

known shipbuilder at Port Glasgow on the Clyde. Ten years later, in 1834, he emigrated back to Upper Canada where he was engaged by the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company. Over the next few years he would be responsible for the new construction at the yard, including *Traveller* (1835), *Experiment* (1837), *Queen Victoria* (1838), *Gore* (1839) and *Niagara* (1840). In addition, he was largely responsible for the ship repair business on the company's marine railway, especially during the rush at the beginning and end of the shipping season.

Part of the interest in the construction of this otherwise rather ordinary Upper Canadian steamboat is precisely her ordinariness. It is also the case that, at least on the Great Lakes, there are very few sources that offer this level of detail about the rhythm of vessel construction.

## 1838

June 21: Mr. Lockhart<sup>2</sup> has succeeded in disposing to "Government" his small steamer the *Experiment*, for £4,500.<sup>3</sup> In consequence of this sale, he has determined to replace her with another boat of somewhat larger dimensions, a measure which will give the Co'y employment for nearly the succeeding eight months. I shall therefore have plenty to do and anticipate producing a very different vessel to the "Exp", though she has been throughout a most fortunate craft. Mr. L. says her profits [sic] have been at least £2,000, excellent, certainly, for 12 months work.

August 3: Bussiness [sic] continues very dull in my profession there is very little prospect of activity this summer. Still I may perhaps be employed should Mr. Lockhart determine to construct another Steamer. On Tuesday we have a meeting of directors, when some measures will be taken to keep the works going.

August 6: ... I require something to stimulate my mind. the present is excessively dull, as no employment offers itself to occupy my attention, but a few days will determine whether the comp'y intend building or not.

August 8: Warm. Rode for an hour this morning, and now think of visiting the woods for the purpose of selecting such a piece of timber as will be suitable for a steamer's keel should the Comp'y propose building. At any rate the information will reward me for the long ride, which is through rather a rough country.

Rode 12 miles but found not what I sought!

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<sup>2</sup> James Lockhart, then a merchant of Niagara, had been among the original petitioners for the incorporation of the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company, and had commissioned both the *Experiment* and the *Queen Victoria* from the Company.

<sup>3</sup> *Experiment* was part of Captain Sandom's fleet patrolling Lake Ontario in the wake of the Rebellion of 1837, and was present at the Battle of the Windmill.