

Colonel Card, Colonel Pond Renamed Mackinaw City and Sainte Ignace in April 1924

* Continued from page 10

adjacent to the Straits. New brochures and maps were in production, and, best of all, UPD Bureau President Bishop reported to Mayor Highstone that the state planned to pave State Street that summer. On a visit to Lansing, officials had assured him the work would be done because they wanted to complete the rest of Highway 12, the "Dixie Highway." More importantly, he said, they wanted the old gravel scraped off State Street to use as fill where they were improving the nearby state ferry dock.

Later that month, the *St. Ignace Republican-News* carried what it called its "obligatory 'Crossing the Straits' story," an article it said was run each year when there was a slow news day. It decried the problems people encountered in getting from one side of the Straits to the other, including delays experienced in the winter when the railroad boats were stuck in the ice. It blasted the waits drivers had experienced in the summer when the state boat was too crowded. It reviewed talk of bridging over or tunneling under the Straits, but

again concluded that the community would have to put up with the problem of ferry delays for a long time to come.

"Talk of bridging the Straits," the article surmised, "is like talk of a new state of 'Superior' to replace the Upper Peninsula. It is nothing but talk."

Lastly, the author complained of the train schedule compared to that which the railroad boats offered. Often the rail ferries provided bad connections with their own passenger trains, especially when the trains, themselves, were arriving more than an hour late.

"The Straits," the article concluded, "get a lot of blame that really belongs elsewhere."

Somewhat to the south of the St. Ignace State Ferry dock, the Great Lakes Towing company began reconstruction of the salvage boat *Favorite's* dock, across from City Hall. The work included all new foundation pilings, moving the warehouse to a point across the pier, and providing storage for a supply of coal so the *Favorite* could be fueled at her own dock. The owners of the property next door constructed a pier for pro-

cessing fish.

On the "State Dock," formerly the "Chambers Dock," work progressed at making a second landing slip for the additional boat the state was adding to the run. The pier roadway was strengthened, and as at the dock to the south, wooden cribbing was added at the north side of the dock so a supply of coal could be stored for the ferries.

The Soo Locks finally opened for business on Saturday, April 19, when five ships and perhaps their escort tug(s) passed upbound headed into Lake Superior. The *T.J. Drummond* opened the season downbound on the evening of April 20. But it would be three more weeks before Cloverland got to taste it's new harbinger of spring at the Straits. The winter seemed like it would never end.

At last, on Saturday afternoon, May 10, Captain May steamed the newly christened *Sainte Ignace* into her homeport city. Tying up at the somewhat remodeled State Dock, the ferry unloaded eight brand new automobiles being delivered to a dealership at the Soo from the factory in Detroit. Two other new cars also made the trip. They would be turned over to a Cheboygan dealer when the ferry made the first of two trips to Mackinaw City the next day. After the cars were delivered on the morning run, a number of curious locals made the round trip in the afternoon, returning in a little over an hour from the other side. The new ferry averaged between 11 and 12 miles per hour for the trip up the lake from Detroit and was expected to do about the same for her Straits crossings.

On Monday, May 12, a schedule of four daily crossings was inaugurated. Trips left St. Ignace at 7:00 and 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 and 3:30 p.m. Return trips left Mackinaw City at 8:30 and 11:30 a.m. and 2:00 and 5:00 p.m.

Next week: The State adds still another ferryboat.

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After a harrowing early winter voyage up the lakes to a Detroit shipyard, the *Colonel Card* and *Colonel Pond* were cut in two and a 50-foot extension was added to each ship's bow. They emerged as the Michigan State Ferries *Mackinaw City* and *Sainte Ignace* and entered service at the start of the 1924 season. (Snapshot from author's collection. Photographer unknown.)



The Michigan State Ferry *Sainte Ignace* was handed over to the Highway Department April 20, 1924, and she sailed for a new career at the Straits of Mackinac, arriving May 10 to begin more than 16 years of ferry service here. Her identical sister, the *Mackinaw City*, would soon follow. (Snapshot from author's collection. Photographer unknown.)

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SAAC Meeting Set for February 14

The School Activities Advisory Council will meet Wednesday, February 14, at 6 p.m. in the Les Cheneaux Elementary School conference room in Cedarville. Everyone is welcome.

Five Plow Trucks Come Up Short, Commission To Bill Manufacturer

Five new plow truck frames came up 10 inches shorter than specified and Mackinac County Road commissioners now are \$10,000 seeking compensation from the company that supplied the

trucks. Commissioners agreed to send a bill to Schultz Equipment and Parts Co., Inc. of Iron Mountain, seeking \$2,000 per truck. Commissioners made the decision Wednesday, January 24.

As the low bidder at \$497,104, Schultz Equipment did not provide the 341 inch frames as agreed upon. The furnished trucks were 331 inches in overall length.

Truck and Tailor Specialties of Boyne Falls discovered the error when it was fitting the trucks with additional equipment and then had to make unplanned adjustments based on the shorter frames, costing the county road commission more money.

The new plow trucks were delivered to the road commission at the end of December.

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