

NOVADOC was typical of many of the canallers built for lake operators by the Swan, Hunter firm, business-like but severely plain. She had a straight stem, almost no sheer, and a counter stern. She had a half-topgallant fore-castle and, between the fifth and sixth hatches, a "step" in her deck up to a long raised quarterdeck. She had two light pipe masts, one abaft the forward cabins and one abaft the stack. Rising from the spar deck were two heavy kingposts, each of which was equipped with two cargo booms.

Atop the fore-castle head was positioned the texas cabin which contained the master's quarters and office. It had four portholes in its face, with the brass builder's plate located between the centre two, and the ship's bell was hung above the builder's plate. Above the texas was the pilothouse, a rectangular structure with five windows in its front and two windows and a sliding door in each side. NOVADOC, like her sisters, came out with no pilothouse sunvisor at all, but later a visor was added. It was, however, only over the front windows and did not extend down the sides of the pilothouse as in later-built canallers. Canvas dodgers often were carried over the bridge deck rails and awnings over the sides of the bridge deck.

The aft cabin looked rather bald, the only overhang of the boat deck being to support the lifeboat carried on either side and worked by radial steel davits. The smokestack was relatively tall but thin and, like the spars, it had little rake. Two large ventilator cowls were positioned just forward of the stack, one on either side.

From a letter to Gerry Ouderkirk from the late George Ayoub, a T.M.H.S. member from Ottawa, we learn that George was a former crew member who was aboard NOVADOC on August 2, 1931. He related the following story. "I was aboard the NOVADOC [ii] (Capt. W. Beatty, Dick Simpell 1st mate) tied up in the Lachine Canal along with several [other] canallers. The canallers moved ahead in intervals, all the while not knowing the cause for the delay. Up-bound ships, however, were in steady transit. The cause was that the smaller spare lock was being used and because this was a tighter fit, downbound canallers had to go in backwards with the bow snug in the 'v' of the gates. That would have been a spectacular event on t.v. news."

An unsourced clipping dated September 8, found in the Ivan Brookes scrapbook from 1932, provides the following report: "NOVADOC at Belleville - On a trial trip the largest boat ever to enter the local harbour, the NOVADOC from Fort William, arrived today with a cargo of 13,500 bags of flour to be unloaded here. The consignment is only the first of many which will arrive. The NOVADOC is 255 [sic] feet long, and under the command of Capt. Beatty. Captain Beatty states that Belleville harbour is admirably suited to the unloading of flour."

Late in the fall of 1932, NOVADOC was involved in a stranding that very nearly was her undoing. Undoubtedly she was on her last trip of the year and the weather proved to be a factor, but we will let the "Kingston Whig-Standard" tell the story in its series of reports.

December 5, 1932: "NOVADOC's Cargo Is Believed Total Loss. Freighter Runs Ashore in Fog Near Alexandria Bay - Kingston Tugs at the Scene - Crew Removed. Cardinal, Dec. 5 - With three tugs and two lighters alongside, work started today on lightering the cargo from the stranded Paterson Steamship Company's vessel NOVADOC, which grounded in a heavy fog [sic] 400 feet off shore in the Narrow below Alexandria [Bay, N.Y.] yesterday. [Frontenac Shoal on which she grounded is located directly across the American Narrows from Alexandria Bay and extends out from Wellesley Island about 1,000 feet upstream from Heart Island. Its outer reaches lie very close to the shipping channel.] Laden with divers and equipment, the tugs and lighters today will remove the water soaked flour from the NOVADOC's hold, and then attempt to patch the perforated lower portion of the vessel preparatory to trying to pull her from the Frontenac Shoal. Weather was clear and only a slight wind blowing.