

Winter work starts when shipping stops



Crews began dewatering the Poe Lock when the shipping season ended January 15. This allowed access to several working parts of the lock and the only opportunity to complete many maintenance tasks. Projects this year included work on the gates, clearing drains and completing upgrades to the operating system.



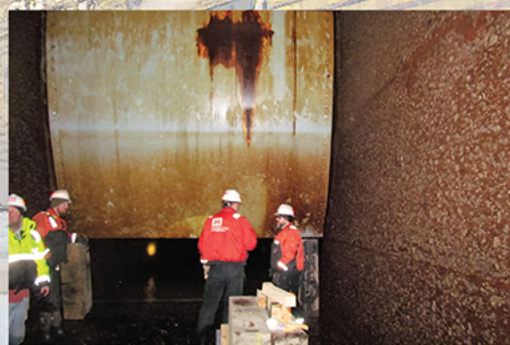
Dam building

Dewatering began with crews installing a temporary dam at the upper end of the lock. Eight separate stop logs, weighing 49-tons each, roll down slots in the lock wall and rest on top of each other blocking water from entering the lock.



24 hour watch

Even with the dams in place, water still seeps into the lock and pumps are used to keep it dry. Because a pump failure could allow the lock to flood and freeze they are monitored 24/7. Every hour a watchman physically checks each pump and keeps detailed records of the power used and water levels in the pump well. Their close attention to these details help identify issues before they become problems.



Deep in the lock walls

During the shipping season water fills the culverts in the lock walls making them inaccessible. When the lock is dewatered crews can enter these areas to inspect and work on the 25,200 pound reverse tainter valves that control the flow of water in and out of the lock chamber.



Log work

Work on the MacArthur Lock stop logs has been a regular winter work project for several years. Each 29-ton log has been pulled into a temporary shelter for sandblasting, inspection and repair before repainting.



Ice, ice and more ice

Temperatures well below freezing meant crews spent a lot of time battling ice and snow to open drains on the lock floor to keep them clear.



Ready for the 2018 Season

Their winter tasks complete, crews pulled the stop logs to rewater the lock in plenty of time for the March 25 opening and the waiting American Century.



American Century opens the 2018 season



Regardless of the weather the arrival of the first ship at the Soo Locks is the real sign of spring for the people of Sault Sainte Marie. An annual tradition has evolved to mark the occasion with officials from the City and local agencies turning out to greet the first ship. This year, the 1000-foot-long American Century took the honors and received a variety of welcome gifts including hats, plaques and treats from a popular waterfront burger joint.

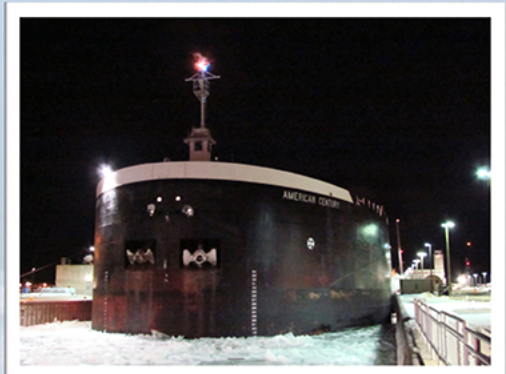


Captain Dunlap invited the welcoming party on deck where Soo Locks Visitor Center Association Secretary Ed Reining presented him with a plaque and "1st ship" caps for the entire crew on behalf of the Association and its members.



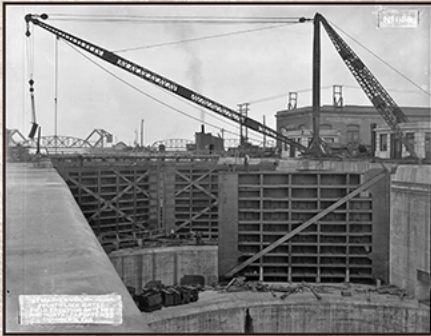
The *Philip R. Clarke* and *Edgar B. Speer* joined the *American Century* on the piers to wait for the midnight opening of the Poe Lock. The Soo Locks operate 24/7 from March 25 through January 15, rain or shine.

At 12:01 a.m. on the dot, the boom went up, the gates opened and the *American Century* made her way into the Poe Lock to kick off what promises to be another great navigation season at the Soo Locks.



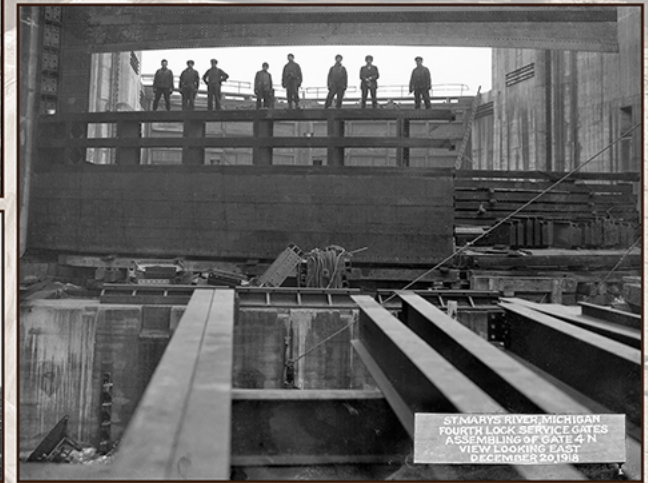
One Hundred Years Ago

While American soldiers fought in Europe, at home, the entire country engaged in a deadly battle against the Spanish flu. People donned protective gauze masks and avoided large gatherings as the virus struck all over the world. At the Soo Locks work continued on the Sabin Lock and crews kept boats moving through the Weitzel, Poe and Davis Locks allowing millions of tons of raw materials to reach steel mills around the Great Lakes.



1918 Highlights

- January 8 - President Woodrow Wilson makes "Fourteen Points" speech to U.S. Congress
 - February 8 - Stars and Stripes published for the first time
 - March 3 - Russia withdraws from WWI
 - March 4 - Spanish Flu - first case in United States confirmed
 - March 19 - Congress establishes time zones and daylight savings time begins March 31
 - April 21 - The "Red Baron," Manfred von Richtofen, shot down over France
 - July 19 - Nelson Mandela born
 - August 24 - World Series baseball players granted draft exemption by Secretary of War
 - August 27 - Only WWI battle on American soil, Battle of Ambos Nogales in Arizona between U.S. and Mexico
 - October 17 - Rita Hayworth born
 - November 11 - World War I ends at 11 a.m.
 - December 4 - Woodrow Wilson becomes first U.S. president to visit Europe while in office
- Average wage for construction workers: \$0.57 per hour
One gallon of milk costs \$0.56



Then and Now: Soo Locks Traffic

	1918	2017/2018
Navigation Season:	242 days	297 days
Vessel Passages:	20,610	7,032
Tons of Cargo:	85,680,327	75,331,868
Tons of Iron Ore:	60,551,296	47,683,728
Largest Single Load:	15,133 tons <i>D.G. Kerr</i>	75,095 tons* <i>American Integrity</i>

*New record at the Soo Locks!



Virus becomes global killer during WWI

By the end of 1918, World War I had killed more soldiers than any previous war, but even more people would die from influenza sweeping the planet during 1918. While the war killed more than 8 million military personnel, "Spanish flu" would claim an estimated 50-100 million lives. No one knows the exact origin of the disease, but the airborne virus appears to have begun in late 1917 and quickly spread with large movements of troops around the world. Unlike typical viral infections which strike the young and elderly hardest - this strain of H1N1 virus primarily infected and killed healthy young people.

The disease spread quickly - the first confirmed case in the U.S. was reported on March 4 at Fort Riley, Kansas and within a week 500 soldiers there were ill with the virus. It then spread throughout the country and cases arose around the world. The flu reached Michigan in the early fall of 1918 with more than 20,000 cases reported across the state by the end of October. To combat the health emergency people wore gauze masks, the Governor banned all public gatherings and many communities around the state closed schools.

Ultimately, the virus killed between 500,000-675,000 Americans before it ran its course.