

of amidships. The steamer was navigated from a raised open bridge located between the paddleboxes. Like most vessels of her type, she was not sponsoned out along most of her length as were Great Lakes sidewheelers. Her maximum beam was, of course, over the paddleboxes, but her guards angled sharply inward both forward and aft of the wheels.

By 1863, with the "War Between the States" raging across the Atlantic, and with the major ports of the Confederacy blockaded by Union forces in an effort to force the "rebels" to their knees, southern interests, with the assistance of British vessel operators, were amassing a fleet of speedy steamers intended to be able to outrun the Union gunboats and get supplies in to help the Confederates. Accordingly, fast ships were very much in demand, even if not particularly suited for freight service on the open ocean.

In 1863, ROTHESAY CASTLE was sold by Watson, for the sum of £8,500, to David McNutt, of Glasgow, for service as a blockade runner. (McNutt also owned several other steamers employed in the same trade.) ROTHESAY CASTLE sailed away from the Clyde under her own power in August of 1863, and in order to disguise her intended destination, her purchaser was officially recorded as the Emperor of China! Out on the open waters, she suffered some damage to one of her wheels and she was forced to return to the Clyde for repairs. However, once the damage was put to rights, she cleared the Clyde for the last time and successfully crossed the North Atlantic, subsequently joining the growing fleet of blockade runners that was based in the Bahama Islands.

ROTHESAY CASTLE loaded a cargo brought to the Bahamas by deep-sea ships, and then sailed from Nassau, successfully running the Union blockade on her first such trip, and arrived safely at Wilmington, North Carolina, on January 20, 1864. After unloading, she cleared Wilmington on the return trip on February 18, 1864, bound back to Nassau. On her second trip through the blockade, she was recorded as arriving at Charleston, South Carolina, on April 10, 1864. Returning, she cleared for Nassau during the month of May.

During 1864, McNutt sold ROTHESAY CASTLE to Andrew Heron and Capt. Thomas Leach, of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The steamer seems to have led a charmed life in her dangerous pursuits, and she survived the hostilities, apparently without damage. In June of 1865, she left the Bahamas, clearing Nassau bound northward for Halifax.

On October 3rd, 1865, ROTHESAY CASTLE was sold to Thomas Mitchell and Adam McKay but, for reasons today unknown but probably resulting from default on payment, she soon was transferred back to Capt. Thomas Leach. He then took the steamer up through the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the St. Lawrence River and its canals, and Leach arrived with the steamer at Toronto during June of 1866. It is believed that ROTHESAY CASTLE still was registered at Halifax at this time, but she had been enrolled at Toronto by 1871. Her Canadian registry number was 29290.

Captain Leach placed ROTHESAY CASTLE on the excursion run across Lake Ontario from Toronto to Niagara in the summer of 1866, running her in opposition to the established service of Duncan Milloy's sidewheel steamer CITY OF TORONTO. During this season, the Toronto press carried numerous reports of racing between the two ships as they competed for the patronage of the travelling public, most of whom were Toronto denizens seeking summer respite from the city amongst the cool breezes on the lake and in the relaxation that could be found in the Niagara Peninsula.

According to a drawing which appeared in Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto, ROTHESAY CASTLE at this stage had a completely open bow, but a deckhouse on the main deck started about a third of the way back from the bow and extended all the way to the stern. There still was no pilothouse, and the ship was navigated from an open bridge located on the catwalk between the paddleboxes. She had two well-raked masts, each fitted with auxiliary sail, and there was one lifeboat on each side, abaft the wheels. The steamer still retained her two original smokestacks.