

WINONA

Last month, we featured as our Ship of the Month a steel-hulled freighter which dated from the 1880s. Accordingly, in an effort to vary the types of vessels featured, we have chosen this month a small, wooden-hulled passenger steamer from the early Twentieth Century. And, once again, the suggestion for this feature article came from one of our loyal readers. In the beginning, we had not thought that we ever would be able to obtain enough information about this boat to consider writing a detailed history of her, but the more we thought about it, the more we realized that we just might be able to obtain the assistance we would require from within the ranks of the T.M.H.S. members, and that we just might be able to pull off the project.

That, dear readers, is precisely what came to pass. So read on, and you will discover the little steamer WINONA, which undoubtedly will be a complete stranger to almost all of you when you begin our story. We hope that, by the time you have finished reading it, you will understand just how important this vessel was to the people whose lives she touched.

WINONA, originally enrolled at Port Stanley, Ontario, under official number C.94717, was a double-deck passenger propellor built of oak. She was constructed over the winter of 1901-1902 at Port Stanley, on the north shore of Lake Erie, by vessel owner and shipbuilder Captain John Ellison, and she was launched on Wednesday, May 28th, 1902. Her construction had been commissioned by The Navigation Company of Port Stanley, in which builder Ellison held a large interest.

The WINONA, as built, was 100.2 feet in length, 22.7 feet in the beam, and 6.8 feet in depth, with her tonnage calculated as 230.54 Gross and 148.59 Net. Power to turn WINONA's screw propeller was provided by a fore-and-aft compound engine which had cylinders of 12 and 24 inches diameter and a stroke of 16 inches, which produced 24 Nominal Horsepower. The engine was built in 1902 by the Doty Engine Works, of Goderich, Ontario. Steam for the engine was provided by a boiler which was fired with wood, but we have no details concerning the boiler itself.

WINONA was completed in August of 1902, and immediately was placed in the local excursion trade on Lake Erie. She was a handsome boat, with a pleasing sheer to her hull. She had a straight stem and a counter stern, and she was equipped with stocked anchors which were carried forward on the main deck, the chains feeding out through hawseholes in the bulwarks near the stem.

The main deck was completely enclosed by a cabin built out to the sides of the ship, with a pronounced gunwale at deck level, and another rub-rail at the waist-high level of the top of the bulwarks. There were a number of large windows in the main deck cabin, and also there were two big gangways in each side, permitting the boarding of passengers as well as the loading of supplies, fuel for the boiler, and any freight that might happen to be available. We have no idea what the layout of the main deck cabin might have been, but the purser's office would undoubtedly have been placed there, as well as that of the chief steward (if he even had an office). Some of the crew's accommodations were almost certainly there, and hard aft there probably was located a small diningroom.

The upper or promenade deck was open all the way around, with a wood post rail covered with wire mesh. Shade was provided by the boat deck above, and there was a relatively small enclosed cabin in the central area of the promenade deck. There was a tall steeringpole attached to the upper end of the stempost at the forward extremity of this deck, and from this pole a large flag sometimes was flown.

On the boat deck were located the two wooden lifeboats, one on each side, which were worked with radial davits. The forward end of the boat deck, in