

The A. E. STEWART was typical of lake bulk carriers built in the very first few years of the Twentieth Century. By the latter half of the century's first decade, ships were being built much larger and with more modern facilities. Nevertheless, ships of the STEWART's type were to serve well and many of them enjoyed long and successful lives despite their conservative size.

The STEWART had a straight stem and a finely cut counter stern. Her hull did not have a great deal of sheer, but enough to give her a nice bit of lift forward. As built, she had two fender strakes running along her sides to protect her plating, one of them just about at the loaded waterline and another about five feet further down. In addition, timber fenders were hung down the sides from the spar deck rail. Vessel operators in those early years of steel ships took pains to protect their ships' plating from canal and dock damage. Whether they wished to keep the side paint looking neat or whether they didn't entirely trust the strength of steel plates and frames is today a matter of conjecture. As usual, stockless anchors were suspended from hawseholes on either side of the bow, close to the stem and just above the loaded waterline.

A. E. STEWART had a closed steel bulwark which ran back from the stem for about half the length of the forecastle head and then gave way to an open rail. A small extender section was later added above the extreme forward part of the bulwark, and provision was made for hoisting a canvas weathercloth high above the bulwark in bad weather, to protect the pilothouse.

On the forecastle head was placed the small, turret-style wheelhouse, which had five widely-spaced windows in its rounded front. Aft the pilothouse was placed the texas cabin which ran athwartship and contained the master's quarters and his office. (The deck officers, wheelmen and deckhands were housed down inside the forecastle.) On the monkey's island atop the pilothouse was an open bridge, from which the ship usually was navigated, orders being relayed to the wheelman below in the pilothouse via a voice tube that often was called "the cussing box". There was a closed rail around the open bridge, and a weathercloth was raised above it to give added protection in nasty weather. There also were stretcher frames overhead, on which an awning was hoisted when the summer sun grew hot. The tall, heavy and well raked foremast rose out of the texas cabin.

An open post-and-wire rail ran down either side of the spar deck, giving way to a closed steel taffrail which ran around the flush quarterdeck aft. The steel aft deckhouse contained not only the boilerhouse at its forward end, but also quarters, galley and messroom facilities. The coal bunker hatch was set into the boat deck above this cabin at its extreme forward end, but there was no rail or bulwark around the hatch as was the custom in later years.

Out of the boilerhouse rose the steamer's very tall funnel, which was raked to match the masts, and the mainmast rose was stepped not far behind the stack. There were four large ventilator cowls placed around the funnel to draw fresh air down to the nether regions below. A lifeboat was set on either side of the boat deck, worked by radial davits.

We never have seen an adequate description of the colours used by the Stewart Transportation Company, and we doubt there is anyone still alive who could recall seeing the STEWART in operation. So all we can do is some guesswork, based on period photographs. Unfortunately, as they were made in the orthographic process of the day, there is excellent contrast between light and dark tones, but very poor differentiation of shadings of either light or dark.

Her hull we would suppose to have been black, although it might have been a dark green. The boot-topping likely was grey, as orange anti-fouling paint