

The Legacy of the Huron Docks

Self-Unloaders / Boats that Came to Huron

Location: Marker can be reached from Main Street north of Wall Street. It is just beyond the parking area for the Huron Docks and Lighthouse facing the dock walkway.



Photographed By J. J. Prats, August 8, 2019

Information taken from the [Historical Marker Database](#).

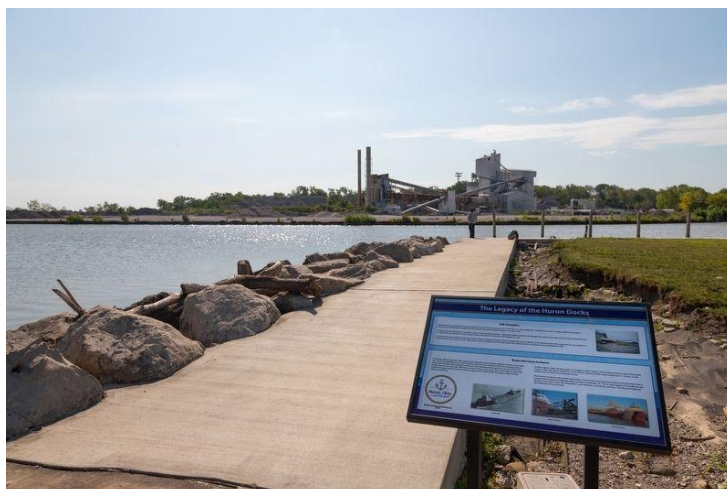
Inscription –
Self-Unloaders. Business at the ore docks was strong through the 1970s. An all time record was set in 1979 when 151 boats shipped in 2,784,000 tons of ore. As higher grade iron-ore grew scarce it

was replaced by lower grade taconite. It became the primary cargo for boats in the late 1970s.

By 1982 most of the taconite was shipped to Huron in self-unloading freighters, making the Hulett's obsolete. Even though the Hulett's were rarely used, the docks were still busy. In 1984 the docks received the largest cargo in history, 38,108 tons of taconite on the freighter St. Clair.

In 1985 the financial problems of the docks' largest shipper, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel in Steubenville, and the decline of the domestic steel mills caused the iron ore contract to be terminated. A new contract for the 1986 season could not be found and the docks closed. The Hulett's and the coal dumper were dismantled in 1989.

Boats that Came to Huron. During the 1950s through the 1970s watching the impressive bulk freighters dock and unload or load cargo was a much-anticipated event for many Huronites. Boats from the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company came to Huron often because



of the company's contracts to carry Wheeling-Pittsburgh's iron ore. One of the more notable ships to visit Huron was *Cliffs Victory*, a former Victory ship. Victory ships were a type of cargo ship produced in large numbers by North American shipyards during World War II to replace ships sunk by German submarines.

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Another regular visitor was the *Joseph H. Thompson*, which came to Huron about 40 times a year. She arrived every 5½ days with about 20,500 tons of ore. The two electric Hulettts could unload her in 11 hours. It took another hour to wind or turn the boat around.

The *Arthur M. Anderson* also docked frequently in Huron. She is most famously known as the last ship to be in contact with the *Edmund Fitzgerald* before sinking on November 10, 1975 in Lake Superior. The *Anderson* was the first rescue ship to reach the *Fitzgerald* in a vain attempt to rescue any survivors. The *Edmund Fitzgerald* also delivered iron ore to Huron.

Erected 2018 by the Huron Historical Society thehuronhistoricalsociety.org.

Hulettts were ore unloaders that were widely used on the Great Lakes of North America., They lift ore from the ship to fill rail cars. They were unsuited to tidewater ports because they could not easily adjust for rising and falling tides.



Hulettts at work in Cleveland Photographed for the Farm Security Administration, May 1943

More about this marker. Taconite is a source of iron ore from Minnesota, an iron-bearing sedimentary rock, in which the iron minerals are interlayered with quartz, chert, or carbonate.