

VULCAN

Last issue, we featured a small, wooden-hulled freighter (and later passenger steamer) which served a few brief years in the local trades of Southwestern Ontario. In our effort to vary the types of ships featured, we present this month the story of a steel bulk carrier which was built only a few years later, but which served well into the new century and, in fact, was only done in by the coming of the Great Depression which began in 1929. Although she latterly served as a "canaller", she was not built with the lower canals in mind, and many of those who saw her in operation as a canal freighter during the 1920s would never have guessed how old the vessel was unless they were very sharp in the eye and expert in ship recognition.

The steamer in question was built by one of the most famous of the old Great Lakes shipbuilding companies, namely the Globe Iron Works, which put her together in 1889 as Hull 26 of its yard at Cleveland, Ohio. She was launched on July 10th, 1889, which was a Wednesday; this probably means that she went into the water without much ceremony. Most of the early steel-hulled lake freighters were launched on a Saturday so that all of the interested shipyard workers, guests of the owners, and members of the local public could view the impressive side-launch and participate in the general festivities of the occasion.

As built, this new steamer, which was christened VULCAN and enrolled at Cleveland as U.S.161610, was 260.0 feet in length between perpendiculars, 38.0 feet in the beam, and 19.5 feet in depth, with tonnage calculated as 1759.08 Gross and 1366.72 Net. She was powered by a fore-and-aft compound engine, which had cylinders of 27 and 50 inches diameter and a 36-inch stroke, and which was built by the shipyard in 1887. Steam was provided by one firebox-type marine boiler which measured 11 feet by 17 feet, and was manufactured by Globe Iron Works in 1889. The boiler was fired with coal.

The new VULCAN was built to the order of the Lorain Steamship Company, of Lorain, Ohio, of which the manager then was David Wallace. The Wallace name was prominent in lake shipping history, and there was a wooden steamer named for David Wallace, but we do not have any biographical information available at present.

VULCAN was typical of the steel-hulled bulk carriers of her period, in that her bridge structure was set not atop the forecastle but rather abaft the first hatch, presumably to protect it from boarding seas. A movable catwalk connected the bridge deck with the forecastle head. There was a straight and sharp stem, with an upright steering pole at its upper end, and close to the steering pole was a radial steel davit, which was used to handle the forward anchors. Of the old-fashioned, stocked variety, these were carried atop the forecastle head, and their chains ran out of hawseholes in the forecastle.

The hull was painted black, as far as we are aware, and there was a light-coloured (probably either grey or silver) boot-top, which rose to a peak at the bow above the loaded waterline. The forecastle was painted white, and so were the deckhouses. The forecastle head was slightly turtle-backed in order to shed water readily in a head sea.

Set back down the spar deck from the forecastle, abaft number one hatch, was the bridge structure. A rather squarish texas cabin contained the quarters of the senior officers, while a very large pilothouse sat above, with three windows in its front and four windows down either side. An open navigation bridge, located atop the pilothouse on the monkey's island, was equipped with flying bridgewings and a closed wooden rail topped by a canvas weather-cloth (or "dodger") enclosed the open bridge to provide protection for the navigation officers who were required to stand watch there.

The foremast, a very tall, wooden pole, rose out of the texas just abaft the pilothouse, and in the old fashion it was equipped with ratlines. The main-