

THE LAKE PILOTS' HANDBOOK

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The Lake Pilots' Handbook by George Trimble

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GEORGE TRIMBLE

**THE LAKE PILOTS'
HANDBOOK**



CAPTAIN GEORGE TRIMBLE
LICENSED PILOT FOR THE GREAT LAKES

THE LAKE PILOTS' HANDBOOK



USEFUL KNOWLEDGE PERTAINING TO THE
GREAT LAKES, AND GREAT LAKES' PILOTING,
THAT SHOULD BE USEFUL TO THE PROFESSIONAL
AS WELL AS TO THE BEGINNER.

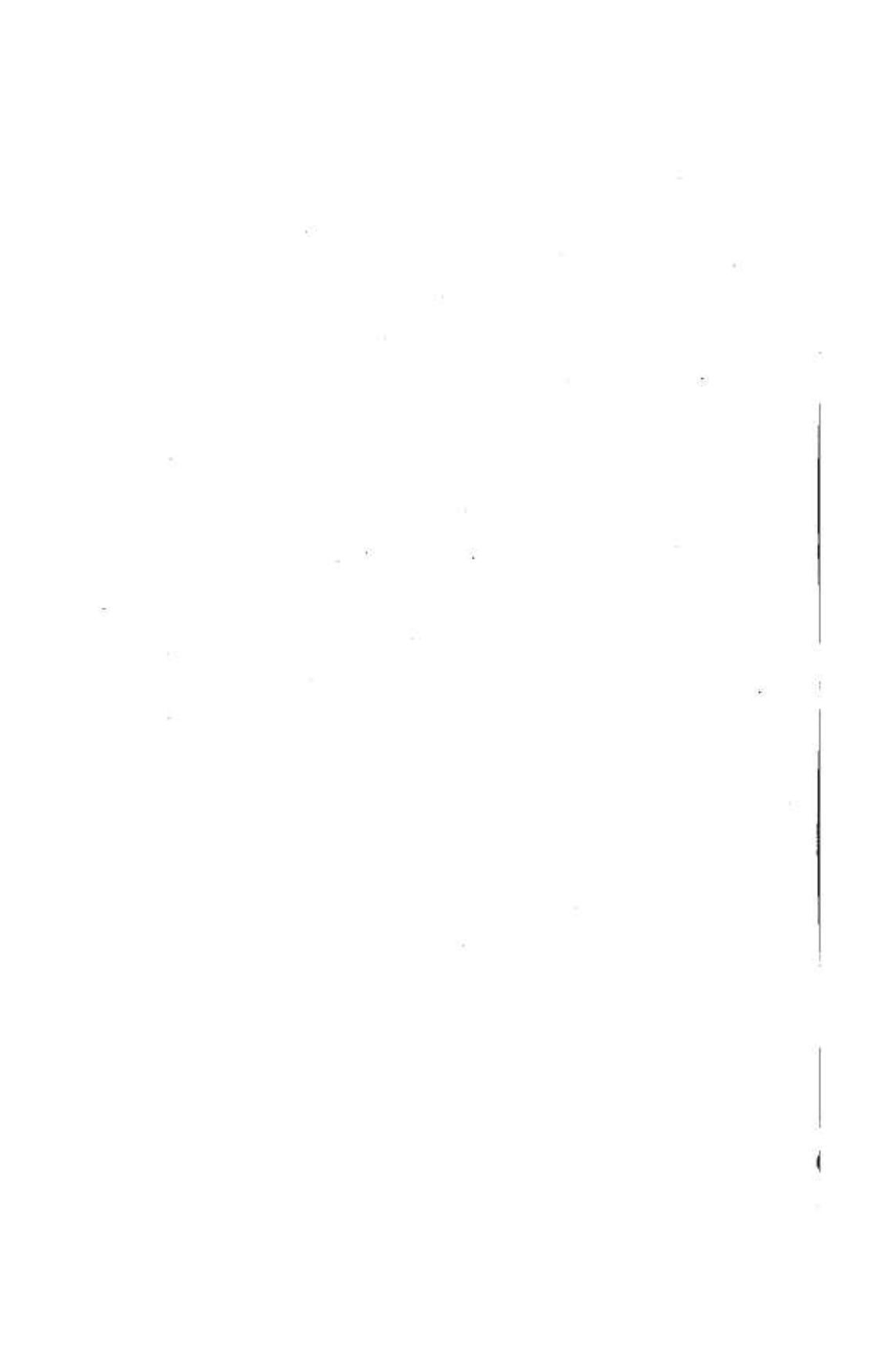


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PREFACE

The need of a handy book of reference and of general information on the subject of the Great Lakes and Great Lakes' Piloting has led the author to undertake the preparation of this work. For years he has been an enthusiastic collector of marine books and papers until his library contains almost every publication that treats of either lake or ocean affairs. From these books and papers have been culled all the valuable information that should be of interest to lake sailors, and this information is presented to you in these pages, together with much valuable information that the author has gained by years of service on the Great Lakes. The author has consulted such authorities as: Blue Book of American Shipping, Beers' History of the Great Lakes, Beeson's Inland Marine Guide, Patterson's Nautical Encyclopedia, Scott's Coast Pilot, American Merchant Marine, Henderson's Elements of Navigation, Georgian Bay Coast Pilot, Knight's Modern Seamanship, The Marine Review, &c., &c., and desires to express his indebtedness to all of these, especially the publications from the office of The Marine Review.

Excerpted p. 29-30

WHERE I GOT MY INFORMATION

I have a library containing almost every book that has ever been published on the subject of the lake marine, from the old Barnett's Coast Pilot to the handsome bulletin published at the office of the U. S. Lake Survey; I have the Lake Survey charts, the Hydrographic charts, and the Canadian make of charts; but one of my most valuable sources of information is a scrap book filled with clippings from the "marine news" columns of the daily papers, or the marine weeklies. I have made it a point never to miss a number of the daily paper that prints marine news.

A PILOT



A Definition.

A pilot is a person who makes a business of conducting vessels in and out of port, through narrow channels, up rivers, or along coasts where the navigation is especially difficult or dangerous.

The business of an ocean pilot is very much different from that of a lake pilot. Ocean steamers do not generally carry pilots as a part of their permanent crew. Lake steamers are required by law to carry two or three pilots aboard as part of their crew. The master and mates of an ocean steamer must be proficient navigators and be able to take their ship from one part of the world to another, but when they approach a port a pilot comes out in a small boat and takes charge of the vessel and conducts her into the harbor. But on the Great Lakes every master and mate of a steamer must also be a licensed pilot and be able to pilot his ship through all the difficult channels and along the five thousand miles of dangerous coasts, and besides being able to take the ship safely into one port, as the ocean pilots do, he is expected to be able to take his ship into the scores of harbors that abound on the Great Lakes. A Commander of an American ocean warship, who is now doing service on the Government ships on the lakes, is quoted as saying that he considers the lake pilots the best pilots in the world. He says that in a single trip through the narrow channels of the St. Clair and Detroit rivers, you would meet more ships than you would meet in a trip from New York to the East Indies, and the greater part of these ships would be the mammoth steel freighters that, from a distance, appear too big and unwieldy to be handled at all. And these big ships are taken through these narrow channels at night just as safely as they are in the daytime. In the trip from Lake Erie to Lake Superior a pilot has to take his ship through the Detroit, St. Clair and Soo rivers, the

aggregate distance of these rivers being over 150 miles. And when the lake is reached the same vigilance is needed as is required in the rivers. With 2500 vessels doing business on the Great Lakes there will, of course, be many in sight all the time. Collisions have to be avoided, not only with boats, but with floating wrecks, rafts, and with sunken rocks, and shoals, etc., etc. Is it any wonder then that the business of a lake pilot is an important one. Every year the Government of the United States is drawing the lines tighter around the lake pilot. A government inspector was asked as to what he thought was required of Great Lakes' pilots. He answered, "When a pilot can take a ship safely through the rivers, without a stake or a buoy or a guide of any kind, excepting his knowledge of landmarks, etc., I will then pronounce him proficient." If pilots could not do this, many ships would meet disaster on account of misplaced buoys, unlighted ranges, etc. A pilot on an American steamer must be an American citizen, must be able to read and write, and must hear and see perfectly.

