

The steamer was built by the Midland shipyard as its Hull 11. She was launched on Saturday, May 12, 1923, with her unloading machinery already installed but without her smokestack and masts, and was completed early in June. She ran her trials out on Georgian Bay on June 12, and Great Lakes Transportation took formal delivery of her on June 16. She was enrolled at Midland and was given Canadian official number 150237. She was christened GLENELG and was named for a small town located on the Sound of Sleat in the Highland district of Scotland. From near the town, a ferry service runs across the sound to the Isle of Skye. James Playfair usually gave his ships names of Scottish origin with the prefix "Glen", but this particular name was most unusual in that it was a palindrome, a word spelled the same way forward and backward. As far as we know, she was the only lake freighter ever to carry a name of that nature.

GLENELG was the very first Canadian new-built self-unloader on the lakes. Her steel hull was 252.0 feet in length between perpendiculars (259 feet overall), 43.1 feet in the beam and 23.3 feet in depth, and her fully-top-gallant forecastle was 36 feet in length. Her tonnage was calculated as 2099 Gross and 1200 Net. She had 10 hatches set on 12-foot centres and as originally built, she had only one continuous hold through which ran the cargo conveyors. There was a watertight bulkhead at either end of the cargo hold.

The ship was powered by a triple expansion engine which had cylinders of 17, 25 and 43 inches bore, and a stroke of 30 inches, which produced 800 Indicated Horsepower. This was a war surplus engine which had been built in 1919 by the C. & G. Cooper Company, of Mount Vernon, Ohio. Steam at 180 p.s.i. was produced by two single-ended, coal-fired Scotch boilers, each of which measured 12'6" in diameter by 11'0" length. There were 2,978 square feet of heating surface and 84 square feet of grate surface. The boilers were manufactured in 1923 by Engine & Machine Works of Canada Ltd., reportedly at St. Catharines.

GLENELG was a handsome steamer. She had a straight stem and classic counter stern and rather more sheer to her decks than most canallers built in the 1920s. She carried her anchors in squarish pockets set close to the stem. She had a fully raised forecastle and flush quarterdeck, and she had no closed taffrail aft, but only an open pipe rail. The forecastle head had a closed steel bulwark for most of its length.

On the forecastle head was positioned a texas cabin which had a bowed front. It contained the master's office and quarters. The pilothouse was set atop the texas and it had nine windows in its rounded front, with a sunvisor over them all. The companionways leading up to the bridge deck on either side rose up from in front of the texas, rather than at its sides as on most canallers. There was a closed steel bulwark around the entire front of the bridge deck, including the wings, although the centre section immediately in front of the pilothouse later was removed in favour of an open rail. An open navigation bridge was provided on the monkey's island above the pilothouse, and it was fitted with flying bridgewings, along with a closed bulwark around everything. Stretcher poles were fitted so that a canvas awning could be hoisted over the open bridge as weather conditions might require. A tall but thin pipe foremast, well raked, was stepped immediately abaft the pilothouse.

Aft, there was a large deckhouse with more overhang of the boat deck, particularly over the fantail, than most canallers sported. The smokestack was set well forward on the boat deck, and it was tall and heavy and well raked. A single steam whistle was carried high up its forward face. The light pole mainmast was set very close ahead of the stack, and two large ventilator cowls were placed just forward of the funnel. A lifeboat was carried on either side of the boat deck, worked with luffing steel davits.

There was a large deckhouse on the spar deck immediately abaft the break of the forecastle, and it contained the cargo elevating gear. Out of it rose