

CITY OF CLEVELAND III

Over the 36 years in which we have been producing "Scanner", we have put together for our readers a large collection of histories of famous lake vessels. Included amongst these have been some of the best known of the passenger steamers that plied our waters. But during those 36 years, we never once have featured any of the many passenger steamers owned by the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, of Detroit. Why this should be, we don't really know, but we now are about to set matters to rights and feature one of the true workhorses of that renowned fleet, and we hope that our readers will enjoy the result.

The history of the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company can be traced back to 1850, when Capt. Arthur Edwards, of Detroit, began overnight service between Detroit and Cleveland using the steamers SOUTHERNER and BALTIMORE. (A service between those ports using the Canadian steamer LONDON had operated briefly in 1849.) The first ships were owned individually and operated under a pooling arrangement known as the Detroit and Cleveland Steamboat Line. By 1852, the Hon. John Owen, a major Detroit merchant, became associated with Edwards in the enterprise, and it is said that Capt. Lawson A. Pierce, and possibly E. B. Ward & Company, may also have been involved. Owen became the largest shareholder and the enterprise eventually became the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company. The firm was incorporated officially in 1868. It was dissolved and a new firm of the same name was incorporated in 1897.

Over the years, the D & C, as the firm commonly was known, came to own a great many ships. It expanded to include both day and night service between Detroit and Cleveland, and also overnight service between Detroit and Buffalo, regular "cruise" service between Detroit, Mackinac Island, St. Ignace and, for a while, Chicago, and assorted excursion services. Until 1950, all were operated safely (as far as passengers were concerned) except for a collision between the company's big sidewheeler MORNING STAR and the sailing vessel CORTLAND on Lake Erie on June 20, 1868. 26 lives were lost in that accident.

Not only was the D & C an operator of steamboats but it also was involved in the hotel business. The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, then the largest summer hostelry in the world, was built in 1887 by John Oliver Plank, with the support of George Pullman of the Pullman Co. The first president of the hotel company was Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt. The stock was subscribed and owned by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, the New York Central Railroad, and the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company. The immense, wooden, landmark hotel still stands today and is as popular as ever.

A succession of larger and larger passenger steamers were built for the D & C as the years passed, and the company came to rely on the considerable expertise of Frank E. Kirby, naval architect extraordinaire, to design these ships. Many of them had large, squarish pilothouses and twin stacks set athwartships. The first single-stackers with rounded pilothouses were CITY OF ALPENA (ii) and CITY OF MACKINAC (ii), built in 1893, which were followed by the 360-foot EASTERN STATES and WESTERN STATES in 1902. By this time, the company was controlled by the McMillan family of Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan. The McMillans had long been interested in the D & C, but a controlling interest was acquired when they purchased the holdings of John Owen after his death in 1892. A succession of McMillans would head the company for half a century.

The company's capital was increased from \$2 million to \$2.5 million, with 50,000 common shares, in February of 1906 in order to finance the construction of a grand new steamer which was to be placed in service in 1907. The order for this new ship was let to the Detroit Shipbuilding Company, Wyandotte, Michigan, and she was built as the yard's Hull 168. Designed by Frank E. Kirby, she was to be the largest and by far the most elegant passenger steamer built for lake service up until that time. She was launched on Sa-