



History – Navigation

On Lake Témiscamingue

1823: In June 1823, Augus Cameron, superintendent of the Hudson Bay Company at Fort-Témiscamingue, commissioned the construction of the first sizeable boat in the region to be built on site by the Amerindians. The Kirkmichael could carry up to 40 persons, 16 of which were oarsmen. It sailed between Notre-Dame-du-Nord and Témiscaming, but was destroyed that same year in a vigorous storm while it was docked at the Fort.

1882-1883 – The first steamboats started sailing on Lake Témiscamingue. The first steamboat was called the Mattawan and it began operating in 1882 by Olivier Latour for the purpose of his sawmill. In 1883, the Largo was built for John Lumsden to tow logs on Lake Témiscamingue.

1887-1926 – The Minerve was built by the Témiscamingue Railway Company during the winter of 1886-87 to provide regular service from Témiscaming to Ville-Marie. The boat measured 105' X 23' X 6', had three decks and sailed at a speed of 10 to 13 miles an hour ensuring the transportation of passengers, merchandise and mail (transported by sleigh or snowshoes in the winter). Alex Lumsden became the owner of the Minerve in 1889. He made changes to the Opemican dock to adjust to the rising business activity. Its back wheel was replaced by a propeller unit. The main cabin was rebuilt and reception halls were added on the upper deck. It was renamed the Meteor and became the Lumsden Steamboat Line's main boat. In 1916, the Ville-Marie Navigation Company purchased the Meteor.



Did you know?

-In 1906, the cost for a return trip on the Meteor from:
Témiscaming to Fort-Témiscamingue : \$1 to go and \$1.95 to return
Témiscaming to Ville-Marie: \$1 to go and \$2.15 to return
Témiscaming to North Témiscamingue: \$1.50 and \$3.70
Témiscaming to Ville-Marie, the cost was \$4 for the transportation of a horse
Témiscaming to Ville-Marie, the cost was \$1 for the transportation of a cow



The arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway (1923-24) between Témiscaming, Ville-Marie and Angliers, created rugged competition for the Meteor. On November 29, 1926, it was deliberately sunk in front of Fort Témiscamingue on the Ontario side. The wreck was found in 1976 by members of the Ottawa Submarine Company. Today, the Meteor remains a symbol of development in Témiscamingue.

1888 – Captain Bergeron’s Étoile du Nord tugboat and Gillies Brothers Company’s tugboat Clyde were put into operation on Lake Témiscamingue. An Act of Parliament extended authority to the Upper Ottawa Improvement Company (also called I.C.O.) allowing it to include the sector from Rapides-des-Joachims to Notre-Dame-du-Nord for its log floating operations. Over the years, many tugboats operated on Lake Témiscamingue.



Harrison

1898 to 1927 – The Temiskaming was built by Alex Lumsden and operated by the Lumsden Steamboat Line until 1904 when it was purchased for the transportation of passengers by the Temiskaming Navigation Company. In 1909, the boiler exploded killing three crew members and a passenger. Around 1916, it was sold to the Compagnie de navigation de Ville-Marie and authorized to transport 250 passengers. The boat burnt in Haileybury on November 3, 1927.



Alexandra

1904-1951 – The I.C.O. purchased the Largo and installed its machinery in the Alexandra which was built at Long Sault. The Alexandra had a steel hull and the upper deck was made of wood. It had a crew of 15 men and measured 45 metres long, which made it the longest tugboat to sail on Lake Témiscamingue. It operated during 18 years as a steamboat with side wheels. During the winter of 1921-22, the I.C.O. installed propellers and three decks. It continued to operate until 1950, but was destroyed in 1951.



Lady Minto

1904 – The I.C.O. commissioned the construction of the Lady Minto at Long Sault. The boat was 146 feet long, had two decks and was propelled by two wheels on each side.

1940 to 1960 – Three tugboats were linked up to Opémican. The Wilda was a steel boat and a twin to the T.E. Draper that belonged to the I.C.O. It was dismantled at Opémican around the 1960s. The Beaver was a small steamboat during its first years of operation and was later modified to be oil-powered. It also stopped operating in the 1960s.



Wilda

1948-1979 – The P.J. Murer was a large tugboat that measured 85 feet long and 21 feet and 10 in. wide. It weighed 61 tonnes. It was in service at Opémican and could pull 300,000 logs. It was sold in 1979 and was transported to Kingston, Ontario on a long-load dolly equipped with 80 wheels.

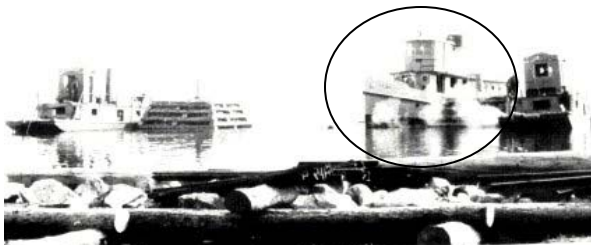


Many small wood tugboats were used on the lake to support the work of the larger boats to recover the logs along the water frontage. Some of these included the Harrison (1940-1960), the Pembroke, the Wabis, which pulled the kitchen and floating dormitories, the Alert (steamboat in the 1950s), and many flat bottom boats called alligators. The Silverland was a beautiful steel boat that was used for the transportation of passengers on the lake. The navigation period usually started at the beginning of May and ended around the month of December.

Activities on Lake Des Quinze and Lake Simard

1925-1972 – The Canadian International Paper Company (C.I.P.) had a large fleet of tugboats that navigated on Lake Des Quinze and Lake Simard. The T.E. Draper, the Henderson and the Expanse were among the largest tugboats.

1929-1972 – The T.E. Draper was built and launched at Gillies Bay for log towing on Lake Des Quinze. It was 61 feet in length (18.6 metres) and 17 feet wide (5.2 metres) and its upper works were 40 feet long (12.2 metres) and 15 feet high (5.6 metres). It weighed 100 tonnes (90.7 metric tonnes) and had a draught of 9 feet (2.7 metres). It was powered by a Fairbanks 285 hp motor. In the beginning, the crew was composed of 7 men.



T.E. Draper in the centre of the photo

1930 – 1950 – The J.A.H. Henderson towed logs on Lake Simard and was replaced by the Expanse in 1950.

On Lake Kipawa

1883 – Olivier Latour operated his first steamboat on Lake Témiscamingue in 1883 to supply his sawmill. The following year, he built another steamboat for Lake Kipawa for the same purpose.