

tapered Oregon-pine spars. The work done on this vessel shows the excellent facilities of the new ship building and repairing plant on the north branch at Chicago and augurs well for its success on new work as well as repairs."

The engine, which developed 1,000 indicated horsepower at 85 revolutions per minute (some subsequent sources showed 1,500 i.h.p. at 86 r.p.m.), had been built in 1887 by the Cleveland Shipbuilding Company. The boilers, which had four furnaces, 176 square feet of grate surface and 6,606 square feet of heating surface, did not come from AURORA like the engine, but rather were manufactured for AUSTRALIA in 1902 by the Manitowoc Boiler Works at Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

After the rebuilding, AUSTRALIA's hull had three watertight bulkheads and her tonnage was calculated as 3845 Gross and 2877 Net. She now had a fully closed steel bulwark down both sides of the forecastle head, and a new bridge structure was located abaft the first hatch. It had a fairly large cabin on the spar deck, which no doubt housed the senior deck officers, while the master's quarters and office were in a texas located on the deck above. Forward of the texas was a three-windowed pilothouse, raised up half a deck in height. Bridge wings, which were extensions of the texas roof, reached out to the sides of the ship and an open navigation bridge was located on the monkey's island. The new foremast, which carried a boom, was stepped right abaft the bridge structure, while part-way down the spar deck, between the fifth and sixth hatches, was positioned a doghouse which provided additional crew facilities.

Aft, there was a much larger deckhouse than before, with the boilerhouse extending forward over the deck area where the twelfth hatch previously had been. The new mainmast rose out of the spar deck immediately in front of the cabin. From the house sprouted a much larger and fairly well raked smokestack, with several large ventilator cowls set near its base. A lifeboat, worked with radial steel davits, was set on either side of the hurricane deck.

The conversion of AUSTRALIA must have been a success for, some five years later, the Corrigan fleet went ahead and did the same thing with its other big steel barges. POLYNESIA was powered over the winter of 1907-1908 using the engine from the fleet's wooden CALEDONIA, which then was given less powerful machinery. And later in 1908, the same sort of machinery exchange brought the original power from the wooden ITALIA to the barge AMAZON.

Meanwhile, as reported by the "Toledo Blade", the 1907 season had been eventful for two of these Corrigan ships. On June 13, 1907, AUSTRALIA was upbound in the St. Clair River with POLYNESIA in tow. About a mile north of Recor's Point, the tow met the package freighter BETHLEHEM of the Lehigh Valley Transit Company, downbound from Chicago for Buffalo with 50,000 bushels of wheat, 600 barrels and 900 bags of flour, and 1,000 bags of feed. As the vessels passed, BETHLEHEM's steering chains parted and she veered into the port side of AUSTRALIA. The POLYNESIA could not be stopped in time and she then struck the BETHLEHEM, putting a six-foot hole in the steamer, resulting in substantial damage to BETHLEHEM's grain and flour cargo. To prevent her from sinking in mid-channel, the wounded AUSTRALIA was run onto the Canadian shore, with her bow up on the beach and her stern in deep water.

In due course, all of the vessels were repaired and returned to service, but it may well have been this incident that persuaded James Corrigan to have POLYNESIA and AMAZON rebuilt as steamers. In any event, it was in the first decade of the new century that the Corrigan fleet was reorganized as Corrigan, McKinney & Company, and in 1910 it transferred the ownership of AUSTRALIA, POLYNESIA and AMAZON to a new firm known as the Australia Transit Company, of which James E. Ferris was manager. Australia Transit was, in fact, a joint operation of the Corrigan-McKinney Steel Company and the Pioneer Steamship Company. (The same "partnership" also later involved the big 1908-built steamer PRICE McKINNEY, which actually had been owned by the Island Transit Company.)

But the Corrigan fleet was reaching the end of its viability as it had only a few steel steamers (AURANIA, of course, having been lost back in 1909) and a collection of old wooden steamers and barges. And much larger independent fleets such as the Gilchrist Transportation Company and Mitchell & Company had gone out of business. The wooden Corrigan vessels simply became obsolete and, on February 4, 1915, AUSTRALIA, POLYNESIA and AMAZON were sold to the Pioneer Steamship Company, of which Hutchinson & Company, Cleveland, was manager. At the same time, PRICE McKINNEY also was acquired outright by Pioneer.

In the Hutchinson fleet, AUSTRALIA was given an ore-red hull, if she did not already have one - and there is some evidence that the Corrigan steel ships had red hulls at least as