Marine Logistics, Inc.) remained idle due to the steel problems discussed at length elsewhere. The small straight-decker KINSMAN ENTERPRISE has not sailed since 1996 because of reduced demand for waterborne grain deliveries to Buffalo. The small cement carrier E.M. FORD (Inland Lakes Management, Inc.) has been in lay-up since 1998.

U.S.-FLAG VESSEL UTILIZATION RATES: 2000-1991

Year	Length of Dry-Bulk Navigation Season	Number of Vessels Available for Service	Number of Vessels Which Saw Service
2000	02/07/00 – 02/05/01 (363 days)	69	66
1999	02/22/99 – 01/25/00 (337 days)	70	67
1998	02/20/98 – 01/30/99 (344 days)	69	67
1997	03/03/97 – 01/25/98 (328 days)	69	66
1996	03/04/96 – 02/01/97 (334 days)	70	66
1995	03/11/95 – 02/16/96 (342 days)	69	66
1994	03/15/94 – 02/10/95 (332 days)	69	66
1993	02/18/93 – 01/27/94 (343 days)	73	67
1992	03/10/92 – 01/19/93 (315 days)	74	66
1991	03/16/91 – 01/12/92 (302 days)	73	67

Notes: The vessel utilization rates for 1995 and before have been recalculated since publication of that year's ANNUAL REPORT to include all tug/barge units reporting cargo movement to LCA. The **Number of Vessels Available for Service** column counts vessels registered with LCA and hulls "in class" operated by non-members. A vessel that is "in class" has passed inspection by the American Bureau of Shipping and has a U.S. Coast Guard Certificate of Inspection (COI). Ships such as the JOHN SHERWIN and L.E. BLOCK are not currently in class and therefore not considered available for service.