

# Boblo Boats





Many of us old timers remember the big wonderful steam powered boats such as the Bob-lo Boats. This is sadly missing in our present day. These were usually all day or all evening excursions to Bob-Lo Amusement park or other destinations. There was a band on the boat with dancing. Food was available. One could sit in a chair and watch the scenery go by. The big deep sounding boat whistle would sound to other boats. As a kid I loved to watch the huge steam engine. It had Three huge pistons and various other moving parts. You could look way down to the belly of the boat and watch the engineer. Bells would ring to tell the engineer to change speed or reverse the engines. And no matter how cold or windy it became on deck the engine area was always warm. Up on the top deck you could see the whistle, the big smoke stack and even watch the captain do his work. On that top deck you felt like you were at the top of the world with a great view for miles. There were huge air scoops and large machinery and huge ropes and a gang plank. At the back of the boat you could look down at the water churned up by the propeller and watch the wake of the boat spread out. We looked way down on to small craft who looked up and everyone waved. Bob-Lo Island had a large amusement park, food areas and nature area. When the boats came back to pick up folks you could pick which boat to take back. They were a little different but they would sound those deep whistles which could be heard for miles to tell that they arrived. It was just a good fun filled day and very inexpensive.



They stopped running in 1991. The Island Amusement park was torn down and the land sold. Sad state of the Bob-Lo boats for several years but they have been declared historical sites and are being restored.

To see more on these boats see <http://boblosteamers.com/> and <http://bobloboat.com/>

See video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3dUa-BIkK0>

Do a Google search on Boblo Boats to see even more

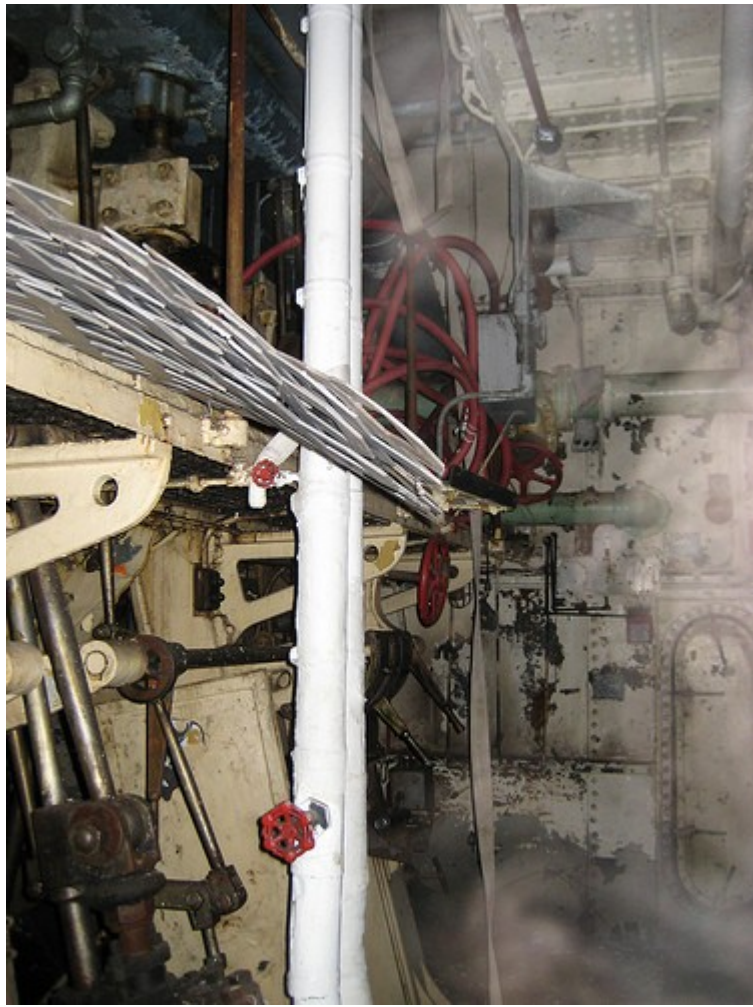


As a boy the most fascinating thing about the boat was the huge steam engine, It was fun to watch the piston rods moving turning the huge propeller shaft. There were other fascinating things moving. One thing was like a narrow fork which went over the shaft. I think it was used to reverse the propeller direction. Other devices were busy moving and doing things. There were funny sounds. One could look down and see the belly of the ship and the sides from the inside.

Top of Triple expansion steam engine below. The boats Stopped running:in 1991.













"The steamer Ste. Claire represents the typical propeller-driven excursion steamer of the turn of the century, a type once found in many parts of the country. Excursion steamers are steamships built primarily for passengers for day trips. Ste. Claire and her running mate Columbia represent the "ocean-going" type of excursion vessel although they were used on lakes."

"The steamer Columbia and Ste. Claire are the last two remaining classic excursion steamers in the country; and the last essentially unaltered passenger ships designed by Frank E. Kirby; and for their essentially unaltered propulsion machinery of a type becoming increasingly rare ; as the two last vessels of the Detroit and Windsor Ferry Co.; as two of the few surviving vessels built by the Detroit Dry Dock Company, and for their unaltered propulsion machinery, which is of a rare type. Columbia is the oldest passenger steamer in the United States, excepting vessels properly classed as ferries. Columbia and her running-mate Ste. Claire are the last two steamers of their type with integrity left in the United States. The pair shared their original run from Detroit to Bob-Lo Island for 81 years, a record of service on a single run unequalled in U. S. history. " Quote from Mr Lee found on <http://bobloboat.com/history.html>

"Built in 1902, the Columbia combines a spectacular array of design, engineering, and aesthetic innovations. At 207' in length and 60' in breadth, the ship was designed to carry 3,200 passengers comfortably on her five decks. Her beautiful interiors were created in collaboration with the painter and designer Louis O. Keil. The ship is adorned with mahogany paneling, etched and leaded glass, gilded moldings, a grand staircase, and an innovative open-air ballroom. The Columbia's massive 1,200-horsepower triple-expansion reciprocating steam engine, surrounded by viewing galleries, will become an unforgettable demonstration of early steam technologies for visitors. Laid up and minimally maintained for the past 15 years, the ship has suffered an accelerating decline in her condition." Quote from <http://sscolumbia.org>

Additional info may be found at <http://boblosteamers.com/>

