

season (as [c] UHLMANN BROTHERS [II]).

But wooden hulls still reigned supreme on the lakes when John Mitchell entered the shipping business, and they would do so for many years to come. One of the most renowned builders of wooden hulls on the Great Lakes was the West Bay City, Michigan, shipyard of F. W. Wheeler & Company, a firm that survived and successfully made the transition to the building of large steel hulls. Mitchell owned quite a varied assortment of wooden ships over the years, but the four largest of these were all built by Frank Wheeler's yard for Mitchell's operation. They were the WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (I) of 1887, the ROBERT L. FRYER (II) of 1888, the JOHN MITCHELL (I) of 1889, and the WILLIAM F. SAUBER of 1891. They varied in length from 265 feet (b.p.) to almost 300 feet, and the largest of them all was the SAUBER, one of six almost identical sisterships built by Wheeler for various owners.

The JOHN MITCHELL (I) was built as Hull 47 of the Wheeler shipyard, and she was launched on Wednesday, April 3rd, 1889. Her oak hull was 283.0 feet in length between perpendiculars (303 feet overall), 41.0 feet in the beam, and 22.0 feet in depth, and her tonnage was calculated at 1864 Gross and 1491 Net. She was enrolled at Buffalo, New York, under U.S. official number 76792.

The MITCHELL was powered by a triple expansion steam engine built in 1889 by the Frontier Iron Works at Detroit. It had cylinders of 20, 32 and 52 inches diameter and a stroke of 42 inches, and it developed 1,000 Indicated Horsepower at 83 revolutions per minute. Steam at a working pressure of 150 pounds per square inch was supplied by two single-ended, coal-fired, Scotch boilers manufactured in 1889 by the Lake Erie Boiler Works at Buffalo. They were each 11'0" in diameter and 12'0" in length; there were two furnaces, with a grate surface of 90 square feet and a total heating surface of 2,452 square feet.

The MITCHELL was originally built for Capt. John Mitchell and William H. Gratwick, the latter of Buffalo, and she was managed by Mitchell & Company after the formation of that firm in 1890. Many early directories showed Gratwick as the sole owner of the ship, but we truly believe that Mitchell and Gratwick were partners in her operation, as they were in several other ventures. The steamer was painted in the usual Mitchell colours, with a black hull, white forecastle and cabins, and a black stack with a broad red band. The foremast was painted buff, while the main was black.

The MITCHELL was typical of the larger wooden-hulled steamers on the lakes in that she had a strongly-built hull with much sheer and with longitudinal steel arches built into her sides to prevent hogging and sagging. A stocked anchor was carried on deck on the starboard side, worked by a davit on the foredeck, while on the port side was a mushroom anchor. There was a fully-topgallant forecastle, with a closed wooden rail the entire length of its head, and a closed wooden bulwark also ran all around the spar deck.

The large, squared pilothouse was positioned directly atop the forecastle head, with the master's office and cabin in the texas behind the wheelhouse. An open navigation bridge was located on the monkey's island, with protection offered the watch officers by a closed wooden rail and weathercloths (and by barrels of straw to stand in during the cold weather). The light steel pipe foremast rose just abaft the pilothouse.

Aft, there was a large wooden deckhouse and, at its forward end, the boilerhouse. Both originally had a prominent overhang of the boat deck along the sides and around the fantail, although the overhang was later removed in the area of the boilerhouse. A tall, heavy and well-raked smokestack rose out of the boilerhouse, with a large ventilator cowl on either side of it. A lifeboat was suspended from radial steel davits on either side of the boat deck, and a clerestory provided light for the interior of the cabin. The steel pipe mainmast rose aft of the smokestack but unfortunately was not raked at