

After one would get off the steamer in Skagway, one would board the WP&Y narrow gauge train and go to Whitehorse, where he'd transfer to the company's sternwheeler for the ride to Dawson and the gold fields. The sternwheeler trip took about 2 days down, a week back.

The sternwheelers could not draw over 4 feet; as a result the vessels never "improved." The KLONDIKE and CASCA of the 1930s are identical to vessels which plied the Yukon in the 1890s. While on the Sacramento, the CAPITAL CITY and FORT SUTTER added private baths, etc., the Yukon boats never could do anything like this for fear of increasing the depth.

Apparently the KLONDIKE was built with relatively little superstructure. Her lower (freight) deck ran all the way back, but her second deck ran only about midway. Later it was extended (you can see in the postcards how the middle portion is higher; that portion plus the decking behind it were added). Anyway, when the ship became a monument, they stripped off that additional decking.

The 2nd deck had an observation room in front. The "tunnel" down the center, lighted in daytime by clerestory windows, served as the dining room. The walls were absolutely blank, as the staterooms exited to the outside promenade on that deck.

(I remember Calif's T.G. WALKER had stateroom doors opening to the inside tunnel, with another set opening out to the promenade. The same for J.D. PETERS).

On the Texas deck of KLONDIKE you think there's another observation room directly beneath the wheelhouse. Actually, it is two staterooms, the one on port side for the captain, the starboard side for either the engineer or some other officer. The captain's room was the only one with a steam radiator in it.

KLONDIKE's single boiler rested in the hull but extended almost to the ceiling of the freight deck. It was not enclosed. On the freight deck were old shuffleboard markings for passengers! Yukon boats often had to winch their way upstream, and we could see all this equipment. Since the TUTSHI on Lake Bennett did not have to winch her way anywhere, she could afford an extension on her forward deck, as you can notice on the card.

The State of Alaska is really helping the average person get to it now with its Marine Highway. Fares are kept at a minimum by such cost-cutting ways as eliminating "flunkies." You carry your own bags; you make your own beds in the stateroom during the time of your trip. Many hippie-style people used sleeping bags either in public rooms or out on deck. Airplane type reclining seats are also available, as well as a 24-hour coffee shop. Most of the Alaska Ferries run from Prince Rupert; however, the recently lengthened MALASPINA now makes a regular run between Seattle and Skagway, skipping any Canadian ports in order to avoid hassling over customs, etc.

We went north, of course, on Alaska's TAKU out of Prince Rupert. Our intent was to return on the MALASPINA to Seattle, then take Amtrak home. However, MALASPINA turned out to be badly overbooked, so we went for the alternate arrangement of PRINCE GEORGE to Vancouver, and SPIRIT OF LONDON to California.