

An open post-and-wire railing ran down either side of the spar deck, and there was a closed steel taffrail which ran around the quarterdeck. But aft, CRESCENT CITY was very different from most later steel bulk carriers. She was of the type sometimes referred to today as a "submarine", in that she had no above-deck cabins aft; all accommodations were located below decks. Out of the flush poop rose the tall pole mizzen mast, and aft of it was a tall and fairly heavy smokestack, with a prominent apron around its lower section. Four large ventilator cowls were positioned around the smokestack, and a melodious, three-barrelled chime whistle was carried on the leading face of the funnel. There was one lifeboat on either side of the deck aft, worked with radial davits. A tall jackstaff was positioned on the fantail.

We don't know much about the operations of the Zenith Transit Company, except that its ships usually ran iron ore downbound and, if anything, coal upbound. But thanks to the late Rev. Edward J. Dowling, S.J., we do have a description of the colours worn by CRESCENT CITY when she was a Zenith ship. She had a red hull and forecastle, white deckhouses (forward, of course, for there were none aft), and a plain black smokestack.

When she joined the fleet of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company in 1901, her hull became dark green, her deckhouses straw yellow, and her smokestack was painted all silver. These silver funnels of the Pittsburgh vessels led to them being called "tinstackers", a term that was used for decades. However, red ore dust discoloured the green hulls quickly, and soot soon smudged the silver stacks, with the result that the crews had to spend many long hours scrubbing down their ships. By 1905, CRESCENT CITY and her sisters had their hulls and forecastles painted ore-red, their deckhouses became white, and their silver stacks gained a broad black smokeband at the top.

CRESCENT CITY underwent one further change after she joined the fleet of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company. Ships of her type no longer required three masts, as insurers had dropped the requirement that they have the means to set auxiliary sail in the event of a machinery breakdown. The old mainmast, positioned as it was about midships, served no useful purpose and only got in the way of loading spouts and unloading rigs. Accordingly, the mainmast was removed and the spar that previously had served as the mizzen became the new main, retaining its former position forward of the smokestack.

It would seem that CRESCENT CITY operated successfully for both the Zenith Transit Company and the Pittsburgh Steamship Company. Writing in the Summer 1979 issue of the Great Lakes Historical Society's "Inland Seas", R. Harrison, then assistant superintendent of the canal at the Canadian Soo, describing an incident which occurred there in 1909, stated that "CRESCENT CITY was consistent in her fondness for reefs, shoals, sandbars or just about any shallow water that happened to be near. In 1910, when her command was assumed by a new skipper, the vessel barely cleared the harbour on her first trip, when she ran aground." Where Mr. Harrison got his information, we have no idea whatever, because mention of CRESCENT CITY in the press of the period in respect of accidents was anything but frequent.

CRESCENT CITY did make the news during the autumn of 1901, but it was in a positive way and not related to any grounding. On October 2, 1901, off Vermilion Point in Lake Superior, the wooden-hulled steamer M. M. DRAKE got into trouble in heavy weather whilst towing the schooner-barge MICHIGAN. When the barge began to take water, the DRAKE went alongside and took off the crew but, in the process, the DRAKE and MICHIGAN were pounded together and the steamer also began to sink. In the immediate vicinity at the time were CRESCENT CITY and the package freighter NORTHERN WAVE. The latter saved four of those from the DRAKE, while all but one of the rest were rescued and taken to the Soo by CRESCENT CITY.

The CRESCENT CITY did suffer a minor grounding on April 9, 1902, when she and her consort, the whaleback BARGE 130, went ashore on Au Sable Reef in Lake Superior near Grand Marais, Michigan. It took three days, but both ves-