

GLENLYON

Confusion is often the result when researchers delve into the history of lake vessels with similar names, particularly those which operated many years ago. In some cases, the situation was caused by certain fleets which had a propensity to shift names around amongst their various ships, and in other cases, a famous name simply would be repeated in successive vessels. The latter-day historian must take great care when attempting to sort through the histories of such ships.

One name which was particularly common on vessels around the turn of the last century was that of William H. Gratwick, a Buffalo gentleman who was much involved in the shipping industry. No less than five lake steamers were named for him! One was the wooden steam barge W. H. GRATWICK (sometimes the name was spelled "Wm." or "William") which was built in 1880 at Detroit. The 48-foot tug WM. H. GRATWICK was built at Buffalo in 1882. The 265-foot wooden-hulled steamer WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (I) was built in 1887 at West Bay City, while at the same port in 1893 was constructed the 328-foot steel steamer WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (II). Another steel freighter, the 416-foot WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (III), was built at Cleveland in 1902.

To make matters even more confusing, there was considerable overlapping of the periods during which these various vessels operated under those names. In particular, WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (I) and (II) were in service at the same time and bearing the same name, while the same situation developed with WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (II) and (III). Persons reading vessel passages during the period 1893 through 1911 would do well to exercise caution should they read the name GRATWICK!

The vessel which we have chosen to feature in this issue is the 1893-built WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (II). She was a beautiful steamer, and one which operated for a great many fleets. In fact, for the first two decades of her life, she only rarely operated for her actual owner, and spent most of her time running under charter to other operators. She spent the last decade of her life under the ownership of Canada's most famous shipping entrepreneur, but her career was cut short by an untimely accident which, fortunately, was not accompanied by any loss of life.

WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (II) was built as Hull 93 of F. W. Wheeler & Company's shipyard at West Bay City, Michigan, and she was launched on Saturday, February 4th, 1893. She was enrolled at Cleveland, Ohio, under official number U.S.81427. Her steel hull was 328.0 feet in length, with a beam of 42.5 feet and depth of 20.5 feet. Her tonnage was registered as 2818.27 Gross and 2202.90 Net.

To produce power for her single propeller, the GRATWICK was fitted with a triple expansion engine which had cylinders of 20, 32 and 54 inches diameter and a stroke of 42 inches. The engine was built by F. W. Wheeler & Company in 1893, and produced 1,200 I.H.P. (or 189 N.H.P.) turning at 90 r.p.m. Steam at 164 p.s.i. was produced by two coal-fired, single-ended, Scotch boilers, which measured 12'0" by 13'0" and had six furnaces. The boilers were manufactured in 1893 by Wickes Bros., of Saginaw, Michigan.

The new vessel was, in the fashion of the day and typical of Wheeler boats, designed to be beautiful in appearance as well as functional. She had just about as much sheer to her hull as any lake steamer ever had, and the sweeping lines of her deck were accentuated by the curve of the heavy wooden fender strakes which ran along her sides to protect her steel plating. The steamer had a straight stem, but it actually appeared to pull backward as it rose to the peak of the forecastle, as a result of the hull sheer. A most graceful and deeply undercut counter stern complemented the hull's lines.

The anchor chains emerged from the hull through hawsepipes set almost at the stem. On each side, there was a stocked anchor which was set atop the forecastle head, with a davit positioned at the stem to raise and lower the anchors. Right at the stem was placed the steering pole, a vertical staff