

completed and in commission by June. In fact, GARDEN CITY entered service for the St. C. G. & T. Nav. Co. on the Toronto - Port Dalhousie route on June 20, 1892. She seems to have operated very successfully and proved to be the best vessel then used on the Port Dalhousie run. This route was very different from that operated by the Niagara Navigation Company from Toronto to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Youngstown, Queenston and Lewiston, in that it had no direct connections with the United States, but did offer rail transportation into downtown St. Catharines and, as the electric railways expanded, to Thorold, Niagara Falls, Welland and Port Colborne. It also lacked the exquisitely scenic views given by the big N.N.Co. steamers on the Niagara River.

The Niagara, St. Catharines & Toronto Railway was officially incorporated in 1899 and eventually took over the various other local electric lines, running a route through to the Port Dalhousie docks in April 1900. GARDEN CITY had operated out of Buffalo back in 1896 (although she soon would return), and in 1900, the Lakeside Navigation Company chartered the steamer LINCOLN to assist. Lakeside Navigation at this time had come under the control of Toronto entrepreneurs Zebulon A. Lash, J. H. Plummer and J. W. Flavelle. Lash had become board chairman of the N.S.&T. Railway, and the navigation company soon came to be known as the Niagara, St. Catharines & Toronto Navigation Company. Eventually, the navigation company and the electric railway company came to be part of the enormous McKenzie and Mann transportation empire.

The "British Whig", Kingston, reported on August 16, 1895, that "the str. GARDEN CITY with 200 passengers from Toronto and western ports, called at Swift's Wharf today for a short time and then proceeded to the Thousand Islands. They will return to Kingston this evening and will remain until tomorrow morning." Of course, GARDEN CITY could handle only day passengers, having no overnight accommodations, and so they had to be put ashore in hotels for overnight stays.

The "Buffalo Morning Express" of May 29, 1896, indicated that GARDEN CITY had arrived at Buffalo the previous day. It was stated that she would be placed on the excursion run between Buffalo and Crystal Beach, Ontario, beginning on Decoration Day. "She is nicely fitted up and will be a big addition to the present fleet of excursion steamers running out of this port. Her capacity is estimated at about 1,200 people."

The same paper reported on June 5, 1896: "The excursion stm. GAZELLE came out of winter quarters yesterday afternoon and went to the fuel dock. She will go on the Crystal Beach route this morning. The GARDEN CITY, which has been running to the Beach since Decoration Day, will lay off today, in order to be tested, after which she will go into commission again. The GAZELLE will begin to run regularly as soon as the business warrants it."

The paper on September 7, 1896, noted that "Yesterday the wind was blowing a gale. The last Sunday for the excursion boats proved to be a poor one... Today the boats, with one or two exceptions, will make their last trip." The next day, the paper reported: "Labor Day was very quiet on the docks, and especially so with the excursion boats. The public had apparently forgotten all about the summer resorts. There was plenty of room on the boats that went out yesterday. Last night the stmrs. NIAGARA, PURITAN and SHREWSBERRY (sic) made their last trip of the season. The GARDEN CITY is under charter and will run to Crystal Beach until the first of the month. That then will wind up the excursion business for the season of 1896."

Some sources have indicated that GARDEN CITY continued on the Buffalo - Crystal Beach route until at least 1901, but we believe those reports to be in error. The Kingston "Daily British Whig" of Monday, September 28, 1896, reported: "Steamer Elopes - Buffalo - Sept. 26. The steamer GARDEN CITY, which has run between Buffalo and Crystal Beach all summer, took French leave last night and under cover of darkness stole out of the harbour, leaving many anxious behind. The GARDEN CITY is owned by a bank in Toronto (sic)."