

As originally built, CANADIAN was 122.0 feet in length, 18.9 feet in beam of hull (we do not know her width on the main deck over the guards) and 5.8 feet in depth, with tonnage of 230 Gross and 145 Net. She was powered by a Corliss condensing, low-pressure engine built in 1882 by Inglis and Hunter, Toronto. This engine had a single cylinder of 20 inches diameter, and a stroke of 42 inches, and produced 165 Indicated Horsepower at 35 revolutions per minute. Steam was provided by one fire-box boiler, which measured 6'0" in diameter by 12'0" in length, and was manufactured by Perkins at Toronto. The boiler generated steam at a working pressure of 80 p.s.i. and had one coal-fired furnace with a grate surface of 24 square feet and a heating surface of 733 square feet.

We have no photograph of the steamer at this stage of her career, but we have no reason to think that she looked much different than she did later in her life. She was double-ended, but not in the same manner as Toronto Island ferries of more recent times. CANADIAN had a pilothouse and a rudder at each end, so that she could run in either direction without being turned around, but she was sharp-ended and never end-loaded her passengers. Those traveling in CANADIAN boarded her and disembarked via large gangways on each side of the main deck, and she always docked "side-to". In fact, CANADIAN was the very first double-ended ferry steamer to run on Toronto Bay.

The 1892 Inland Lloyd's Register, in listing CANADIAN, commented that she had "false sides". We are not certain what was meant by this remark, although possibly it meant that her sponsons were boxed in along her sides. CANADIAN's main "cabin" was mostly wide open to the air, with numerous arched "windows" which were glassless, but may have been closed in with canvas drops or wooden shutters in inclement weather. Amidships, the engine pit would have been open to public view as was the fashion of the day. The steamer's huge radial paddlewheels were enclosed within fancifully decorated paddleboxes which rose high above the upper deck. There was a closed wooden bulwark all around the main deck.

The upper or promenade deck was entirely open and was surrounded by a wooden post railing. The steamer's one lifeboat was carried under radial davits on this deck, near one of the paddleboxes. There was a tall octagonal "bird-cage" pilothouse near each end of the upper deck, and a tiny cabin for the master was located immediately abaft one of the pilothouses. A narrow shade deck stretched between the pilothouses to offer a bit of protection from the hot summer sun.

A tall and fairly thin smokestack, protected by a small enclosure on the promenade deck, rose up out of the hurricane deck, where there was nothing else to keep it company except for the sidelight brackets set amidships. There was no rail at all around this deck. The ship had no real masts, just a short pole at the back of each pilothouse to hold a running light. A very tall steering pole was carried at each end of the steamer.

John Clendenning originally operated CANADIAN in excursion service on Toronto Bay and environs. As the owning company was named the Toronto & Humber Navigation Company, we must assume that she ran out into Humber Bay, to the west of the city core, perhaps ferrying passengers between that area and the lakeshore communities to the west, and downtown Toronto. In 1885, however, CANADIAN was in service on the bay at Hamilton, running in conjunction with the Hamilton Street Railway. Under Capt. Angus G. Stanton, CANADIAN made hourly trips between the James Street Wharf and Burlington Beach. She was advertised as a "powerful new steamer" with a capacity of 500 passengers.

By 1886, CANADIAN was in the Toronto Island ferry fleet that was operated by Capt. John Turner. Not much is known about the specifics of Turner's operations, but CANADIAN undoubtedly spent most of her time running to Hanlan's Point, which was the busiest part of the island chain at that time. It was the site of the large and elegant Hotel Hanlan, and there had begun to spring up the earliest attractions of what was to become one of Canada's