

# Steamer's career was marked by mishaps

OVERLOOKED ORLEANS: Excursion ship's woes included a drunken passenger fatality and lawsuit  
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**OAK ORCHARD** — An image shows the steamer Arundell approaching Oak Orchard Harbor around 1904 or 1905.

Built by the Bell Iron Works at Buffalo in 1879, the iron hull steamer was operated along the southern coast of Lake Ontario during the summer months through 1910. When the photograph was taken, the Arundell was owned and operated by the Cole & Holt Lines of Bay City, Michigan and was brought each spring to Lake Ontario by way of the Welland Canal.

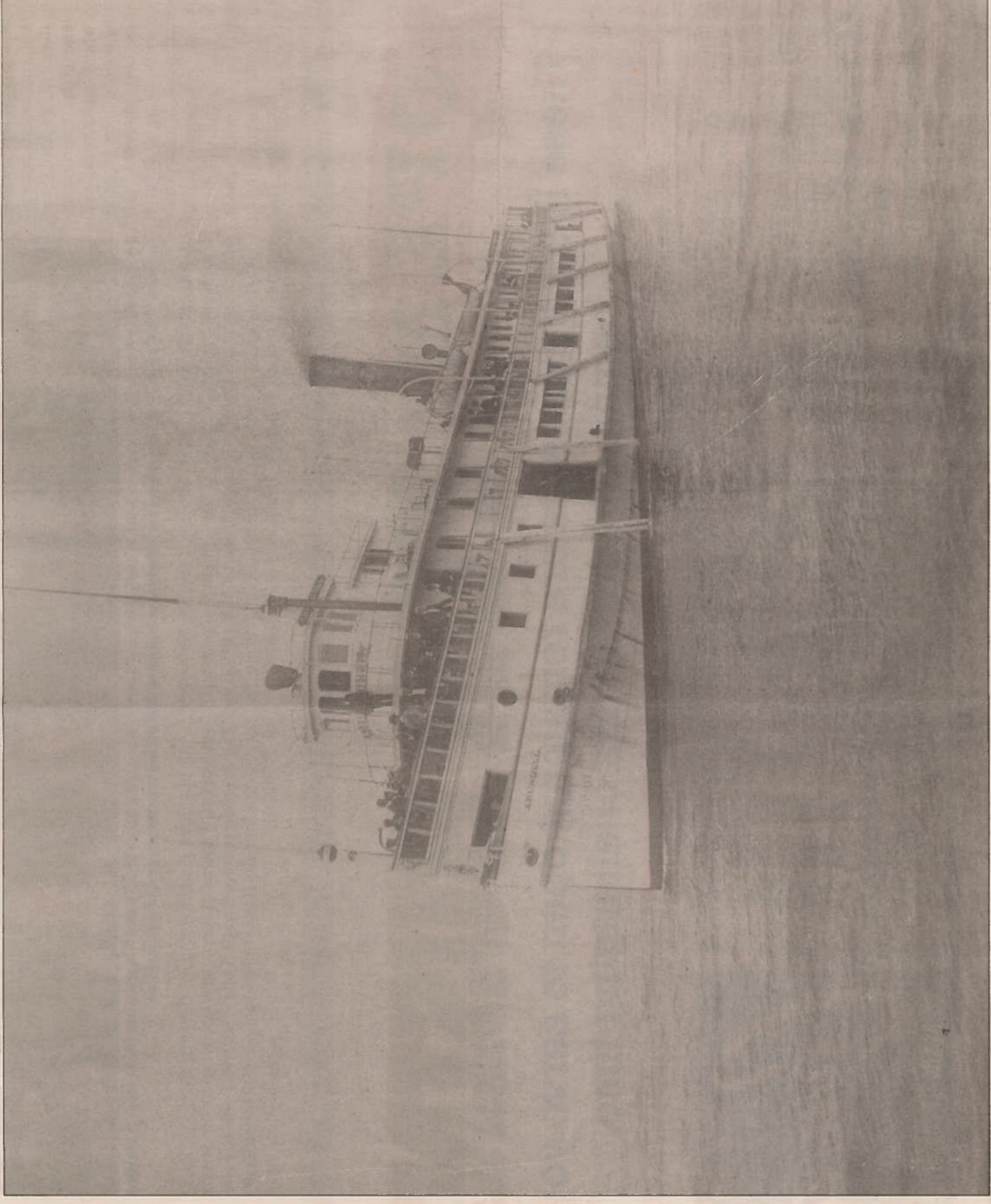
The steamer frequently carried Orleans County passengers during picnic days and pioneer events.

The company advertised “Good meals on steamer at 50 cents,” and “No dust, cool breeze and a pleasant time guaranteed” for its excursion trips across the lake. These relaxing jaunts included stops at Olcott Beach, Point Breeze, Charlotte, Sodus Point, Fairhaven, Oswego, Cape Vincent, and Clayton.

The typical cost of a round trip ticket from Olcott to the Thousand Islands was \$5 per person. During the earliest years of operation around the Buffalo Harbor in the 1880s, a ticket would run approximately 50 cents for gentlemen and 25 cents for women and children.

In 1904, the company operating the steamer was charged in the death of George Reed of Niles, N.Y., a passenger who boarded the previous year for an excursion trip to the Thousand Islands. Reed's wife claimed that the employees and agents on board the Arundell got her husband “beastly drunk” and stowed him away in a bunk below deck.

When reaching Fairhaven, the crew allegedly carried the semiconscious man to shore



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**The Arundell steamer was popular for area residents, but sustained a series of accidents.**

and left him there. At some point the man regained his composure and attempted to find his way inland but stumbled into the water and drowned.

The \$15,000 lawsuit did not appear to have any long-term effect on the operation

placed in dry dock for several weeks for repairs — the accident set the company back several thousands of dollars.

Shortly after the image was taken, the steamer was sold to the Crawford Transportation Company of Chicago, who used her as a ferry on

Lake Michigan until she suffered a tragic fire and burned in 1911. Although her time as a transportation vessel was not over, her time as the “Queen of Lake Ontario” was complete.

The Arundell was rebuilt, sold, and renamed Brewster

in 1921. The steamer sank after a collision with the Sterling Lake on the James River in Virginia in 1922.

*(Editor's note: Overlooked Orleans arrived after deadline last Friday. It's being run today in its entirety.)*