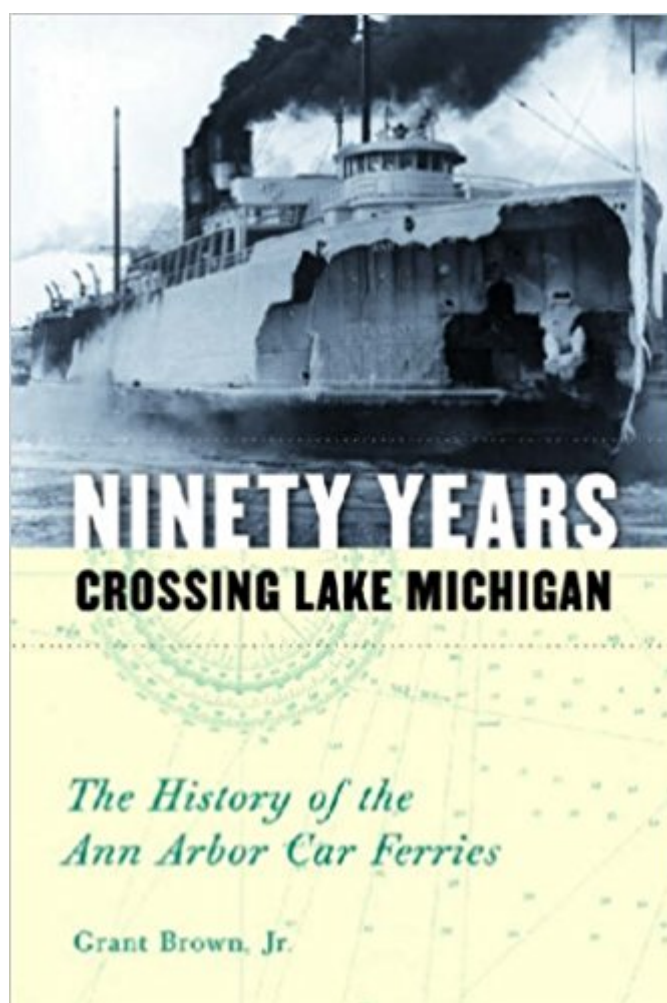


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Ninety Years Crossing Lake Michigan: The History Of The Ann Arbor Car Ferries



Synopsis

"A must buy for anyone interested in the Great Lakes."---Frederick Stonehouse, maritime historian
In 1892, the Ann Arbor Car Ferries shook the transportation world by doing what was then deemed impossible---carrying loaded railroad cars by ship across the sixty-two miles of open water between Frankfort, Michigan and Kewaunee, Wisconsin. With passion, acuity, and remarkable detail, Grant Brown describes the nearly 100-year crossings---from their beginnings with James Ashley's bold new idea of car ferrying down to the last fight for survival until the Michigan Interstate Rail Company finally closed in 1982. Crossing the lake with loaded freight cars was a treacherous task that presented daily obstacles. Knowledgeable people believed it was impossible to secure rail cars from tipping over and sinking the ship. Weather and ice presented two near-insurmountable hurdles, making car ferrying doubly difficult in the winter when nearly all shipping on the Great Lakes shut down. This vivid history gives voice to the ships and their crews as they battled the storms without modern navigational aids or adequate power. This spirited account of the Ann Arbor car ferries draws on ships' logs from various museums, over 2,000 newspaper articles, annual reports from 1889 through 1976, and interviews with former employees. The result is a living history of the ships, the crews, and their adventures; of the men who built and ran the business; and of the enormous influence the vessels had on the communities they served. Grant Brown, Jr., worked for S.D. Warren Company, a paper manufacturer, for 37 years. He raced sailboats on Crystal Lake in northern Michigan for ten years while growing up, continued in Boston and St. Louis, and has since returned to living and racing in Frankfort, Michigan. He spent eight years in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve, where he learned navigation and shipboard procedure.

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Customer Reviews

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This book is the finest history of the Ann Arbor Railroad published. The book focuses on the car ferries, of course, but includes vast detail about the Ann Arbor Railroad's history as well. The book is written in a compelling style and includes detailed end notes to support the factual content. The numerous photographs add greatly to the book. Highly recommended!

Great account, and great book...

I would rate this as one of the top Lake Michigan carferry books I have read. This is focused on a specific carferry line--(the Ann Arbor), yet includes information regarding some of the other carferry lines, (Pere Marquette, Grand Trunk, Straits carferries, etc), as well as general carferry information and history, such as battling great lakes ice, rough weather sailings, life on board carferries, famous names in carferry development and history, reasons that caused the need for carferries, along with the reasons for their decline and what has become of the various carferries since their demise. This appears to me to be a very well researched and detailed book for anyone with an interest in carferries on the Great Lakes. Great Job and Highly Recommend.

This book is a great companion to the other fine Lake Michigan carferry works that are out there. This book focuses highly on the fierce weather encountered during both winter and summer seasons. Lots of tales of ice, including some excellent descriptions of weather patterns and the reasons the ferries got stuck in the ice...

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