

galley and messrooms. On the boat deck above, a lifeboat was set on either side, and these boats were worked with luffing davits. The bunker hatch was set at the far forward end of the boat deck and, in later years, the deck was extended forward and equipped with a closed steel bulwark to provide for additional bunker coal capacity. Two large ventilator cowls were positioned just abaft the bunker hatch and behind them rose the smokestack, which was fairly tall, quite heavy, and well raked. The mainmast, likewise pleasantly raked, was stepped fairly closely abaft the funnel, and there was a jack-staff right aft.

About the only "fancy" touch that was added to these steamers was a double curve (small at the top and large at the bottom) in the steelwork fairing at either side of the break of the forecastle. That was a pleasant little touch which was characteristic of ships designed and built by the American Ship Building Company during this period. Steamers built for several companies other than the Lackawanna Steamship Company also sported this distinctive and classy feature.

The eight ships of the Lackawanna Steamship Company were given the same colours as the other vessels which were managed by Pickands Mather & Company. They had ore-red hulls and forecastles, white cabins, and black stacks with a broad orange band. These colours have continued to be worn even to this day by vessels owned by the fleet's successors.

The CRETE and VERONA, as well as the surviving five of the smaller sisters, appear to have operated very successfully for their owners. VERONA seems to have led almost a charmed life, and we have been able to find mention of her being involved in only one accident whilst carrying that name. CRETE, however, was to find her way into three major collisions, the first of which was reported in the August 1912 issue of "The Marine Review". On Tuesday, July 2nd, 1912, CRETE collided in the Southeast Bend of the St. Clair River with the 1906-built steamer JAMES S. DUNHAM (26), (b) LYNFORD E. GEER (34), (c) OTTO M. REISS (ii), then managed by D. Sullivan & Company, Chicago. CRETE suffered five damaged plates and eight buckled frames in her bow, while the DUNHAM sustained only "slight" damage. CRETE was sent to the shipyard at Toledo for the necessary repairs.

The year 1913 saw changes for all of the fifteen vessels then managed by Pickands Mather & Company, including CRETE and VERONA. In that year, all of them, along with seven steamers purchased from the Wolvin interests (the Provident and Acme Steamship Companies) and seventeen more acquired from the receivers of the bankrupt Gilchrist Transportation Company, were transferred into the ownership of a newly-incorporated firm, the Interlake Steamship Company, of Cleveland, which also was managed by Pickands Mather & Company. There was no change in the colours worn by the former Lackawanna ships, except that the name of the new owning company soon appeared in white letters on the bow of each vessel beneath her name.

CRETE and VERONA went through very few physical changes during their lives but, over the winter of 1920-1921, both were rebuilt at Fairport, Ohio. This work seems mostly to have involved the redesign and renewal of internals inside the holds and the fitting of sloping sidetanks and new tanktops. It did, however, alter the tonnage of the vessels; CRETE thereafter was listed as 6030 Gross, 4605 Net, while VERONA was 5880 Gross and 4515 Net.

CRETE's second recorded collision occurred on Tuesday, September 8th, 1936. In fog on Lake Superior, some forty miles west-northwest of Whitefish Point, CRETE collided with the 1900-built, 454-foot steamer CORNELL of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company. Reports do not give any further details or indicate the extent of the damage to either vessel.

The rigours of continual service in the ore trade took their toll on the steamers' internals, and both CRETE and VERONA were given new sidetanks over the winter of 1944-1945.