

Timothy Kelley, Retired Lakes Captain, Dies

Sailed For Nearly
55 Years; Funeral
To Be on Friday

Captain Timothy J. Kelley, 94, Manitowoc lake captain who sailed the Great Lakes for nearly 55 years before retiring here 25 years ago, died Tuesday evening at the home of his daughter, Mrs. M. J. Ryan, of 630 North Seventh street.

He is believed to be the last survivor of a long list of lake captains who commanded the big fleet of grain carriers that oper-



Captain Kelley

ated in the seventies between Chicago and Buffalo.

Funeral services will be held Friday at 8:30 a. m. from the Watawa, Urbanek and Schlei funeral home and at nine o'clock from the Sacred Heart church, the Rev. Louis Schorn officiating. Burial will be in Evergreen cemetery.

Captain Kelley to the end had full possession of all his faculties, except hearing. His mind was clear and his memory accurate. He started his sailing days as a boy of 13 years in 1862, and retired in 1916 after 54 years of continuous services on the lakes.

An Unbroken Diary

He retained a lively interest in marine matters and kept informed on them after he quit the lakes. To that end he read daily several newspapers and library books on history, biography and travel. He was a lifelong collector of books on ships, the sea and seamanship, and left hundreds of these volumes as well as an unbroken diary of 65 years.

Until a few years ago Captain Kelley made daily visits to the ship yards here to watch progress on boats under construction. In the winters, during his active life on the lakes he worked at a printer's case. He learned to set type by hand by working on the Manitowoc Pilot, starting as a "printer's devil" under Editor Jerry Crowley in 1883.

Captain Kelley was born in Springfield, Mass., in 1849. His parents had come to the United States from County Cork, Ireland, the previous year. After several years in Massachusetts and New Jersey the family landed in Manitowoc April 15, 1856. His father died in February, 1858, and was buried at Manitowoc Rapids and Captain Kelley started out on his own at the age of 13.

Sailed Schooners

In the seasons from 1862 to 1865 he was ship's boy on the schooners, "Ellen" "Free Mason" "Erie", "Wayne", "Experiment", "Board of Trade" and "William Quage." In those days the crews were discharged at the end of each trip, in ocean fashion. The next two years he was an able seaman on the "Naiad" and "Suncloud."

In 1868 he was second mate on the barque "Charles Nims" and the next year, at the age of 20, was mate of the same ship. In 1870 and 1871 he was mate on other lake vessels.

In 1872, at the age of 22, Captain Kelley was put in command of the schooner "C. L. Johnston" by Peter Johnston of Manitowoc and for the next seven years he skippered Johnston's larger schooner, the "Thomas Howland." After Mr. Johnston sold his fleet Captain Kelley took command of the "Wells Burt" a large square-rigged Chicago ship.

The next spring he began his long career with the Inter-Ocean Transportation Company. In 1882 and 1883 he commanded the barge "Meticomett" and at the opening of the 1884 season he took over the steam craft of this line. This service included 15 years as master of the "Manchester" and 11 years on the fleet's flagship, the "Maryland" from 1905 to 1915.

Steamers of this fleet were the largest size class on the Great

He married Miss Anna Buggie of this city in Chicago in 1870. Mrs. Kelley died in 1927 and two sons, Charles and Edward, preceded him in death.

Survivors are a daughter, Mrs. M. J. Ryan of this city, with whom Captain Kelley made his home; four sons, Postmaster Harry F. Kelley and Kenneth Kelley of this city, Dr. John M. Kelley of Cato and Timothy, Jr., of Beloit. There are 15 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

The body may be viewed at the funeral home from Thursday noon until the hour of services. The Holy Name Society will meet at the funeral home Thursday evening at 7:30 to recite the rosary.

Lakes when they were commissioned.

Disliked Idleness

For several years after his retirement Captain Kelley occasionally took a Manitowoc-built steam trawler to Boston from the yards here. He delivered several other new ships at New York for the Manitowoc Ship Building Company. On these trips to the coast he served as master and pilot only as far as Montreal, and as builder's delivery agent the rest of the trip.

He was restless with idleness and for two seasons took command of a large towing tug, the "Butterfield," engaged in towing rafts from the north shore of Lake Superior to Ashland. His last service on the lakes was at the age of 73.

Of all his lake experiences Captain Kelley recalls most vividly the "big blow" of 1881. In October of that year Captain Kelley brought his vessel, the "Wells Burt" into Lake Michigan, upbound from Chicago and ran into the storm, which sent the steamer Alpena to the bottom. Captain Kelley's ship weathered this gale.

Wife Died In 1927

Captain Kelley could never be prevailed on to write or dictate his recollections of old times on the lakes or of early-day Manitowoc. Sailing to him seemed only hard and dangerous work, but nothing of the heroic about it. He dreaded the appearance of posing as an "old sea dog" or as claiming any distinction.

He would sometimes talk of the picturesque characters on sailing vessels back in the 60's and 70's when the officers and most of the crew members were deep water men who had been everywhere.

Captain Kelley was a charter member of the Branch No. 2 Catholic Knights of Wisconsin, organized over 60 years ago and of the Holy Name Society of the Sacred Heart parish. In old age he had withdrawn from other affiliations.

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