

of 1904, being taken up the Welland Canal to Merritton. OCEAN's register was closed on January 24th, 1905. Her new owner was Joseph Battle, contractor, of Thorold, who was the proprietor of the Canadian Sand & Gravel Company. He had OCEAN rebuilt by G. H. Garner during the winter of 1904-1905.

OCEAN's machinery was removed and the hull was converted into a crane-equipped barge, ten feet shorter and three feet wider than the original hull of OCEAN. Her depth was reduced by three feet, seven inches. According to the Dominion List of Shipping, she now measured 135.3 x 26.2 x 8.0, 243.8 Gross and 218.36 Net Tons. This reconstruction required her re-registration, and this was done at St. Catharines. She was given official number C.116874 and at this time she was renamed (b) HELENA.

HELENA had a very bluff bow, and a raised forecastle and poop. Wooden box sides were built on the spar deck to facilitate the carriage of aggregates. HELENA sported two large A-frames, one at either end of the spar deck, and each was equipped with a heavy boom and a clamshell bucket. There was a small, three-windowed pilothouse atop the forecastle, while aft was a small cabin and the smokestack which served the boiler that provided steam for the steering gear and the cargo-handling equipment.

John O. Greenwood, in Namesakes 1920-1929, states: "This wooden barge was named for Helena Sommerville who was the daughter of Mr. George Sommerville of Toronto, Ontario. He was wharfinger at Toronto in 1905 and managed this barge for Wentworth Navigation from his office at the foot of Yonge Street." This seems very strange indeed. One wonders why Joseph Battle would choose to name the boat after the daughter of George Sommerville, and why Wentworth Navigation, which had owned OCEAN before the fire but then had sold her burned-out hull, would have anything to do with the operation of HELENA for other owners when she was a sand and gravel barge.

Namesakes continues: "Helena was born at Toronto on July 18, 1888 and married Mr. John Murry of Port Hope, Ontario in 1911. She died at Edinborough (sic), Scotland on August 14, 1960 and never took an active part in the shipping business. Her namesake... was scrapped in 1920."

In fact, HELENA was not simply scrapped in 1920. She caught fire on the night of December 30, 1920, whilst tied alongside Lock 3 in the old Welland Canal, and this put an end to her operation in the aggregates trade. Her remains were abandoned as a total loss, but she was carried on the Dominion List of Shipping until 1937.

HELENA's register carries the notation "SBoE since 1923. Burned May's Pond, Pt. Dalhousie." Her register was closed on 22nd January, 1938. The writer of this notation on the register no doubt meant that HELENA had burned in Muir's Pond, but that really was not the case, because Muir's Pond was the area between Locks 1 and 2 at Port Dalhousie, and did not extend up to Lock 3. We wonder what the notation "SBoE" might mean; could it perhaps be "Said to Be Out of Existence" or something similar?

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