

Blue Water Highway



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Ojibwe
Canoe
at Lake
Superior
Shoreline

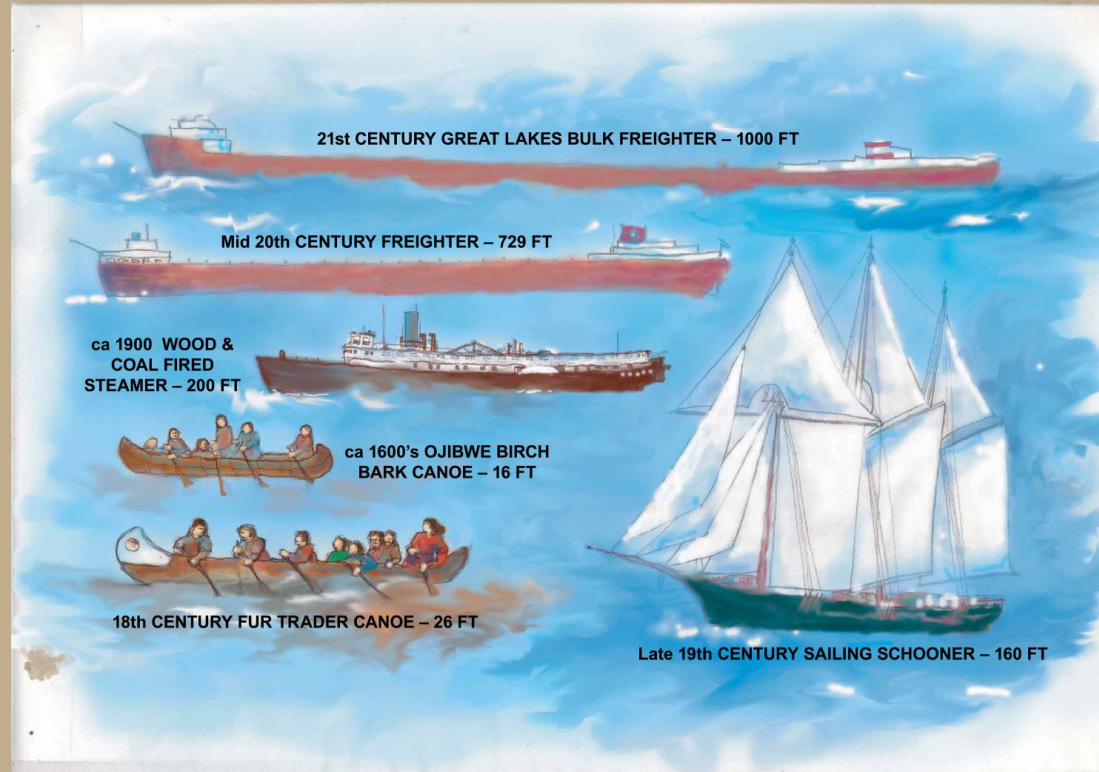
Illustration:
Mike Lempinen

FRESH WATER ROUTES

Four hundred years ago, native Ojibwe could be seen paddling their 16-foot birch bark canoes skimming this shoreline. Half a century later, French and British fur traders would also be navigating these waters in 26-foot canoes. The discovery of iron ore and copper in the mid 1840's popped open this trade route. First came the stately sailing schooner which brought in people and supplies and carried out chunks of ore.

As the ore trade boomed, the ships got bigger and sturdier. The 200-foot wood and coal powered steamers displaced the sailing vessel. But a larger carrier, the mighty freighter, replaced the others and ruled Superior's shipping lanes. Growing to 1000-foot behemoths, their hulks can be seen on the horizon carrying out ore pellets to hungry furnaces down south.

Providing centuries of commerce, Lake Superior can be deemed the Blue Water Highway.



21st CENTURY GREAT LAKES BULK FREIGHTER – 1000 FT

Mid 20th CENTURY FREIGHTER – 729 FT

ca 1900 WOOD &
COAL FIRED
STEAMER – 200 FT

ca 1600's OJIBWE BIRCH
BARK CANOE – 16 FT

18th CENTURY FUR TRADER CANOE – 26 FT

Late 19th CENTURY SAILING SCHOONER – 160 FT

Legacy of Lake Superior Vessels

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