

MAPLEHILL

When many of today's younger marine historians think of the canallers, a class of ship which many of them never saw in operation, they tend to consider primarily those vessels built to the dimensions of the old canals during the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, those were the years during which the best known canal-sized lakers were constructed, as the Canadian fleets struggled to update their operations and replace older vessels as well as the many canallers which had been lost during World War One.

However, a great many steel-hulled canallers were built in the years before the commencement of the war, and in many ways they were the most handsome of the canal boats. They were constructed in the years before mass-production became common, and the steamers generally were designed individually. For this reason, they tended to have more distinctive and graceful lines than did their later counterparts, and they also were rather more substantially built. Some of those completed around the turn of the century enjoyed extremely long lives, surviving right up until the advent of the large locks of the new St. Lawrence Seaway.

In 1904, the Bertram Engine Works Company Ltd. constructed at its Toronto shipyard its Hull 43, which was a canal-sized steamer built to Bertram's own account. (In other words, the ship was designed and built by the yard in the anticipation that she could be sold to one of the Canadian lake operators when she was completed.) The steel-hulled bulk carrier was 246.0 feet in length between perpendiculars (256.0 feet overall), with a beam of 42.6 feet and depth of 15.0 feet. Her original tonnage was 1603 Gross and 1010 Net. She was powered by a triple expansion engine which had cylinders of 15 3/4, 25 and 42 inches diameter and a stroke of 30 inches. Steam was provided by two Scotch boilers, 10 feet by 11 feet. All of the machinery was built for the vessel by the shipyard.

The steamer was designed to carry 70,000 bushels of grain when loaded to full canal draft. To assist her in handling cargoes other than grain, she was fitted with six whirly-type deck cranes of three-ton capacity each. Three cranes were fitted on each side of the spar deck, one set each abaft the first, third and fifth hatches.

The ship was launched on Saturday, July 23rd, 1904, and her sponsor was none other than Mrs. Bertram. We have been unable to find out anything about her, but we assume that Mrs. Bertram was the wife of the proprietor of the shipyard. In any event, the steamer was christened HADDINGTON, and she was enrolled at Toronto under Official Number C.116764. Her original registered owner was S.S. Haddington Ltd., and she entered service in September of 1904 under the management of the well-known J. and J. T. Mathews, of Toronto, whose vessel operations later were consolidated under the name of the Mathews Steamship Company Ltd., Toronto.

HADDINGTON was a very good-looking canaller, with a slightly raked stem, a handsome sheer to her deck, and a graceful counter stern with a pronounced undercut of the hull. She had a full forecastle, with a closed steel rail for a bit more than half its length. Atop the forecastle was a texas cabin, which contained the master's office and quarters, and in front of it was situated a small, rounded pilothouse, with seven large sectioned windows in its front. An open navigation bridge was located on the monkey's island atop the pilothouse, and the heavily raked foremast rose up out of the texas.

An open railing ran down both sides of the spar deck, and there was a closed steel taffrail around the after cabin and the fantail. The after cabin was large, and there was a slightly "indented" (narrower) boilerhouse at its forward end. There was a wide overhang of the boat deck around all of the deckhouse, except the boilerhouse, to provide shelter for the walkway around the cabin. The tall and well-proportioned funnel rose out of