

CHAPTER VII.

ST. JOSEPH CHANNEL (CHART 1507).

VARIATION $2^{\circ} 10' W.$

ST. JOSEPH CHANNEL* is the name given to the water separating St. Joseph island from the mainland of the district of Algoma, and from Bruce Mines on the east to Sugar island of the United States on the west, is $15\frac{1}{2}$ nautical miles in length. The eastern entrance between Bruce Mines and Big point is broad and the channel keeps wide for 6 miles to the Sister rocks. Hence to Bamford island light-house—4 miles further—the channel is narrowed by islands, being only 100 yards wide at Wilson channel, the name given to the passage half a mile north-eastward of Bamford island light-house.

From this light-house to that on Shoal island, a distance of 4 miles, the channel from shore to shore (called by some, Bear lake) is broader, but the shoals from the north shore limit the width of the navigable passage considerably. After passing the narrows at Shoal island light-house, the channel again widens for $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles to the buoyed channel of St. Mary river.

The two places requiring the greatest care in navigating St. Joseph channel, are the vicinities of Shoal and Bamford islands, on account of the sunken rocks—usually buoyed—and strong current.

A stranger should not attempt St. Joseph channel at night, but will have no difficulty—when the buoys are in position—in navigating in day light, by following the directions herein given, which will lead him over not less than 18 feet water, and no doubt, if sufficient buoys were placed, as much as 24 feet *could* be had in the shoalest place.

A vessel from lake Superior bound to the south-eastern ports of Georgian bay, by using St. Joseph channel and the North Channel of lake Huron, can have 110 miles of comparatively smooth water from Sault Ste. Marie to Badgeley island, before emerging into the open waters of Georgian bay, adding considerably to the comfort of passengers in the fall of the year. The distances from the south-eastern ports of the bay are not much increased by taking the inside route as will be seen by the following:—

Owen Sound to Sault Ste. Marie by inside track is 230 nautical miles, by lake Huron 224; Collingwood by inside route 245, by lake Huron 237; Midland 246 and 242 respectively while from Parry Sound the distance by inside track is 220, by lake Huron 222.

In treating of St. Joseph channel, it will be divided into three portions, Bruce Mines to the Sisters, the Sisters to Bamford island light-house, and the latter to St. Mary river.

* See chart No. 909 for eastern portion of St. Joseph channel.