

STEPHEN M. CLEMENT

In the March issue, we looked in detail into the history of the steamer JOHN MITCHELL (I)(02), (b) MAJOR. She was a wooden-hulled freighter which was built in 1889 by F. W. Wheeler for the Mitchell and Gratwick shipping interests, and she operated under the management of Mitchell and Company until she ran foul of the Great Storm of 1913. She then was acquired by James Playfair, who ran her through the 1919 season. From 1921 until 1941, she served D. Ganton Dobson as a floating drydock at Midland, Ontario.

We said much in that feature about the shipping interests of Captain John Mitchell, and although we did not have time to describe them fully, we did mention some of the very handsome steel-hulled steamers which later were built for the Mitchell fleet. Many of these were built to Capt. Mitchell's very own design, and few other ships built on the Great Lakes during the period could rival them for their good looks, for their "special" lines, or for the strength of their construction.

The most memorable of these ships was a series of eleven steamers, all about 420 feet in length and built around the turn of the last century. Because most of them had long lives, we list them here in the order in which they were built and showing either their untimely demise or else the name under which they were best known in later years: 1898 - HENDRICK S. HOLDEN (VANDOC [I]); 1899 - H. C. FRICK (CANADOC [I], PORTADOC [III]), M. A. HANNA (WINDOC [I]); 1900 - WILLIAM E. REIS (SASKADOC); 1901 - WALTER SCRANTON (SATURN), JOHN J. ALBRIGHT (FORT WILLDOC); 1902 - JAMES GAYLEY (lost by collision 1912), WILLIAM H. GRATWICK (III) (PEGASUS), FRANK H. GOODYEAR (I) (lost by collision 1910), MOSES TAYLOR (SOODOC [I]); 1906 - PENDENNIS WHITE (VEGA).

These ships were built for The Cleveland Steamship Company, formed in the 1890s by Mitchell and Gratwick, and all came either from the American Ship Building Company yards at Lorain and Cleveland, or from the Globe Iron Works of Cleveland. Built for the same fleet by AmShip at Lorain in 1906, but some 100 feet longer, were LOFTUS CUDDY (16), (b) C. S. ROBINSON (65), (c) UHLMANN BROTHERS (II), and JOSEPH SELLWOOD, both of which were very similar in appearance to their smaller near-sisterships.

A number of other ships of different design were built for the fleet over the years, but one more near-sistership appeared in 1905, this being a vessel built for another of the Mitchell-controlled companies, The Buffalo Steamship Company. She was the STEPHEN M. CLEMENT, built as Hull 336 of the American Ship Building Company's yard at Lorain, Ohio, and launched on Saturday, May 20th, 1905. She was named for a Buffalo financier who was one of Captain Mitchell's backers in The Buffalo Steamship Company. In 1905, Stephen Merrill Clement was president of the Marine National Bank of Buffalo. He also was personally interested in lake vessel operations, and in 1905 was vice-president of Rogers, Brown & Company. We do not know for certain, but we believe that Stephen M. Clement may have been the father of Norman P. Clement, who was born in 1885 and for whom an Eastern Steamship Company Ltd. canaller later was named.

STEPHEN M. CLEMENT was given U.S. official number 202087, and she formally was enrolled at Cleveland, although like many vessels registered there, her home port was shown in many publications (and on her stern) as Fairport, Ohio. About half-way in size between the eleven Mitchell "sisters" and the CUDDY and SELLWOOD, the CLEMENT was 480.0 feet in length (b.p.), 52.0 feet in the beam, and 30.0 feet in depth. Her tonnage was calculated as 5821 Gross and 4487 Net. She had three cargo compartments, of 3100, 2500 and 3200 gross tons capacity, which were accessed via 28 hatches built on 12-foot centres. The hatches were all nine feet across, measured fore-and-aft.

The CLEMENT was powered by a triple expansion steam engine which was built for the ship in 1905 by the American Ship Building Company at Cleveland. It had cylinders of 22½, 36 and 60 inches diameter, with a stroke of 42 inches,