

kable credit to their builder. All of the machinery for the vessel was made by the American Shipbuilding Company.

WILLIAM E. REIS was a vessel typical of Capt. Mitchell's beautiful designs. She had a straight stem and a graceful counter stern, and her deck showed a sheer of sweeping proportions. (The Mitchell boats probably exhibited as much deck sheer as any lake freighter ever sported.) There was a three-quarter forecastle, and the anchors were suspended from hawseholes, as anchor pockets had not yet come into vogue.

On the forecastle head sat a small "turret-style" pilothouse, with three large and sectioned windows in its somewhat flattened front (another distinctive Mitchell feature). Immediately abaft the pilothouse was situated the texas cabin, which contained the master's office and quarters. Its roof formed the bridge deck and wings, while the vessel was operated from an open bridge atop the somewhat higher pilothouse. There, the officers were sheltered from the elements by a canvas dodger or weathercloth, and by a colourful awning which often was suspended above the open bridge. The heavy pole foremast, which was given a jaunty rake, rose from the texas immediately behind the pilothouse. On hot summer days, a large awning often was strung up over the entire foredeck to provide a bit of shade.

The spar deck boasted twelve widely-spaced but small hatches, and was not cluttered by any accommodation "doghouses" as were the decks of the steamers of several other lines. An open rail ran down the sides of the working area of the deck. The after cabin was a large structure, around which a closed steel taffrail ran for protection from the seas, while the boat deck projected out to the sides of the hull for protection from above. At the forward end of the aft cabin was a boilerhouse which, in best Mitchell tradition, was indented a few feet on each side. The coal bunker hatch was located atop the forward end of the boilerhouse, with an open rail running around it. The tall and relatively heavy stack rose amid several prominent ventilator cowls and immediately abaft the stack was the tall pole mainmast. Both the mast and the funnel were heavily raked to match the angle of the foremast.

The Mitchell boats like WILLIAM E. REIS were given black hulls, with white cabins and forecastles. Many of the steamers of that period had all-black stacks, but Mitchell gave his steamers black stacks with a wide maroon band. Modern-day historians can be forgiven if they should think that Mitchell funnels were all black, for the photographic films used back in those days were not generally capable of distinguishing dark red from black, and thus confusion sometimes results in respect of colours.

WILLIAM E. REIS served the Mitchell fleet well, running mainly in the iron ore and coal trades. She did, however, run into trouble not long after her commissioning. Whilst downbound with a cargo of ore, apparently during 1901, she was involved in a collision in the St. Clair River, and she settled to the bottom in some sixty feet of water. The REIS was quickly salvaged, repaired and returned to service. There exists a photograph of a Mitchell boat sunk, which we believe to be the REIS, but we have no confirmation in that respect. We would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have information concerning this accident and its consequences.

In 1913, WILLIAM E. REIS was rebuilt at Toledo by the Toledo Shipbuilding Company, after which her tonnage was reported as 4426 Gross and 2832 Net. We believe that the majority of the rebuilding work involved the replacement and updating of the deck to facilitate the handling of cargo by new shore-mounted gear; there now were 22 hatches. It would seem that it was at this time that a new upper pilothouse was constructed to provide more substantial shelter for the officers on watch. It was a wooden turret-style structure, which had fifteen small windows down its sides and across its front, with access being gained from the rear by means of a stairway reaching up from the bridge deck. As well, a new raised section was added to the forward end of the forecastle head rail, apparently in an effort to deflect spray away from the windows of the new pilothouse.