

December 2023



on the Move

Local maritime news, events and history from the Chicago Maritime Museum

Letter From the Vice-Chairman

Dear CMM Members and Supporters:

This past year marks a tremendous milestone for the Chicago Maritime Museum. We are securely on our way to becoming a fully functional and sustainable museum for our key audiences.

We could not have done it without your support.

Two highlights come to mind: a \$200K donation by the CMM chair, Capt. Dave Truitt, for two new major exhibits to be completed in April 2024, one on Capt. William (Bill) Pinkney and the other on the Lady Elgin; and, a successful fundraising campaign, our fourth annual CMM Festival, hosted by Tom Kastle and Barry Butler, exceeding our goal of \$100K.



As we move forward into 2024, it is worth looking back on the events of the past year - those that we are proud of as well as those events we are saddened by.

On the latter, we sadly note the unexpected passing of **Capt. Bill Pinkney** in August. Captain Bill was not only a close friend, but also a huge supporter of the museum and was actively helping us design his exhibit. As a result of his death, the museum is more driven than ever to create an exhibit that not only memorializes his life and his many accomplishments, but also inspires school

children to live out their dreams, much as Bill did.



On to the good news. We are excited and proud to have welcomed a new Curator to our staff, **Madeline Crispell**, who brings not only the skills for maintaining our collection but is also steeped in Chicago history, with expertise in using small exhibitions to tell a story.

As part of our outreach to public schools, **Sari Breslin** is on a mission to educate Chicago Public School (CPS)

students on the importance of Chicago's maritime history.

Education outreach ties in with our existing exhibits that focus on key points in history, such as the importance of the waterways on trade and urban development. The new Captain Bill Pinkney Exhibit will highlight commitment and achievement, while the Lady Elgin Exhibit will focus on underwater archeology, displaying stories uncovered from the water's depth.

Our Museum Manager, **Ariana Rubin**, and Operations Board member **Trigg Waller** have organized a new volunteer program to support the anticipated growth of activities from new initiatives, as well as support of the ongoing programs.

Under the leadership of **Kath Thomas**, we hosted exciting events this year that included a Youth Empowered gathering (in conjunction with the Jackson Park Yacht Club Foundation), a teen event featuring Capt. Bill, and several book signing events: one on the *Eastland* Disaster by historical fiction author, Jocelyn Green and another with author Will Sofrin on the adventurous delivery of the *HMS Rose*, used in the movie *Master and Commander*. The most recent event was our successful CMMFestival, and upcoming is the December 9th holiday concert with Lee Murdock.



Thanks go to **Jim Jarecki** for our Third Friday series, which featured engaging talks on subjects including: the Underground Railroad in Chicago, early sailing vessels on the Great Lakes, preserving the Chicago Harbor Lighthouse, Marquette's 1673 map, the history of ship repair facilities on the Great Lakes, Irish shipbuilder John Gregory, and Magellan's historic circumnavigation of the earth.

Each month, our communications director, **Mary Ann O'Rourke**, creates a newsletter to inform our members on current events and maritime history. She also provides content on our social media platforms and helps spread the museum's message to the public and media.

Indeed, the museum has many hardworking volunteers including Operations Board members who give their time, and our Board of Directors, who have been generous in their financial support. We are an organization that depends on both volunteers and staff to create this world class boutique museum. As we move into the New Year, perhaps you might want to join our volunteers, our Operations Board or become a member of the Board of Directors. I think you will find it a fun and rewarding experience.

And, if you wish to support the museum, of course your donations at any level are more than welcome.

Best wishes for the New Year!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald H. Thomas".

Gerald H. Thomas
Vice-Chairman
Chicago Maritime Museum
admin@chicagomaritimemuseum.org

Donate Today!

Welcome the Holiday Season with Lee Murdock's Holiday Concert

Save Saturday, December 9, for great afternoon and early evening rounds of magical music and storytelling by Lee Murdock at the Chicago Maritime Museum. Murdock's concert opens with an early 4-5:30, timed to include the youngest museum fans, and in the second set, 6:30-8:30, the Dock Wallopers will join in. This is a rousing all-ages performance sure to ring in the season of holiday gatherings.



Before the concert, 3-4 pm, and during intermission, the museum will be open to concert attendees. Admission to museum is included for concert ticket holders.

Tickets will be available for preorder (see below) and at the door.

Seasonal cookies and beverages will keep spirits bright. To add your specialty to our list, contact Events Coordinator Kath Thomas at events@chicagomaritimemuseum.org

Where

Chicago Maritime Museum
River Level, Bridgeport Art Center, 1200 W 35th St, Chicago
Free Parking on North Side Lot

Ticket Prices

Members: Adults- \$20, Under 18- Free
Non-Members: Adult- \$25. Under 18- \$5

Questions: 773- 376-1982

[Preorder Tickets Here!](#)

Friends of the Chicago River Chooses CMM for Member and Volunteer Celebration



CMM will welcome partner organization, Friends of the Chicago River, as they celebrate their year of improving and protecting the Chicago-Calumet River system with fellow Friends members, volunteers, and partners at the Member and Volunteer Celebration, January 25 at CMM. Friends of the Chicago River will present Commitment Awards to three worthy supporters for their exceptional efforts on behalf of Friends' mission.

Private gatherings can be arranged by members, partner organizations or anyone interested in a truly unique venue at the Chicago Maritime Museum.

Contact [Kath Thomas](#) for more information.

Curator's Corner by Madeline Crispell Historical Maritime Postcards

Some of the smallest works of art in the museum are displayed in the section of the gallery dealing with the birth of steam travel. Of course, the tiny works of art in question are humble postcards.

Appropriately, since both the postcards on view and the steamships reflect the meeting point of travel and the exciting new technologies of the day.

The golden age of Great Lakes passenger steamers came at the perfect time for the booming turn-of-the-century postcard business. Impressive passenger ships bellowing steam in front of rosy, dramatic landscapes were frequent postcard subjects.

However, while one may think of passenger steamers as a natural fit for postcards, they were far from the only maritime subjects popular at the time.

Luckily, the Chicago Maritime Museum's postcard collection gives a wider survey of how postcard manufacturers were illustrating travel on the Great Lakes and what Americans were interested in sending.



In addition to glamorous lake travel, the museum's archives also depict images of freighters loading and unloading ore, of the dock structures and railroads, and of the mines where the ore was dug. In addition, postcards with industrial subjects often showed multiple angles or parts of the process, like the postcard reproduced above showing an ore boat docked and, in a smaller window, entering the docks.

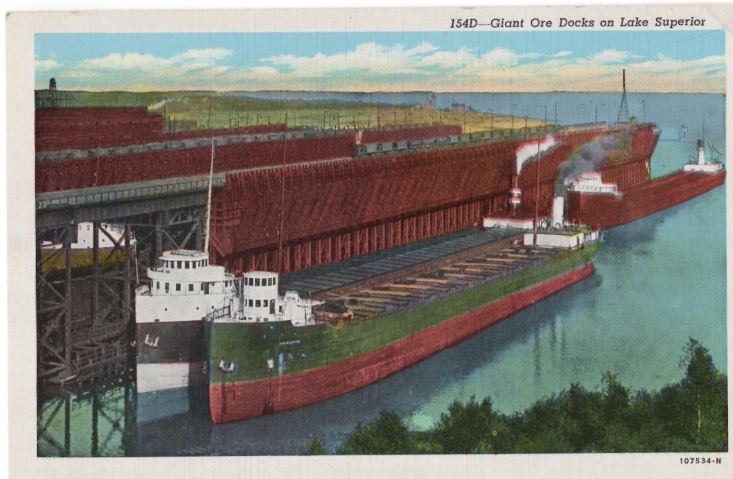
The three postcards here are typical in their approach to heavy industry as an impressive and interesting subject, but also in how they depict Great Lakes landscapes. Skies are technicolor and clouds are picturesque. The lakes are most often calm and beautifully colored. Note the ore boat leaving harbor during a storm curiously juxtaposes the high waves and stormy water of the "Northeaster" with a calm horizon and technicolor sunset.



While some of these choices were no doubt stylistic (swapping beautiful skies

for mundane ones) they are also reflective of the technology used to create these postcards. All three of the postcards reproduced here, and several of the passenger steamer postcards on view in the gallery, were produced by Chicago's Curt Teich & Company.

Curt Teich, a German immigrant who started his postcard printing firm in Chicago in 1898, is probably best known for introducing the "Greetings From" postcard style, where each letter in a place's name is inset with images of local landmarks. His company was an early adopter of offset printing and the halftone technology that printed photographs using tiny dots of color, which may be seen in the reproduced postcards here.

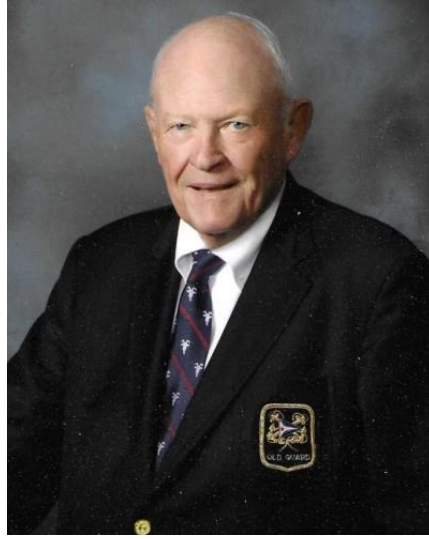


The printing technology used by the Curt Teich company allowed the printer to color and enhance photographs. This means that whether they depicted a city park or a ship during a bad storm, the background sky was bright blue or pastel pink with cotton candy clouds.

While the CMM archives feature maritime postcards spanning different industries and eras, Curt Teich's postcards are very well represented. Many of the postcards in the archive were never sent and are as pristine as the year they were printed. However, the few that were sent provide perspective on how tourists saw these ships and the maritime landscape. In the notes, people reference going to the docks to view ships, watch ore being unloaded, or to see lock systems in action. More than a hundred years since these postcards were sent, this aspect of Great Lakes tourism has fallen to the wayside. Later postcards that featured ore boats focused on the landscape rather than the actual ships.

Visitors can see some of the CMM's vast postcard collection in the North Gallery and can of course see some contemporary maritime postcards in our Museum Store.

Rest in Peace Peter Barrett



CMM is saddened to report that long-time museum supporter Peter Barrett passed away on November 27.

Peter was a passionate yachtsman, completing the Race to Mackinac 29 times and the Bayview Mackinac Race four times. He served as Treasurer of the Chicago Yacht Club in 1982 and for the Island Goats Sailing Society for 30 years.

Peter supported the Chicago Maritime Museum as a donor as well as serving on the Board of the Chicago Maritime Society.

Peter will be dearly missed by the museum and the Chicago maritime community.

When the Water Wars Come



A 100-year, \$1 billion agreement between the cities of Chicago and Joliet will transport water from Lake Michigan through a 31-mile pipeline.
Credit: S. Nicole Lane

Inside the plans for a pipeline between Joliet and Chicago.

[Learn More Here](#)

U.S. Coast Guard Unloads Christmas Trees at Navy Pier



The annual Christmas Ship delivery, a beloved holiday tradition, returned for its 24th year on Saturday, December 2.

This year's Christmas Ship Events were special due to the attendance and participation of Vice Admiral James D. Hull. Admiral Hull was the commander of US Coast Guard District 9 (which oversees operations of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway) in the year 2000 when Captain Dave Truitt (CMM's Chairman) and other Chicago mariners came up with the idea to revive the tradition of the annual Chicago's Christmas Ship.

Admiral Hull helped pave the way by enlisting *USCGC Mackinaw* as Chicago's new Christmas Ship, loading trees from northern Michigan to Chicago's Navy Pier for distribution to disadvantaged families in the city's underserved areas.

"Admiral Hull was thrilled to see how the event has grown to distribute over 30,000 trees over the last 24 years," says said George Kisiel, chairman of Chicago's Christmas ship committee. "He vows to return for next year's 25th anniversary of the modern version of Chicago's Christmas Ship."

[Watch WLS-TV Piece Here](#)

Maritime Event Calendar

Check out local maritime events at the Chicago Maritime Museum [website calendar page](#).

Submit maritime events in the Chicagoland area or story ideas to Mary Ann O'Rourke at communications@chicagomaritimemuseum.org.

Ready to join or renew your membership?

Information about our membership offers can be found [here](#).
If you need further membership support please email us at
cmm@chicagomaritimemuseum.org

We hope you've enjoyed our monthly e-newsletter, On the Move.

