

WINONA REVISITED

Our Ship of the Month No. 207, of the issue of November 1993, was the small passenger steamer WINONA, built in 1902 at Port Stanley, Ontario, for The Navigation Company of Port Stanley. We were not, however, able to include much detail of what she did during her years on Lake Erie and environs, before she went north to run for the Purvis interests in the North Channel of Lake Huron. As well, there were questions arising out of the ownership of the vessel as it was reported in the Canadian List of Shipping.

During her early years, she was quite well known in the Wallaceburg area, where she ran scheduled service and also did a number of excursions much enjoyed by local residents. As a result of the efforts of longtime members Alan Mann and Dr. Gordon Shaw, we now are able to provide some details concerning this important stage in WINONA's life.

In 1902 and 1903, WINONA must have been running down on Lake Erie, because there is no mention in local sources of any appearance of the steamer in the Wallaceburg area in those seasons. During 1903, the HIAWATHA and the CITY OF CHATHAM were the passenger boats normally serving Wallaceburg, although the big propellor RAPIDS KING ran an excursion from Wallaceburg to Detroit in September of the year.

WINONA made her appearance in 1904, and advertisements which ran in the "Wallaceburg News" indicate that she began to serve the area on April 25th, 1904, with Capt. J. Ellison (her builder and the principal of The Navigation Company of Port Stanley) as her manager, and Capt. Walter Power as her master. She was scheduled to run to Windsor every Monday, leaving Dresden at 7:30 a.m., Tupperville at 8:15 a.m., and Wallaceburg at 9:40 a.m., while she made the return trip every Tuesday, leaving Windsor at 8:00 a.m. Fares from Wallaceburg were 75¢ one way or \$1.25 return; from Tupperville, 85¢ and \$1.35, while from Dresden the cost was \$1.00 one way or \$1.50 return.

Every Thursday, WINONA sailed for Detroit, with a special round trip fare of 75¢. She departed Wallaceburg at 7:00 a.m., and returning she sailed from John Stevenson's dock at Detroit at 4:00 p.m. "Canadian Time". It was advertised that WINONA was available for charter every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Sunday, of course, was a quiet day for the ship, as operation on the Sabbath was not permitted in Ontario, so trips were not originally scheduled for that day.

It was not long, however, before WINONA had a run-in with the Lord's Day Act, as reported in the June 30, 1904, issue of the Wallaceburg newspaper: "Information has been laid against the officers of the steamer WINONA, and the general impression on the street is that the strict Sabbatharian who started the law machinery in motion was one of our ministers, but whether that is right or not will be shown when the case comes up. The charge is violation of the Lord's Day Act in running an excursion from the town to the cemetery and from Dresden to Wallaceburg on Sunday last (June 26th), Decoration Day. The landing of this excursion boat into the magistrate's dock has greatly agitated the citizens and particularly the members of the societies, as it was for their convenience that Capt. Ellison run (sic) the steamer on Sunday. The captain strives to run his passenger business in such a way as to meet the approval of all law abiding citizens.

"When the societies, whose membership is made up of the best citizens of the town, saw fit to hold Decoration Day on Sunday, prominent men and clergy sanctioned it by taking part, it was not looked upon as a desecration of the Sabbath Day only by a few (sic), and as the holding of Decoration Day would necessitate the running of the boat, that is if the convenience and comfort of the ladies and children are to be considered, the popular opinion was in favour of the boat running, thus giving a chance for those who wanted to escape trampling or driving through the clouds of dust on the road to the cemetery, and the trip by boat overcame this trouble, and thus Capt. Ellison gave the excursion at the societies' request, who will no doubt stand by him. Those who oppose the excursion maintain that it may not appear very bad