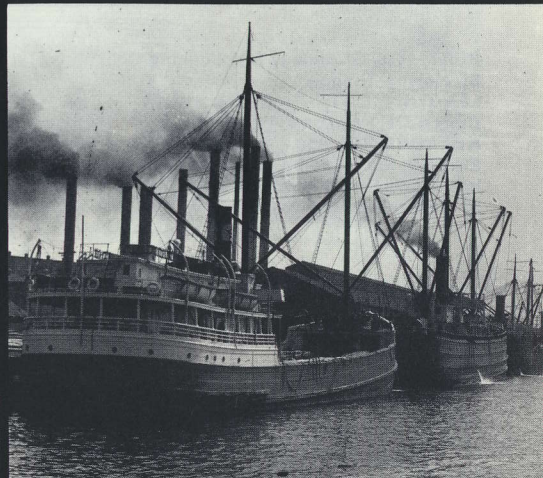
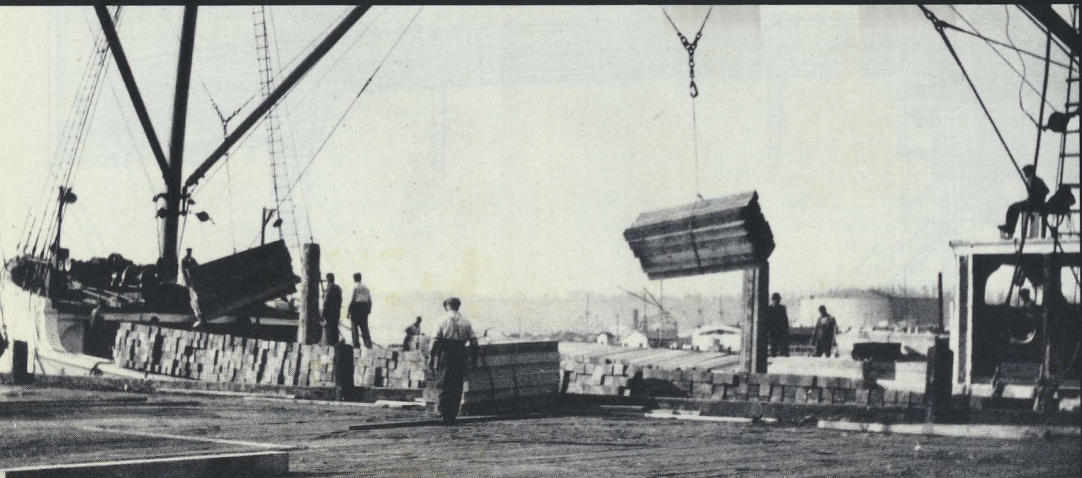


The Steam Schooner

Wapama

National Maritime Museum,
San Francisco

Bay Model Visitor Center



Wapama, Last of Her Kind

Built in 1915 at St. Helens, Oregon, *Wapama* is the last of some 225 steam schooners. She is one of seven historic ships in the fleet of the National Maritime Museum, San Francisco. Now berthed at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dock at The Bay Model Visitor Center in Sausalito, the steam schooner *Wapama* faces serious preservation problems. In 1979 *Wapama* was in danger of breaking apart and was removed from the water. Since then, deterioration has continued. *Wapama* cannot return to the water unless she is completely rebuilt at considerable expense, sacrificing much of her remaining historic material and workmanship. While decisions about *Wapama*'s future are being formulated, work continues to save the vessel and return her to the fleet of historic ships at the National Maritime Museum, San Francisco. After languishing in the backwaters of Oakland Estuary for seven years, *Wapama* has been returned to the public. Visitors can watch as documentation and stabilization of her hull take place.

A Tough Survivor

The steamer Wapama, latest addition to the already large fleet of coasters belonging to the Chas. R. McCormick Company, will be ready for her trial trip in about ten days. The vessel will have accommodations for forty-five cabin passengers and fifteen steerage. The lumber carrying capacity will be 1,100,000 board feet. (San Francisco Examiner, April 12, 1915)

Steam schooners were hardy little wooden-hulled steamers originally rigged with auxiliary sails, hence their "schooner" name. The steam schooners were specially designed for use in the rugged Pacific Coast lumber trade. By the late 1850s dozens of logging camps and sawmills on the rugged coasts of California and Oregon gave rise to the Pacific Coast lumber trade. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, sailing schooners and steam schooners formed the backbone of maritime trade and commerce on this Coast, carrying lumber south and general cargo north. Passengers were also transported by steam schooners, which frequently were the only link with small coastal towns and the "dog-hole" ports where sawmills had sprung up.

The rugged conditions of the lumber trade battered *Wapama* for fifteen years, but she survived the coastal fog, heavy seas, and accidents which claimed dozens of her kind. In 1930 she became a freight and passenger steamer for the White Flyer Line, steaming between San Francisco and San Pedro. *Wapama* was sold in 1937 but continued on the same run. Her new owner later reminisced "we charged \$8 for the trip . . . dinner and breakfast included . . . She made two trips for me, both of which lost money, and I laid her up." *Wapama* was sold once again in 1937, this time to the Alaska Transportation Company. Renamed *Tongass*, she carried mail, freight, and passengers between Seattle and small port towns on the south-eastern coast of Alaska.

Old age finally caught up with *Tongass*, and in 1947 she was laid up once again. *Tongass* was sold to a ship-scraping firm, but as one reporter noted, "No one really seems to have the heart to wreck the little old lady . . . she's still afloat." *Tongass* was saved from oblivion by the State of California in 1958. *Wapama*, her original name once again painted on her bow, was restored, and displayed at the San Francisco Maritime State Historic Park along with other historic ships. In 1977 these vessels were acquired by the National Park Service. In recognition of her historical significance, *Wapama* was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1984.

What is Being Done to Preserve Wapama?

Fresh water promotes the growth of dry rot, a fungus which eats into the wooden planks and frames until they weaken and collapse. Since *Wapama*'s decks are no longer watertight, dry rot has spread through the ship. While rotten wood, which can "infect" good wood, is removed, *Wapama* is being helped by the addition of a weatherproof cover. The brightly colored cover, erected on a wooden frame, allows the vessel to dry out sufficiently to receive appropriate preservation treatment. Meanwhile, *Wapama*'s iron fittings and machinery will not be allowed to rust away. Volunteers chip off rust, oil moving parts, and repaint exposed metal surfaces. Scraping peeling paint from sound wood and applying a fresh coat helps make it waterproof and less prone to dry rot.

While volunteers and museum staff have been working to retard her deterioration, *Wapama* has been thoroughly surveyed inside and out. This survey, or Historic Structure Report, includes an historical review of the ship's construction and career in addition to detailed plans of the vessel, for the first time documenting *Wapama*'s unique characteristics and how she was built. Careful analysis of *Wapama*'s structural decay, damage, and deterioration will provide the first comprehensive understanding of the ship's problems. The Historic Structure Report also provides a detailed discussion of alternative means and methods for preserving *Wapama* for the future. The preservation of the steam schooner *Wapama* will be a landmark effort. Therefore, careful research, testing and analysis of means to stop the dry rot and consolidate the vessel's structure will take at least two years. At that time a final preservation alternative can be selected.

The Bay Model Visitor Center has developed a cooperative program with the National Park Service centering around their Sausalito dock space and the *Wapama*. The interpretation of the *Wapama* and her preservation treatment will provide a unique opportunity for coordinating the educational, volunteer, interpretive, and other public programs of the BMVC and the National Maritime Museum for the benefit and enjoyment of the public and the preservation of this National Historic Landmark.

What You Can Do to Help

Volunteers are helping keep *Wapama* alive. If you would like to join *Wapama*'s crew of volunteers, contact the National Maritime Museum at (415) 556-1871. Donations for *Wapama*'s preservation are welcome and may be sent to the *Wapama* Fund, National Maritime Museum Association, Building 275, Crissy Field, Presidio of San Francisco, San Francisco, California 94129. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by the law. Individuals, groups, or corporations wishing to donate materials or supplies for *Wapama* should contact the Maritime Unit Manager at the National Maritime Museum, San Francisco at (415) 556-3002.

The National Maritime Museum, San Francisco

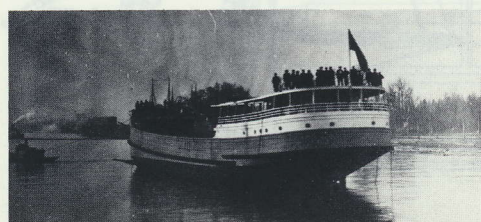
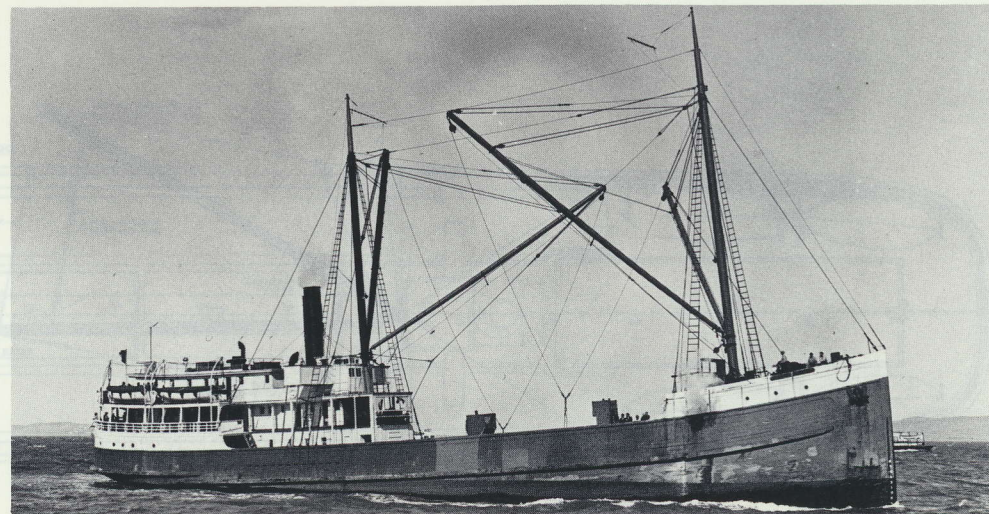
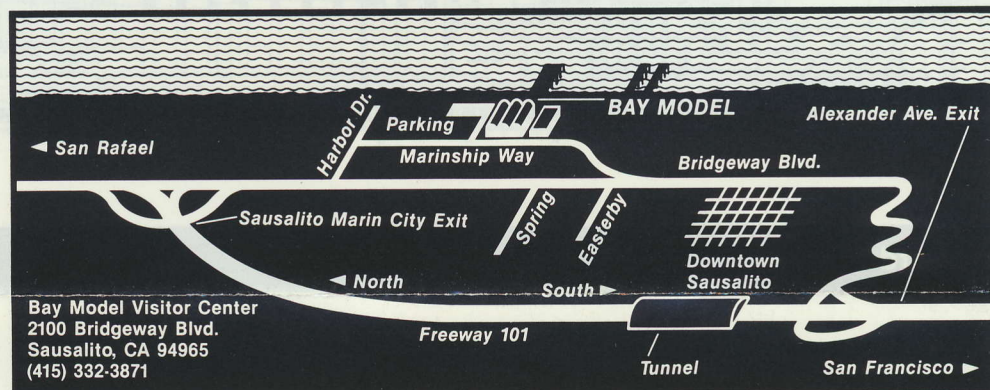
The National Maritime Museum recounts the saga of the people and ships that helped shape the development of the Pacific Coast. Offering several attractions, The National Maritime Museum includes the museum itself, historic vessels at Hyde Street pier and a research library and archives. The Museum is managed by the National Park Service as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. For more information call (415) 556-6435.

The National Maritime Museum Association

The National Maritime Museum Association (NMMA) is a tax exempt, non-profit California corporation dedicated to the preservation of maritime history. Your NMMA membership and your tax-deductible contribution will help preserve *Wapama* and keep the historic sea traditions of America alive. For more information call (415) 929-0202.

The Bay Model Visitor Center

The Bay Model Visitor Center, a facility of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, houses a working hydraulic model of the San Francisco Bay and Delta Regions. The Center provides scientists, educators, and citizens interested in San Francisco Bay and the Bay-Delta Model a unique opportunity to view the complete bay-delta system at a glance. The Center gives an introduction, and provides an overview.



The Steam Schooner

Wapama

BUILT: 1915, St. Helens Shipbuilding Co.,

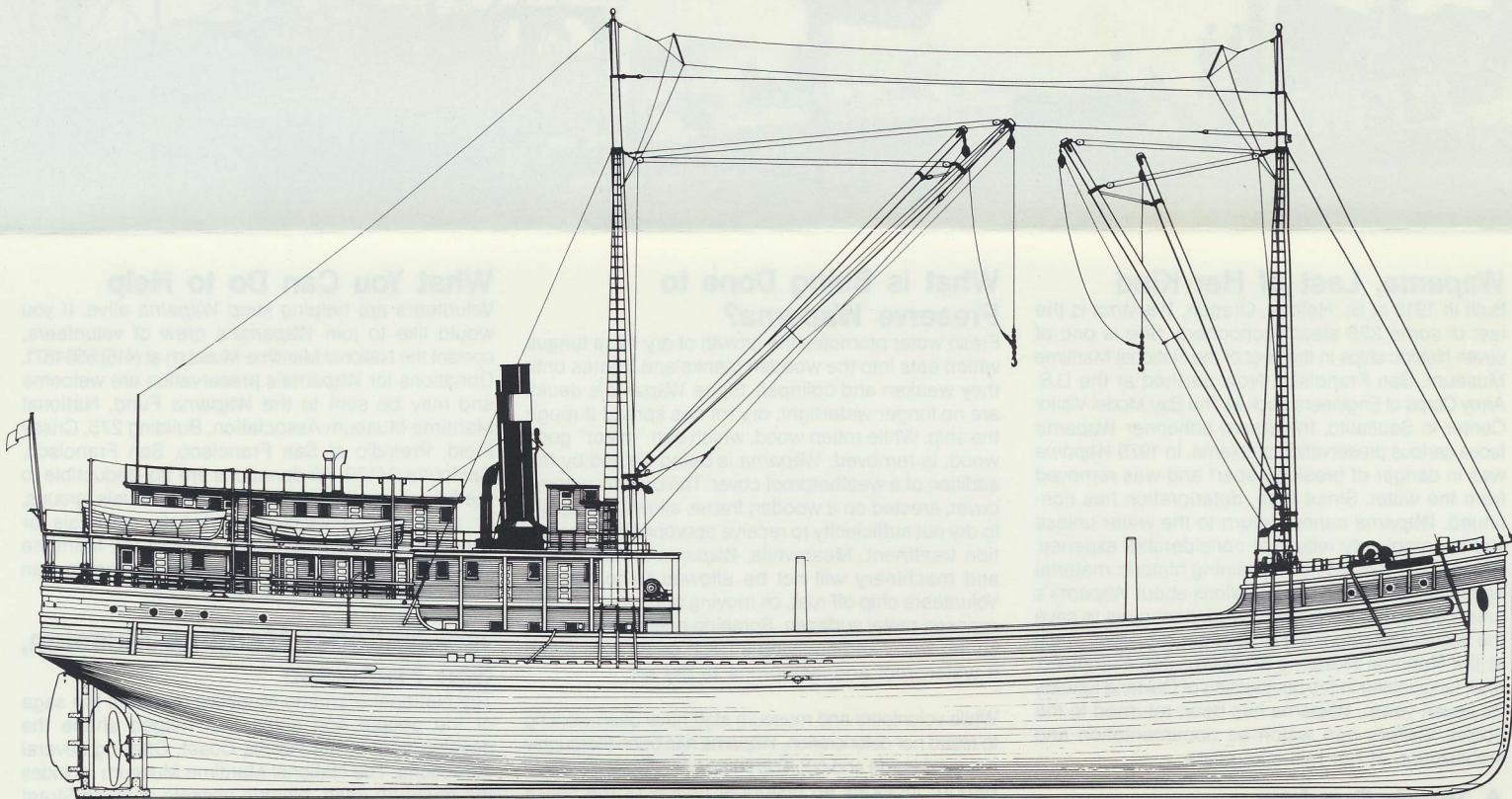
St. Helens, Oregon

LENGTH: 216'-11" **BEAM:** 41'-1"

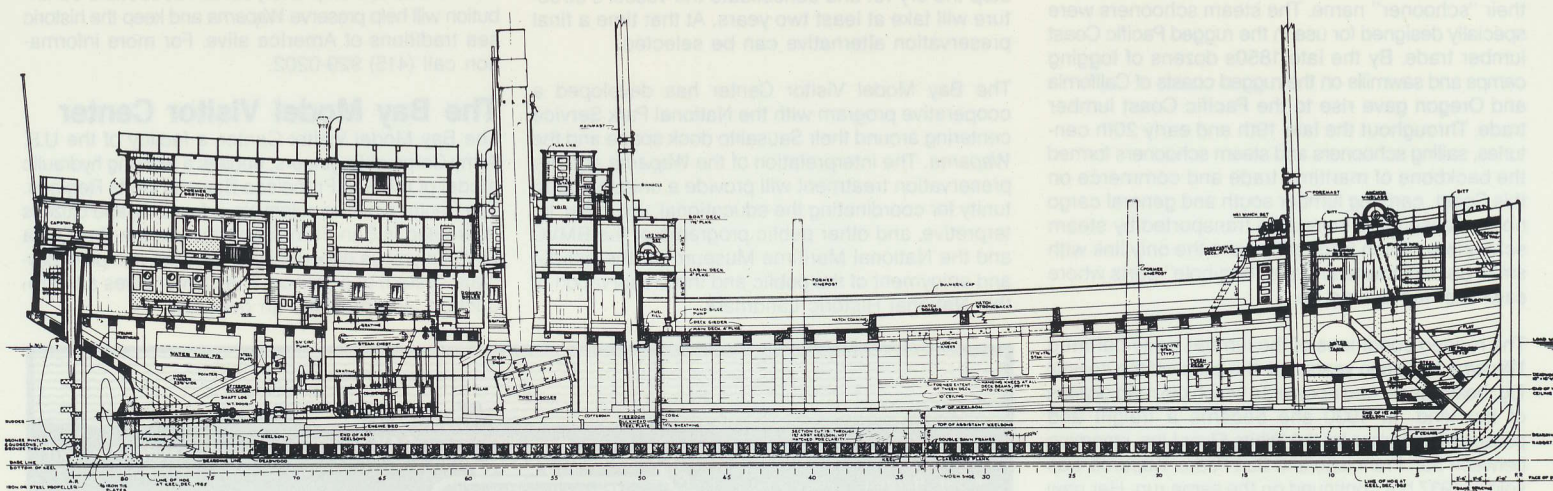
DEPTH OF HOLD: 14' 4"

NET TONNAGE: 584 **GROSS TONNAGE:** 951

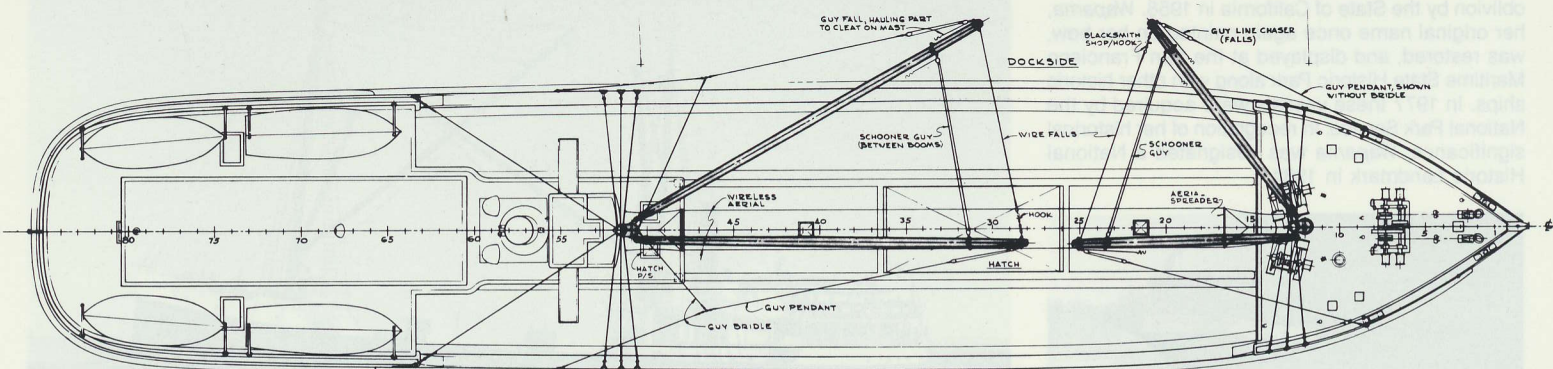
ENGINE: Steam, triple-expansion, built by Main Street
Iron Works, San Francisco. 2 water-tube boilers built
by Babcock & Wilcox.



Outboard Profile



Inboard Profile



Rigging Arrangement