

GLENORCHY

In our issue of February 1998, we featured, as our Ship of the Month No. 240, the canal-sized steamer ARLINGTON, which sank on Lake Superior on May 1st, 1940, in heavy weather. The C.S.L. steamer COLLINGWOOD was standing by when the ARLINGTON foundered, and managed to rescue all of the lost ship's crew with the exception of Capt. Fred "Tatey Bug" Burke, who went to the bottom of the lake with his vessel.

When reporting the loss of the ARLINGTON, the news media made much of the fact that this was not the first major shipwreck in which Fred Burke had been involved. He had been the master of the Playfair steamer GLENORCHY back in 1924 when she foundered rapidly after a collision on Lake Huron. The men were able to scramble across from the bow of one ship to the other, but Captain Burke, in getting his crew off the sinking GLENORCHY, found that two men were missing. Setting off in search of them, he found them trapped in their cabin and, using an axe to clear away the debris, Fred Burke was able to free both men and get them to safety. Fred Burke was a "gruff old seadog" but the kind of master for whom crews liked to sail.

We were filing away some clippings on the ARLINGTON recently, and reading some old Fort William news reports about the GLENORCHY, all of which made us wonder whether we could come up with enough material to do a feature on GLENORCHY. It turned out that we could, and we hope our readers will enjoy the result.

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The story of the GLENORCHY began when she was built in 1902 for the Stewart Transportation Company, of Detroit, Michigan. This was a small fleet whose first (and only other) vessel was the big, wooden-hulled freight steamer C. F. BIELMAN (U.S.126887), built for the company by the F. W. Wheeler yard at West Bay City, Michigan, in 1892. The BIELMAN, one of six almost exact sisterships built for various owners by Wheeler, was named for the manager of the Stewart Transportation Company. However, she was sold out of the fleet in 1896, and if the company remained active between 1896 and 1902, it did so as a vessel manager, or perhaps as an operator of chartered tonnage. A. E. Stewart then managed the company himself for a few years and he, in turn, was succeeded as manager by John J. Barlum, a well known vessel operator and owner.

The order for the construction of the new steel-hulled Stewart Transportation freighter was placed with the West Bay City Shipbuilding Company, which built her as its Hull 607. The steamer was launched on Tuesday, July 8th, 1902, and was christened A. E. STEWART. Registered at Detroit, she was given U.S. registry number 107778. She was completed and in service well before the close of the 1902 navigation season.

A. E. STEWART was 356.0 feet in length between perpendiculars, 50.0 feet in the beam and 28.0 feet in depth, and her tonnage was calculated as 3943 Gross and 3049 Net. Her half-topgallant forecastle was 48 feet in length. There were ten hatches positioned on 24-foot centres, and her hold was divided into three compartments of 1,800, 2,400 and 1,800 Gross Tons capacity, respectively.

The STEWART was powered by a triple expansion engine which had cylinders of 20, 33 and 54 inches bore, and a stroke of 42 inches, producing 1,800 Indicated Horsepower at 85 revolutions per minute. The Nominal Horsepower was reported variously as 146 or 189. Steam at 170 p.s.i. was produced by two single-ended, coal-fired Scotch boilers, each of which measured 14.0 feet in diameter and 12.0 feet in length. There were six furnaces, with 120 square feet of grate surface and 4,254 square feet of heating surface. The engine and boilers all were built for the STEWART in 1902 by the Detroit Shipbuilding Company.