

*City of Detroit III - undocumentated at the time
Collision*

U. S. Local Inspectors,

Detroit, Michigan.

Dear Sirs:

I have to report accidental sinking of the steamer "J.C.SUIT" by the steamer "CITY OF DETROIT III" on May 30th, 1912, on the occasion of the builder's trial trip of said steamer of which I was in charge of the navigation thereof. The incidents in connection with said collision were substantially as follows:

At about 10:15 A.M. on date above mentioned, we pulled away from the Shipbuilding dock at the Foot of Orleans Street; I first attempted to come about for the purpose of proceeding to Lake Erie (with a port wheel); the steamer did not seem to come about readily, so after getting away from the dock, and a short distance out in the river, I concluded that I could better bring her around with a starboard wheel, backing and filling with stern toward the Canadian shore, this I attempted to do, and apparently everything was working all right up to the point when it was necessary to back; I estimate that we were well away from the dock line when I gave backing bells on the gong; this gong is connected with a return sound tube between engine room and pilot house; the wheelman and mate who were in the pilot house report that they distinctly heard the signal (sound) repeated back through said tube, I myself am unable to verify this as the sound return tube does not extend to the top of the pilot house (the point from which I was handling the steamer) however as the steamer's way was not checked promptly, and as she seemed to be forging ahead, I immediately threw the Chadburn back strong; the signal on Chadburn was answered back, and as the steamer's headway still continued I sent a man from the pilot house to engine room with orders to verbally give the order to "back strong"; at this time there was considerable noise of escaping steam through the vessels side in the vicinity of the engine, and I am unable to say whether or not the engine backed at all, but I am sure that if my first back up signal was reasonably promptly answered the steamer's way would have been safely stopped as I had intended; as it was however the steamer continued on and came into collision with the steamer "J.C.SUIT" which was moored to the dock; the force of the collision which was apparently slight caused the "SUIT'S" mooring lines to part, and as the steamer "DETROIT III" moved away from the docks the "SUIT" came with her; with the assistance of tugs the "SUIT" and "DETROIT III" were pulled apart, the "SUIT" very soon thereafter sinking in the channel; with the further assistance of the tug the "DETROIT III" was pulled around, and after heading down stream proceeded to Lake Erie for the continuation of the trial trip, which was completed without further accident or mishap.

No lives were lost by the accident, the crew of "SUIT" escaped to the dock; no damage was sustained by the steamer "CITY OF DETROIT III".

As already stated I attribute the accident to the failure in some way of the engine backing promptly in response to my backing signal; whether or not the engineer fully understood my signal, or whether the engine backed I am unable to say.

(Signed)

Alex. J. McKay.

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June 18th, 1912.