

boat stop until the turn of the century.

Perhaps it was ill luck that helped Capt. Myers decide to return to the Windy City. With a moonlight excursion party aboard, the BELLE went ashore in the Niagara River at Snake Creek, Wednesday night, July 14, 1875, and stuck fast. The excursionists danced all night and finally were brought up to Buffalo about 9:00 a.m. by the tug DAYTON, which then returned to Snake Creek and succeeded in releasing CHICAGO BELLE about 4:00 p.m. After the BELLE's return to Chicago in the autumn of 1875, however, we do not know what she did or where she did it. The 1875 "Lake Underwriters' Directory" simply listed her as an "excursion boat".

The BELLE's history under the Canadian flag was better recorded, and her move to Canada was brought about by the loss of another propellor. First, however, something must be told of her colourful captain and owner, Edwin Dunn, one of the prominent lake men of his time. Capt. Dunn was born on January 6, 1838, in Birmingham, England, and came to Upper Canada in 1843 "in an old time sailing packet" with his mother and three brothers. They landed at Port Hope and journeyed overland to join his father, who had preceded the family by 18 months. At that time, there were no more than six log houses in Owen Sound. The family settled on a farm at Sydenham, about four miles outside Owen Sound, but in 1854 they moved into Owen Sound, taking up residence on the river front, south of Peel Street (now known as 11th Street East).

Capt. Dunn was destined for the water. His grandfather had been a petty officer in the British navy, and his father was in the British navy and the coast guards. Capt. Dunn began sailing on a yacht which he built in conjunction with his brother, William. About 1858, he entered into business with the tug OKONRA, which he and William had built at Owen Sound. This tug was converted into a small passenger boat during the winter of 1867-1868. In 1879, OKONRA was employed by General Garnet Wolseley to carry troops westward to help put down the first Riel Rebellion. She plied out of Owen Sound and along the Bruce Peninsula coast until September 5th, 1878, when she burned at Wiarton. Her machinery and boiler were salvaged in 1880; more will be said about this later. Following the loss of OKONRA, Capt. Dunn began shopping for a replacement vessel, which he found on the lower lakes in the summer of 1879.

The "Wiarion Echo" of August 8, 1879, proclaimed: "New Boat. The 'Owen Sound Advertiser' says 'Capt. Dunn has succeeded in getting the boat CHICAGO BELLE and may be expected around here in ten days to take his old place on the route between here and Wiarton'." She arrived at Sarnia on August 14th, and at Owen Sound on Sunday, August 17th. Capt. Dunn's obituary later stated that he had been "one of a company" to purchase the CHICAGO BELLE.

Handbills were distributed at Wiarton on the morning of August 28th, 1879, announcing that Capt. Dunn would arrive with CHICAGO BELLE at 9:30 p.m., and that at 10:00 p.m., a christening ceremony would take place. Accordingly, about 300 people gathered at the wharf to welcome the boat, but after waiting past midnight, with neither captain nor ship showing, they went home in disgust. The "Echo" warned: "We would suggest to Capt. Dunn not to repeat the 'sell'". The following day, Dunn did appear with his new steamer. She left at 8:30 with the largest excursion party that ever sailed from Wiarton. The christening ceremony took place at the wharf before departure, and the steamer was renamed WIARTON BELLE.

WIARTON BELLE was a rather homely little craft. Her hull had virtually no sheer except for a little upturn right near the bows, and her stempost pulled back markedly as it rose above the main deck. The main deck cabin, which ran the full length of the steamer, had two gangways on each side, one forward and one about midships. Photos show that there were windows all the way down both sides of the cabin, as befitted an excursion boat, but all of them