

PLAYFAIR PORT OF REGISTRY

Readers will recall that when we featured the history of the Wolvin canaller JOHN CRERAR some months ago, we puzzled over the registry of the steamer when she operated for the Playfair interests as GLENGARNOCK. She and her sisterships did not appear in the Canadian register when Playfair owned them, and Lloyd's showed only that they were "British" and gave no specific port of hail. Several readers later wrote to advise that the ships were registered at Newcastle, the River Tyne port at which many of the 1920s-built canallers were registered when they first came to the lakes. That even the older Wolvin boats were registered there is not surprising in view of the close relationship between Playfair and the Newcastle shipbuilder Swan, Hunter & Wigham Richardson Ltd.

We did note, in one of our follow-ups to the GLENGARNOCK story, that we had no stern view of any of the Playfair canallers that would positively identify the port of registry. In response to this, member Vern Sweeting, of Midland, has generously shared with us several photos taken around Midland Harbour by photographer J. W. Bald. One of them is particularly interesting and shows the port during the winter of 1923-1924. Breaking ice in the foreground of the photo is the big tug LUCKNOW.

Behind the tug is a row of laid-up steamers which are, left to right, GLENLIVET, GLENDOWAN, GLENSTRIVEN and GLENFARN. The GLENDOWAN and GLENFARN, of course, were Wolvin boats, and clearly visible on the counter stern of each is the registry port Newcastle. Thus we have proof positive of the registry of the Wolvin boats during their Playfair years.

The photo shows some other interesting ships. In the background is a string of Playfair steamers including GLENMAVIS and GLENLYON. The two stacks visible over GLENFARN's pilothouse belong to Playfair's yacht PATHFINDER. On the other side of the dock from the yacht are two black-hulled steamers; they are J. A. MCKEE and THOMAS J. DRUMMOND, recently purchased by the Paterson fleet but still wearing the colours of the Canadian Government Merchant Marine.

We thank Vern Sweeting for providing this photo, copied for us from one of Bald's Midland harbour panoramas.

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WINONA YET AGAIN

While on the subject of things having to do with the port of Midland, we must admit that we could not resist sharing with our members two additional photos of the passenger steamer WINONA, the subject of a recent "Scanner" feature and several follow-ups. Both photos show WINONA when she was operating out of Midland for the Playfair and White interests. One view, supplied through the courtesy of Vern Sweeting, is one of several small photos on a J. W. Bald postcard, and shows WINONA on what appears to have been a regular trip. Bald took many excellent photos of the vessels which were seen around the Midland area during the first third of the century.

The second WINONA photo, again by Bald, is an absolute gem, shared with us by member Gordon Wendt, of Sandusky, Ohio. It shows WINONA at the Midland town dock, and it is obvious that it was the day of a very special occasion. Note the crowds on steamer and dock, and the lodge regalia worn by many of the men in the picture. We'd love to know more about what was going on when Mr. Bald snapped the shutter of his camera.

While speaking of WINONA, we must apologize for an error which crept into the follow-up item that appeared in the March issue, where it was stated that the big steamer RAPIDS KING had run an excursion from Wallaceburg to Detroit in September of 1903, before WINONA appeared on the Sydenham River. We must have been dozing not to have noticed this little problem; RAPIDS KING was not built until 1907!

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