



Sarasota County History Center

S.S. Mistletoe

This packet, owned by John Savarese, ran from Tampa to Sarasota carrying goods and passengers. She was a significant actor in local development.

The screw steamer *Mistletoe* is masked in a mist of mystery. Partly because there is little documented information on her... but more, that what we have is so often contradicted by equally credible sources!

An informal treatise by Irwin N. Schuster

Assisted in content collection by R. Fairlie Brinkley and others.

SS Mistletoe of Florida's Mid-Gulf Coast

Preface:

SS *Mistletoe* (ca. 1892 – 1917) was a small steamer that had an outside significance in the development* of the middle west coast of Florida. She was **first**, and for that fact alone, worthy of review. This tract is an attempt to pull together, into one file, all that can be found. I believe that has been accomplished. If this “publication” generates more, that will be incorporated.

*Some, and I am one, would say over-development.

SS *Mistletoe* has mysteries. Her length of 100 ft. is described, as well as lengths of 54', 75', 84.5 and 86', etc. Norwalk, Florida is recorded as the location of her build. Construction is told as “Composite.” Her propeller is displayed on the grounds of the Florida Maritime Museum in Cortez. It measures 46 x 13”.

The only known model of the ship, at the Bishop Museum in Bradenton, has a nameplate dated simply 1905. This indicates to me that the ship is portrayed in the configuration of that date. That correlates with photographic images and news clippings, in particular of extended accommodations on the upper deck. The model has a complete hull. While we know the model-builder's name, we cannot know if he built from personal knowledge, conjecture, or if drawings exist that have not been located, or have been lost.

There is a substantial amount of redundancy in the accounts included here, because it cannot be edited out without corrupting the source material, plus for emphasis and frustration.

The Author/Editor has known of S.S. *Mistletoe* for years, and seen the model of her in The South Florida - Bishop Museum, so felt no pressing need to make another.

There are some low-resolution photos and an elevation illustration with a dubious contour. It seems idealized.

I planned to provide a more accurate drawing to close out this mission. In the end, I did not alter my interpretation (p34).



As far as can be determined, this screw propeller is the sole remaining artifact from SS Mistletoe.



What is a “Packet?” Historically, and particularly before reliable communications, ships came and went, leaving when a crew was signed and the vessel had a paying cargo.

Packets, on the other hand, ran on a regular schedule, like a bus-line.

A good summary of her life, from "Sarasota History Alive," by Ann Shank

"The steamship Mistletoe was Sarasota's first reliable and regular connection to the outside world. In the 19th century, road and rail connections between Sarasota and neighboring towns were poor or nonexistent and boats came and went according to whim or need, not on any schedule. In his "The Story of Sarasota", Karl Grismer called the coming of the Mistletoe more important to Sarasota than the coming of the Scottish colonists (most of whom left) and the building of the DeSoto Hotel (which was boarded up most of the time). Beginning in October 1895, the Mistletoe began a regular schedule, bringing passengers and goods every Monday, Wednesday and Friday and returning to Tampa on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. *Karl Hiram Grismer (1896 – 1952)*

The Mistletoe's arrival was facilitated by the dredging of channels in the northern part of Sarasota Bay, enabling shallow-draft steamers to make the entire trip from Tampa without having to go into the open Gulf waters. The beginning of regular shipping to Tampa led to a

shift in the fishing industry in Sarasota. Previously, fish for export were dried and salted. The Mistletoe carried ice, enabling it to take on fresh fish for northern markets via Tampa trains. A number of wholesale fish houses opened along the bay in the following years, including one by John Savarese, the Tampa wholesale fish dealer who owned the Mistletoe.

While being overhauled at Savarese dock in Tampa, the Mistletoe sank during a hurricane in October 1910. After being raised, the steamship was enlarged and outfitted to carry 200 passengers as well as cargo. In its new form it was christened The City of Sarasota on February 6, 1911. The Sarasota Times reported that Miss Esther Edmundson christened the ship, the Sarasota Brass Band played, Mayor H.S. Smith gave a speech and Harry Higel reviewed the history of the vessel. The Times article focused on the elegantly furnished and upholstered cabin of The City of Sarasota, with only brief mention of its capacity to carry fish.

By 1917 The City of Sarasota ended its runs to Sarasota.

*The Pillsbury Boat Ways on Sned Island, at the mouth of the Manatee River, converted the steamship into a barge.** It seems, however, to have not functioned well in its new form, and one account states that the barge was pulled onto the shore and burned.*

A model and photograph of the Mistletoe are on display at the The Bishop Museum of Science and Nature in Bradenton as part of its maritime exhibit, "Charting a Course Through History: Our Manatee Heritage."

* Karl H. Grismer was an author, newspaper and magazine editor, who wrote histories of several Florida cities.

**She was also called a "tug" in her last configuration. It is reported by Curtis Stanton that her engine and boiler were removed but prop and shaft remained in place. Further, that she was scuttled off Sned's Island, and found on January 27, 1967, when prop and shaft were salvaged.

Tampa, Hunter's Point and Sarasota Steamboat Co.

TRI-WEEKLY SERVICE.

Tampa and Sarasota

BY DAYLIGHT.

Schedule of the Steamer "Mistletoe"

Leave Tampa—Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays... ..7.00 A.M.

RETURNING.

Leave Sarasota—Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays .7.00 A.M.

Wharf: Foot of Whiting Street.

Connections..... Seaboard Air Line Ry.; Plant System.

FOR OTHER INFORMATION SEE

JOHN SAVARESE, Pres. & Gen'l Manager, TAMPA, FLA.

F. L. RUSSELL, Agent

Hunter's Point was an early name for Cortez. The Seaboard Air Line Railroad existed from April 14, 1900. "Air line" was, at the time, a common term for the shortest distance between two points. Note mention of Plant System.

Mistletoe's owner was John Savarese.

His great-great nephew, Tom Mayers, of Longboat Key, says the ship was of composite construction (presumably wood planking over iron framing), and was bought in North Florida. It is he who tells of her being 54' originally.

That length is supported by a listing; **Merchant Vessels of the United States - 1895**, shown further on. Her creation is variously listed as 1885 and 1892.

Norwalk is no longer a town but is recorded, and had the capability, as many river paddle steamers were built on the St. Johns River, in that area and era.

Stern-wheelers were necessary for Florida riverine work because they are extreme shallow draft and the rivers were not routinely policed for fallen trees and snags. A paddle wheel is only efficient as propulsion at the lower 10-15% of its travel. Otherwise it is pushing water down or lifting it.

Being built as a **Screw Steamer** indicates that *Mistletoe* was specifically intended for salt-water service in sheltered areas. Sheltered, because of her extreme low free-board (the distance from the waterline to sheer line/deck).



Photo from Tom Mayers

SARASOTA COUNTY WATER ATLAS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA — FALL 2009



Tom Mayers grew up and still lives on the north end of Longboat Key at a marina his father started.

Interview with:	Tom Mayers
Date of Interview:	October 14, 2009
Interviewer:	Casey Schelhorn
Subject of Interview:	Longboat Key
Transcriber:	Casey Schelhorn

My name is Tom Mayers. I was born in Tampa, Florida, August 25th 1951. My mother and father were Fran and Frank Mayers. My mother was born in Tampa in an old Tampa family, and my father was born in Barbados.

I live at the north end of Longboat Key, at a family property called Land's End. It belonged to my great uncle John Savarese, who had the first passenger-carrying boat to go from Tampa to Sarasota on a regular basis in 1900. He had a fish house. It wasn't just a fish house, it was one of the biggest industries in Tampa in that time period. He had over 500 people working for him at his fish house. It was the biggest fish house in the Southeastern United States. He had 150 boats fishing out of the fish house. He had *The Mistletoe*, which was the first passenger carrying boat to go from Tampa to Sarasota on a regular basis. The importance of *The Mistletoe* was like the importance of Cancún getting an airport that allows jet planes to land. All of the sudden, what used to be a hazardous trip from Tampa to Sarasota, what might have taken a couple of days by horse-drawn carriage or by horse... Back then they had snakes, Florida panther and still had Indians. It was quite an adventure to go from Tampa to Sarasota. Imagine inclement weather, and the road may have been bad. To have a boat that you could sit down on and eight hours later you would be in Sarasota... All the sudden, that opened the area up to people coming down to Sarasota: all the business people that would be coming down—surveyors, bankers and merchants. It was a scheduled trip that they would take on the *Mistletoe*. So that was my Great Uncle's boat.

He has an interesting history in that he came from Italy and he came to Savannah. He and my great-grandfather had the biggest fish house in the Southeastern United States in Savannah, and (Intentionally clipped – 34-page document)

The Ship:

I will try to flesh this out, with particular attention to the vessel itself, in her service as *Mistletoe*. Her life as *City of Sarasota* follows, to describe her ultimate destiny.

No documentation has been found, to date, of her configuration below the waterline. Indeed, no plans of any kind. The Tampa Bay History Center, Bishop Museum of Bradenton nor Florida Maritime Museum in Cortez and "online collections of Sarasota County" have folios on *Mistletoe*, but not plans.

Savarese was, first and foremost, at least early on, in the fish business. As told, before *Mistletoe*, fish south of Tampa were mostly split, dried and salted for preservation. They were netted and landed from small boats and *Mistletoe* was the market boat that collected and "trucked" them, fresh-iced, to centers of population and distribution points.

The only photo illustrating that collection shows small sailing craft clustered aft. Later, a single davit is seen up in the bow, and that quarter of the ship has a clear deck, surely with a hatch over the fish-hold. It is possible that paying passengers complained of their accommodations being above the aft hold and that fish storage was shifted to the pointy end of the hard-driven vessel.

Factoids:

- *Mistletoe* was converted to *City of Sarasota* at Tampa Steamways. That location operates today as The Jean Street Shipyard.

- A photo that I had, but discounted as *Mistletoe* because of inconsistencies, has altered history. A higher resolution image clearly shows her name-board as *Mistletoe*. This means there was another, substantial reconstruction, between 1895 and 1900, before she became *City of Sarasota*. Indeed, many are recorded as brief notes in local papers. It is in these that the various sizes are noted.

- Pillsbury Boat Works on Sned Island purchased the steamship and converted her into a barge for a short time before pulling her ashore and burning her (ca. 1917).

- The book, "Shipwrecks of Florida, a Comprehensive Listing," by Steven Singer, shows, *Mistletoe* – Steamer, of Tampa, 43 tons, built in 1885 at Norwalk, Fla. 75.3 x 16.4 x 4.4'. Captain Thompson. Sank at her dock on the Hillsborough River during a storm, Oct. 18, 1910. Some cargo saved. Source: 14. (Source = Congressional Information Service (CIS). United States Serial Set Index, Part 1-11, and Records of the National Archives. Washington, D.C.) Another book by Michael C. Barnette, says the same. Mr. Barnette, of St. Petersburg, generously offered his archive of clippings.

- Mr. Barnette has authored two books on Florida shipwrecks: *Images of America; Florida's Shipwrecks*, and "Shipwrecks of the Sunshine State - Florida's Submerged History," with the Association of Underwater Explorers.

- Norwalk, on Little Lake George, was about 30 miles south of Palatka, and where, in 1904, the 89-foot sternwheeler Hiawatha was built. If it ever was a town, it is no longer. Satellite images show few discernible structures, and no town administration is listed. Little Lake George is a wide spot in the St. John's River, on which many shallow-draft paddle steamers were built.

- "Historical Development of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway" says: from 1895 until ca. 1914, the ICW maintained a 5 ft. x 100 ft. channel between lower Tampa Bay to Sarasota. (While having little freeboard, *Mistletoe* got from Norwalk to Tampa, so had enough stability to venture "outside." There is some suggestion that it is possible to get a vessel to Lake Okeechobee from St. Johns and thence to the Gulf. My licensed associates say it is not so.

- Manatee River Journal of August 30, 1894 states: "The steamer *Mistletoe* has been re-built from the keel up, and is now at John Savarese's wharf receiving her finishing touches. She will be re-christened the **Nellie S.**, and will be ready for service about September 1. Her dimensions now are 74 feet on keel, 84 feet overall, 22 feet beam and 4 feet draft when light. She will carry 30 tons, and with her new machinery is expected to make nine or ten knots **an hour***" (sic).

—Tampa Times.

*Knot = a unit of speed equal to one nautical mile per hour. ("an hour") is redundant and erroneous)

From "Italian Settlers in Pioneer Tampa, by Tony Pizzo, from Sunland Tribune - Journal of the Tampa Historical Society:"

"Captain John Savarese, a friend of Henry B. Plant. This young Italian, a native of Naples, came to America at the age of ten in 1872."

John Savarese was head of:

- Tampa - Sarasota Transportation Co.
- Tampa, Hunter's Point and Sarasota Steamboat Co.
- John Savarese Fish Company
- Florida Fish and Ice Company (at least)

In addition, he was the first President of the Tampa Yacht and Country Club, ca. 1904, served as the first Italian Consul of Tampa, Founding director of Citizens Bank & Trust (1895), was elected to two terms on the City Council and on boards of other firms and financial institutions.

(In 1898, Tampa population was about 14,000 - U.S. population about 75 million).

Sidebar: I spotted this same error in a book when in grade school, and was encouraged by my teacher to write a letter to the publisher, which I did. I was a nit-picky little kid way before I was a nit-picky little old man.

Astrid Drew, Archivist of SSHSA reports:

"Neither version of her (*Mistletoe & City of Sarasota*) is in *Ways Packet Directory* or the *Lytle-Holdcamper List*. I did find her in *List of Merchant Steam Vessels of the United States*. The 1895 edition lists *Mistletoe*: screw steamer, official number **91750**, 43.92 gross tons, and 21.96 net tons. Her dimensions and build date/place were the same as what you have. Her first home port is listed as Tampa, FL.

City of Sarasota is in the 1915 edition. Screw steamer of 126 tons (75 net) with official number **208321**. Her dimensions and build date/place are the same. She's listed as operating for passenger service with a crew of 7.

What's notable is that the *City of Sarasota* remains in the list until 1920, where her service changes to tow. I didn't find her in the 1921 edition."



"I don't always research steamers, but when I do, I prefer SSHSA."

You can quote me on that!
It and I, were born in the same year.

Below: Name, Date, Norwalk and Tampa confirm that this is the same ship. Tonnage and lengths of **43.92T @ 75.3'** vs. **25.37T @ 53.8'** on essentially the same beam and draft, say to me, there was a major change of plans. **Hard I.D.: 91750**

List of Merchant Vessels of the United States - 1895 Edition. Astrid Drew SSHSA 7/10/23

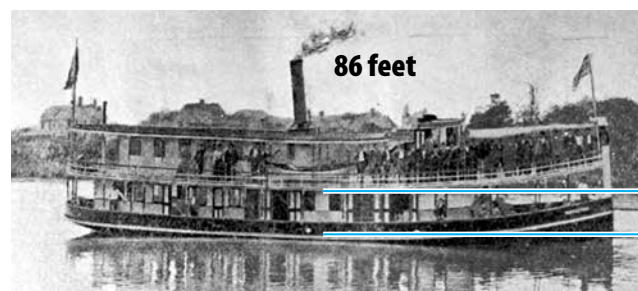
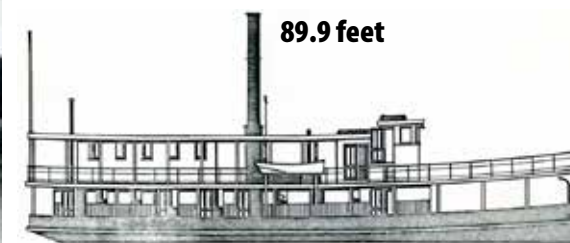
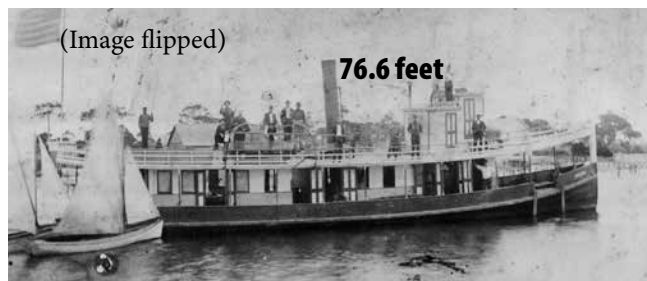
Official #	Rig	Name	Tons Gross	Tons Net	Length	Beam	Draft	Year	Place Built	Home Port
91928	St. s.	Missouri	1,920.88	1,585.33	212.0	40.0	21.0	1887	Cleveland, Ohio	Cleveland, Ohio.
91184	St. p.	Missouri	340.59	340.59	191.7	31.7	6.3	1879	Metropolis, Ill.	St. Louis, Mo.
91750	St. s.	Mistletoe	43.92	21.96	75.3	16.4	4.4	1885	Norwalk, Fla.	Tampa, Fla.
92519	St. s.	Mizpah	7.60	6.62	27.0	12.0	4.2	1893	Norwalk, Conn.	Stonington, Conn.
92537	St. s.	Mizpah	8.74	6.55	40.9	11.6	5.3	1878	Boston, Mass.	Lubec, Me.

Listing below is undoubtedly authentic, but its credentials are lost.

Signal letters	Rig.	Name of vessel.	Gross tonnage.	Net tonnage.	Length.	Breadth.	Depth.	Nominal horse-power.	Indicated horse-power.	When built.	Where built.	Home port (where permanent document issues).
St. s.		Missoula	1,920.88	1,585.33	212.0	40.0	21.0	800		1887	Cleveland, Ohio.	Cleveland, Ohio.
St. s.		Missouri	378.28	282.35	168.2	27.2	11.2			1887	Buffalo, N. Y.	Detroit, Mich.
St. p.		Missouri	340.59	340.59	191.7	31.7	6.3			1879	Metropolis, Ill.	St. Louis, Mo.
St. p.		Missouri	130.24	130.24	133.0	25.0	3.0			1880	Reed's Landing, Minn.	St. Vincent, Minn.
St. s.		Mistletoe	25.37	25.12	53.8	16.0	4.4			1885	Norwalk, Fla.	Tampa, Fla.

Consider this, from Michael Barnette: *Merchant Vessels of the United States 1906-1907* (#203605, of Texas), just to muddy the waters.

91750	St. s.	Mistletoe	43	21	75.3	16.4	4.4	Pas.	7	1885	Norwalk, Fla.	Tampa, Fla.
203605	Ga. s.	Mistletoe	18	12	54.2	12.0	3.3	Pas.	1	1906	Texas City, Tex.	Galveston, Tex.



Mistletoe 1905
 Owned by the John Lawrence Fish Co. of Tampa. Carried passengers and general cargo from Tampa to Cuba and Havana. Sunk at Tampa during a hurricane in 1911. She was raised, rebuilt and renamed the "City of Havana". Partially dismantled around 1917, later sunk at Spanish Island.

Taking this dimension as 7 feet...

Length/Size of SS Mistletoe:

There is a variety of measurements to describe length of a ship: Overall (LOA - OAL), Length on Deck, Waterline Length and Length of Keel, to name most. Sparred Length is another, but is not applicable to most pure steamers. This can account for some of the statement variations.

Along with length, a number of beams (breadths) are told. Of that dimension and its variations, there is no documentation by plans, only recorded statements alongside lengths that are otherwise contradicted.

The single dimension we can be pretty sure of is draft (depth below the waterline). According to historical statements, the waters she plied were about 5 feet at mean low tide, *after* they were dredged and allowed her scheduled runs. Most official records say 4+ feet. She could not be significantly more or she risked grounding. That likely happened at any rate.

There is no statement found, that tells of her going "outside" the island chain, but it seems likely, in decent conditions, if the tides were against holding to her schedule.

While no construction plans have been located, there are these good (if low resolution), photos of her that taken from abeam, which can be scaled to determine her length. The simple mathematical method I used, was to measure the length on deck and the height from sheer line to the underside of the upper deck.

The earliest image, dated 1892 and showing no accommodations structure on the upper deck, works out to 76.6 feet. The second, showing a 5-window upper structure calculates to 73.3 feet, and the image with

what appears to be about 7 windows aft, scales to 86 feet.

Finally, the **illustration** labeled, "Mistletoe 1905" (5-window upper structure), shows 89.9 feet by the same method. Close, but this drawing is not entirely trustworthy, in that it does not agree with photos in the sweep of the sheer forward. Generally, these correlate with descriptions of her lengthening, but not the 100 foot length so often repeated.

Apart from length, notice different stack heights and angles. That is not critical to this tale, but indicates that she experienced several revisions.

I choose to believe that 73 to 76 feet and 86 to 90 feet are within the margin of error, under the circumstances. While this is inexact due to the fuzzy images, the calculations do support statements **(except for the 100'!)**.

Warning: These were generated by BARD, an Artificial Intelligence experiment that seems to me to be loose with facts! BARD essentially does creative writing based on information it finds in the universe of knowledge. Garbage in – garbage out, but it did turn up a couple of nuggets to pursue.

A. 100' *Mistletoe* was built by Manitowoc Shipbuilding in 1894 and bought by Tampa Bay Navigation Co. Originally named *Manitowoc*. 150 hp, 12 kt, 100 passengers + 200 tons of freight, 100 x 25' beam x 10' draft. Lost off Tampa 1917. Still visible. **Draft definitely wrong.**

B. (Built) 1894 by Maryland Shipbuilding Co, Baltimore originally W. H. B. Smith. Tpa > Cedar Key. Lost off CK in 1917 with 100 people of which a "handful" survived. Still visible in 30' of water. 100hp, crew of 12, 150 passengers, 100 x 25 x 8' Wood, Black w/ white trim. **Half & half.**

C. 1917 sank off CK 25 lost. Still visible. 120 hp, 12 kt, 100 passengers + 20 crew, wireless telegraph, 100 x 25 x 10' **Draft definitely wrong.**

D. Sank Jan. 15 1911 crew of 12 all lost cause unknown in storm off Sarasota. **No.**

E. Built in Jacksonville 1882 Screw prop. 100 x 20, 120 tons, 100 hp, 10 kt. Passengers & freight on St. Johns & Gulf. In service 50 years

retired in 1937. Owned by Mistletoe Steamship Co. Crew if 12, 100 passengers, Ran Jax, Palatka & St. Aug. Towed barges. **This ship, if it ever was, could be the cause of some confusion.**

F. 100' prop-driven sidewheeler (?) built in Jax 1894. Originally named *City of Sarasota*, renamed *Mistletoe* in 1897. Carried mail. Sank off Anna Maria Sept. 16, 1911, in hurricane. No fatalities. Still visible. 100 x 25 x 8', 130 tons. Single cylinder compound steam engine, single screw, 12 kts, 100 passengers + 100 tons of freight. **Prop-driven sidewheeler is an oxymoron. At best, amusing & backwards.**

G. Built in Norwalk, FL **OKAY! This lead panned out.**

H. 100' wooden prop-driven built in Jax 1894. Originally owned by John Savarese Fish Co. Op on W coast of FL betw Jax & Sarasota. 1911 renamed *City of Sarasota*. March 13, 1917, struck a sandbar and sank in Manatee River, no fatalities. Still visible. 100 x 24 x 10', 100 tons gross, 10 kt, 50 passengers. **Half & half.**

I. Steamship *Mistletoe* was 100' prop-driven passenger & freight steamer built in Jax 1894, originally owned by Florida Transportation Co. opp(erated) Jax & Tampa. 1906 sold to John Savarese Fish Co and renamed *City of Sarasota*. Sank in storm off Sarasota 1911. Crew 12, 120 hp, wood hull, single screw, 100 passengers. **Another that MAY be accurate as to the original owner, although the 1906 date is CLEARLY wrong.**

Wikipedia: The Florida Coast Line Canal and Transportation Company (FCLCTC) was chartered in 1881 to construct a series of canals connecting existing lakes and rivers between St. Augustine and Lake Worth, Florida. The company begun through the urging of St. Augustine residents, led by Dr. John Westcott, a prominent local politician. In 1893, railroad mogul Henry Flagler became associated with the company in order to help extend his railroad to the south of the state.

J. 100 x 25 x 10' 150 gross tons, 200 hp, 12 kt, crew of 10, 50 passengers. **Lots definitely wrong.**

All above (sic.)

It is pretty clear that much of this is whackadoodle, to use the technical term. "Jax" probably indicates the closest recognizable port city.

Much of this does not comport with the published local lore! Crew and accommodations can vary over time and circumstance. Measuring hp may have been guesswork, too. Power variations may be attributed to improvements or optimistic claims. Load would alter speed.

You will also find tonnage figures of 43, 44, 100, 120, 126, 130 and 150 scattered through this publication. Many do not define exactly what they were measuring. "Sources" tell that she can be dived on, but currently, no dive-tour shops contacted have knowledge of that.

Feel free to try to run down any of these "facts" that you wish.

Questionable "Facts":

There was more than one ship named *Mistletoe* in that era, which contributes to the confusion.

Contemporaneous News Clippings:

The publications of that time printed news of the comings and goings of local vessels. These were collected by, and generously shared, by St. Petersburg author, **Michael C. Barnette**. His books on Florida shipwrecks show his findings, backed up by a similar book by Steven D. Singer, titled, "Shipwrecks of Florida."

Tampa Tribune Tue., Oct. 25, 1910

Work is still progressing on raising the steamer Mistletoe. A hoisting engine on a lighter at the side of the steamer is employed. The Mistletoe's cabin is suffering more or less damage in the work of raising it.

Tampa Tribune Tue., Nov. 8, 1910

A bulkhead giving way just as the vessel was floated under the pressure of three big pumps, the steamer Mistletoe yesterday sank a second time at the Savarese docks. Efforts to raise the steamer will be renewed this morning, as soon as the bulkhead is repaired.

From this point forward, the subject is *City of Sarasota*. 7

Tampa Tribune Tue., Nov 1, 1910

STEAMER IS SLIGHTLY DAMAGED SAYS SAVARESE

Says the Only Mishap Is In Breaking
of Windows and Rail.

Regarding the sinking of the steamer Mistletoe a second time Sunday night at the Savarese docks, Mr. Savarese yesterday said: "That the Mistletoe was damaged to any great extent by its second tumble, is a mistake. The steamer is in very good condition, although several feet under water, and the only mishap which it suffered is slight damage to several of the windows of the main cabin and the smashing of its railings.

"We are confident," says Mr. Savarese that the Mistletoe will be raised within the next few days and it is our intention to put it back in commission immediately."

Tampa Tribune Thurs., Dec. 1, 1910

SAVARESE NAMES BOAT "CITY OF SARASOTA"

The Name of the Steamer Mistletoe,
Now at Tampa Steam Ways—Will
Be Changed

Coming off the Tampa steam ways a finer and more commodious vessel, the steamer Mistletoe will be known henceforth as the "City of Sarasota." Sir John Savarese, who owns the vessel, has ordered the name changed. Many improvements will be made.

The steamer is being rebuilt and will have six feet more beam and will be made one and a half feet longer. It will then have a length of eighty-six feet and a beam of eighteen feet. Fore and aft the vessel is being given new planking which will make it more seaworthy than ever.

Repairs were made necessary by the sinking of the Mistletoe at its Water street landing in the recent hurricane. The vessel was left high and dry and when the tide rose, its hull was filled with water. Some difficulty was experienced in raising the steamer, several attempts being unsuccessful. In being brought to the surface, the Mistletoe sustained damage to its cabin but its machinery was uninjured. It will come off the ways practically a new steamer.

Tampa Tribune Thurs., Dec. 29, 1910

Repairs on the Savarese steamer at the steam ways are well under way. It was hoped that the City of Sarasota would be ready to go into commission by January 1, but owing to the delay in receiving material at the ways, it will not be off before the middle of the month. The City of Sarasota was formerly the steamer Mistletoe, damaged in the little blow this port suffered three months ago.

Tampa Tribune Tue., Feb. 7, 1911

The Savarese steamer City of Sarasota proceeded to Sarasota yesterday on its initial trip. On its arrival at that city, the new steamer was christened by a young woman at that place under auspicious circumstances. A committee from the Sarasota Board of Trade met the boat and extended a hearty welcome to Captain Dudley, its master. A short excursion trip, showing the hospitality of the steamship company, was tendered the citizens of Sarasota yesterday afternoon. The City of Sarasota returns to its Water street docks today, on its regular run. It will steam from Tampa on alternate days.

Added 10 feet bringing her to 86 feet (x 18 feet beam), as *City of Sarasota*, AGAIN disputes the 100 feet length.

Only the 54-foot Mistletoe of Galveston (bottom, page 6) had a 12-foot beam.

Tampa Tribune Fri., July 10, 1914

Having a boiler blow-out, the Savarese steamer City of Sarasota has been towed from the Tampa Coal Company docks to the Tampa Steam Ways to undergo repairs. The steamer was at the docks taking coal when the blow-out occurred. According to coal officials, the blow-out was not of a serious nature and can be patched up safely within several days.

Tampa Times Sun., March 14, 1915

Sarasota Line Steamers

GEN J B CARR CITY OF SARASOTA

Arrive and depart from City Dock, St. Petersburg.
Arrive and Depart from Savarese Dock, Tampa.

Most Convenient Terminals in Both Cities

Leave St. Petersburg 1:30 P. M.; Arrive Tampa 3:30 P. M.

A very convenient boat for the business man; making all evening train connections out of Tampa

Fare for Round Trip 75c --- One Way 50c

SOUTH BOUND

Leave St. Petersburg 9:30 A. M.
Arrive Anna Maria 11:30 A. M.
Arrive Sarasota 3:30 P. M.

A TRIP INCOMPARABLE FOR BEAUTIFUL SCENERY.
CUISINE UNEQUALLED. PRICES REASONABLE.

D. D. BIGGER, Jr., Gen. Agent. GEO. L. PATRICK, Dock Agt
H. S. Smith, Traveling Pass. Agt. Home Sec. Bldg.
J. Louis Houle, Industrial Agent.

Tampa Tribune Wed., May 12, 1915

TRUSTEES WILL SUSPEND TAMPA-SARASOTA BOATS

Property of Line Will Be Sold, As
Charges For Dockage at Sarasota
Make Run Unprofitable.

Service between Tampa and Sarasota by the steamers Gen. J. B. Carr and City of Sarasota, operated by the Tampa-Sarasota Transportation Company, will be suspended with the arrival of the Carr from Sarasota tomorrow. The last trip by the line will be today, when the Carr leaves for Sarasota.

The announcement of the suspension of the business was made yesterday by R. A. Crowell, chairman of the Board of Trustees named recently by creditors of the line, and John Savarese, to take charge of the assets of the two parties. Mr. Savarese is the head of the Tampa-Sarasota Transportation Company and is the principal owner.

The affairs of the line and of Mr. Savarese have been in litigation since a libel was filed recently against both of the two steamers for repairs and supplies. The largest factor in the insolvency of the line has been two fires which have necessitated the entire rebuilding of the steamer Carr and extensive repairs to the City of Sarasota.

The suspension of the line to Sarasota is made because the trustees believe the dockage charges are exorbitant and too large to allow the busi-

Tampa Tribune Fri., June 18, 1915

MANATEE TAKES RUN TO SARASOTA TRI-WEEKLY

FAVORITE LINE ENTERS FERTILE TERRITORY

Vessel to Leave Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays At 8 A. M.
—Return On Following Day

Beginning June 21, the steamer Manatee, of the Favorite Line fleet and fresh from the drydock, will take up a tri-weekly run between Tampa and Sarasota. It will give the Sarasota people an outlet to Tampa via boat. This they have not had since the Tampa-Sarasota Transportation Company, operating the Gen. J. B. Carr and the City of Sarasota, suspended March 12.

The Manatee, which has been thoroughly renovated during its short stay on the ways and the passenger accommodations of the steamer have been improved wonderfully.

The Manatee will leave Tampa Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8 a. m. and arrive at Sarasota about 4 p. m. The return trip will be made on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, leaving Sarasota at 8 a. m.

The shippers petitioned the Favorite Line, according to local officials, as soon the Tampa-Sarasota Line suspended. They gave ample assurances of sufficient freight to keep the Manatee busy and General Manager W. R. Funk announced his decision yesterday morning.

Tampa Tribune Wed., Sept. 22, 1915

NEWS OF RECORD

FEDERAL COURT

In re Tampa Coal Company vs. S. S. Gen. J. B. Carr, in Admiralty. Order to retax costs filed.

In re Tampa Coal Company vs. S. S. City of Sarasota; in Admiralty. Order to retax costs filed.

Tampa Tribune Sun., Nov. 28, 1915

Two Steamers For Passenger and Freight Service---\$17,000.00 Under Value

"General J. B. Carr"	"City of Sarasota"
Twin screw. Length 110 feet. Beam 23 feet. Gross tonnage 157. Speed 10 1/2 m. p. h. Number of passengers allowed, 200. Freight capacity, 80 tons. All furnishings and fittings---ready to go on run.	Twin screw. Length 76 feet. Beam 20 feet. Gross Tonnage 126. Speed 10 m. p. h. Number of passengers allowed, 200. Freight capacity, 40 tons. All furnishings and fittings---ready to go on run.
Appraised value \$25,000	Appraised value \$15,000
Price 15,000	Price 8,000

These two boats are in excellent condition. Their design is good and they can be operated most economically. The "Gen'l J. B. Carr" has a five foot draft, and the "City of Sarasota" a draft of only four feet. They are particularly well constructed and fitted for river work and will pay a large return on the investment at the prices offered.

Photographs and complete description of either or both steamers will be gladly furnished upon request.

R. A. CROWELL,
Trustee

708 Madison St. - - - TAMPA, FLORIDA

Above: "City of Sarasota" - Twin Screw

Length 76 feet Beam 20 feet. Gross Tonnage 126. Speed 10 m.p.h. Number of passengers allowed. 200. Freight Capacity, 40 tons. All furnishings and fittings---ready to go on run." (!?)

This gentleman offering his wares, is hardly likely to understate them. On the other hand, "twin screw" is a unique claim!

Curiouser and curiouser.

Lakeland Eve. Telegram
Mon., Jan. 29, 1917

The City of Sarasota and the General J. B. Carr, two steamers which have been lying idle in the Hillsborough River for some time, may be overhauled and put in service between Tampa, St. Petersburg and Sarasota.

Tampa Times Tue., Jan. 16, 1917

**MAY RUN LINE
TO SARASOTA**

**TWO IDLE STEAMERS MIGHT
BE OVERHAULLED.**

Profit Could Be Made From J. B. Carr and City of Sarasota.

Sarasota, Fla., Jan. 16.—There are strong prospects of resuming steamer service between Tampa and Sarasota, via St. Petersburg. The board of trade has given power to act to a committee consisting of its president, J. H. Lord, Owen Burns and ex-Mayor Edwards, who will negotiate with John Savarese and others interested in the Gen. J. B. Carr and City of Sarasota. Mr. Savarese told the board the steamers could be painted and the slight overhauling necessary done within ten days.

City of Sarasota, Richmond Times Dispatch
Thu., Nov. 6, 1919

TUGBOAT GOES DOWN

**Craft That Left the Ways a Few Days
Age Sinks in Harbor of
Tampa, Fla.**

[By Associated Press.]

TAMPA, FLA., Nov. 5.—The tugboat City of Sarasota, off the ways but a few days, sank in twenty-four feet of water at her dock here early today, apparently without cause. Captain E. B. Walton, Engineer C. G. Leverette and his wife, who were on board, were awakened by a sudden listing of the vessel, and had only time enough to clamber to the wharf before the boat sank.

Tampa Tribune Thu., May 20, 1920

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
Whereas navigation is obstructed and endangered by wreck of steamer tug City of Sarasota in Hendry & Knight Channel near Starbuck's wharf, Tampa, Fla.; notice is hereby given that unless otherwise removed within thirty days from May 17, 1920, it will be removed by the United States under authority of law. W. J. Barden, Lt. Col. Engrs. 5-17-18-19-20 (6) 16-17.

Tampa Tribune Fri., June 25, 1920

PROPOSALS FOR REMOVAL OF WRECK
U. S. Engineer Office, Jacksonville, Florida.
Sealed proposals for removing the wreck "City of Sarasota" in Hendry and Knight Channel, Tampa, Florida, will be received at this office until 12 o'clock noon, July 8, 1920, and then opened. Information on application.
6-23-24-25-26-(7)-6&7

Katie Fleck,

Assistant Supervisor,
Information Services,
Central Library,
Manatee County Public
Library System:

"I have attached a few from the Manatee River Journal. Although there were other mentions of the Mistletoe, they were just mentions of its current route or fishing activity.

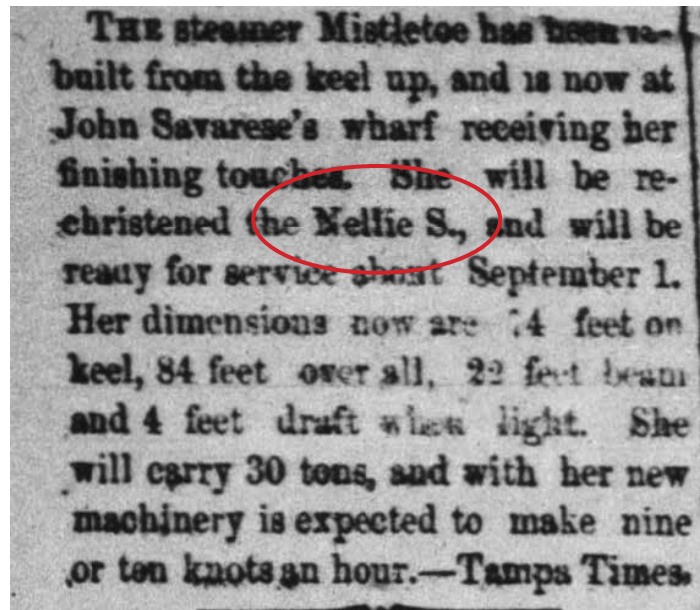
One interesting article is the Aug 30, 1894, one, because it states very specific dimensions for the ship after a rebuild. The dimensions are listed as "74 feet on keel, 84 feet overall, 22 feet beam."

I could not find any newspaper articles referencing the ship prior to 1894 in the Manatee River Journal, even though I've seen mention of the ship in the Tampa papers going back to at least 1889.

There was no coverage of the ship's damage/rebuild in 1910 either.

I also wasn't able to locate anything relating to the Mistletoe in our paper records."

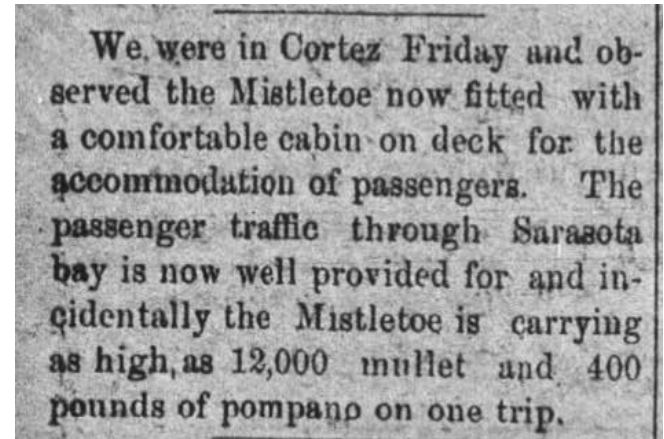
Manatee River Journal Aug. 30, 1894



THE steamer Mistletoe has been rebuilt from the keel up, and is now at John Savarese's wharf receiving her finishing touches. She will be rechristened the Nellie S., and will be ready for service about September 1. Her dimensions now are 74 feet on keel, 84 feet over all, 22 feet beam and 4 feet draft when light. She will carry 30 tons, and with her new machinery is expected to make nine or ten knots an hour.—Tampa Times.

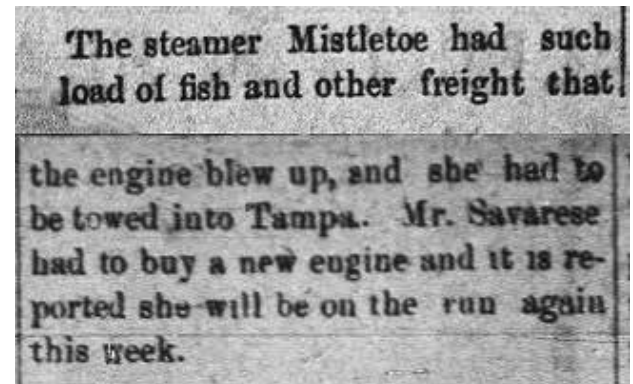
Stretched to 84 feet OAL in 1894? That is described as a done deal. We are pretty sure that she was not renamed Nellie S.

Manatee River Journal Sept. 2, 1897



We were in Cortez Friday and observed the Mistletoe now fitted with a comfortable cabin on deck for the accommodation of passengers. The passenger traffic through Sarasota bay is now well provided for and incidentally the Mistletoe is carrying as high as 12,000 mullet and 400 pounds of pompano on one trip.

Manatee River Journal Jan. 15, 1903



The steamer Mistletoe had such load of fish and other freight that the engine blew up, and she had to be towed into Tampa. Mr. Savarese had to buy a new engine and it is reported she will be on the run again this week.

Remarkable that a replacement engine would be available and that the capability was there, to do the work on such short notice.

Jonathan Torkos added these bits of history: Note the article titled, "**STEAMER.**" This looks reliable, written by a reporter on the spot in very good detail, with Savarese attending (although the tenses are mixed, regarding completion).

Tampa Tribune Mar. 26, 1901

CONSTRUCTING A NEW WHARF.
Crowell-Savarese Co., to Possess New Facilities.
Capt. Sid Washington began work yesterday morning, on the construction of a new dock for the Crowell-Savarese Co., which will provide that firm with new and adequate quarters. The new dock will take about two weeks to construct. The piles were being driven yesterday by Capt. Washington's pile-driver.
The new dock is located north of the Gulf Naval Stores dock and adjoining that of the Florida Fish & Ice Co. It will be carried out the line of the channel and will probably become one of the busy wharves of the city's water front.

Tampa Tribune Mar. 28, 1993

Maritime history

The South Florida Museum at 201 10th St. W. in Bradenton has just opened an exhibit, "Our Maritime History," co-sponsored by the Florida Maritime Historical Society.

Maps, a sextant and compass, along with a model of the 1905 Mistletoe, a steamship later renamed the City of Sarasota, are on display along with numerous photographs and artworks of Tampa Bay area steamships.

Dewey Dye Jr., president of the maritime historical society, served as guest curator of the exhibit. It's open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children from 5 to 12 years old.

The exhibit will run through May 16.

Sarasota Times Feb. 9, 1911

STEAMER

**"CITY OF SARASOTA" COMPLETED
WILL BE PUT ON REGULAR
RUN IN FEW DAYS**

With the completion of the new steamer City of Sarasota, another splendid bay boat will be added to the fleet operating out of this port. Messrs. Whiteside and Pierce, United States inspectors of hulls and boilers for this district, are inspecting the City of Sarasota today at the Tampa Steam Ways, and by next Tuesday Sir John Savarese, her owner, expects to bring her down to his docks near the foot of Whiting street, under her own steam.

The City of Sarasota is some eighty-five feet long, by eighteen feet beam. She has a freeboard of two and one-half feet, and a draft of four and one-half feet. Her estimated cargo capacity will be four carloads of oranges, or about 1,000 boxes of this fruit. She is being fitted to carry 200 passengers.

The steamer is housed in up to ward of amidships aft. The cabin on her deck will be elegantly furnished and upholstered, while it will be a veritable maze of windows, affording at once light and ventilation and a splendid view for passengers who seek the repose of the cabin.

In the after part of the cabin house will be the galley, owner's stateroom and an extra stateroom. The afterdeck will be open, the hurricane roof extending flush with the stern. Forward of the cabin will be the open deck directly in view of the pilot house and

comfortable benches of the lattice type will afford passengers an "open air" chance while en route. The lower deck, amidships taken up with engine and machinery, with freight space left forward. In the hold and fish boxes are placed for transportation of iced fish, tanks, bunker capacity, etc., ample for the boat and its run. The lower deck a broad stair leads up enticingly into the

of the paraphernalia belonging to a first-class passenger steamer is being placed aboard the City of Sarasota, Sir John Savarese devoting his personal attention to fitting her out. The boat will be christened at Sarasota by a party of young ladies on her first trip to that town.

The City of Sarasota will be commanded by Capt. E. B. Dudley, who formerly commanded the Brunswick steamer Dorothy, in that trade. Captain Dudley is a young man of engaging personality, and is a steamboatman of experience. He should make quite a popular commander for a steamer which will fill a long felt want between the town in question and Tampa.—Tampa Times.

Sarasota Times Feb. 9, 1911

STEAMER ARRIVES

**MET BY SARASOTA BRASS BAND
AND CITIZENS, CHRISTENED
BY MISS EDMONDSON**

With flags flying and met by several launches and pleasure boats, the new steamer arrived from Tampa at Higel's dock Monday afternoon, where it was met by the citizens, welcomed by the Sarasota Brass Band and christened "The City of Sarasota" by Miss Esther Edmondson.

Large numbers of citizens, visitors, many from the country were present. When news of the steamer's coming was announced, the launch Siesta from the Bell Haven Inn and several other boats, carrying passengers, went up the bay to meet the steamer and on arriving presented a beautiful sight, with the smaller craft following behind.

As soon as the steamer drew alongside the dock and immediately after landing, they were greeted with music by the Sarasota Brass Band, under the leadership of Mr. Liebert. Three cheers were given for the City of Sarasota, and from the deck, Mayor H. S. Smith made a speech in which he said the handsome new steamer was quite in keeping with the advance in progress and the city's growth of the past year.

Mr. Harry L. Higel gave a brief history of the boat since she first appeared in Sarasota fourteen years ago, as a one-deck fish boat, and the improvements that were

increased business made it necessary, until this elegant steamer with its splendid passenger and freight facilities, was a credit to Sarasota.

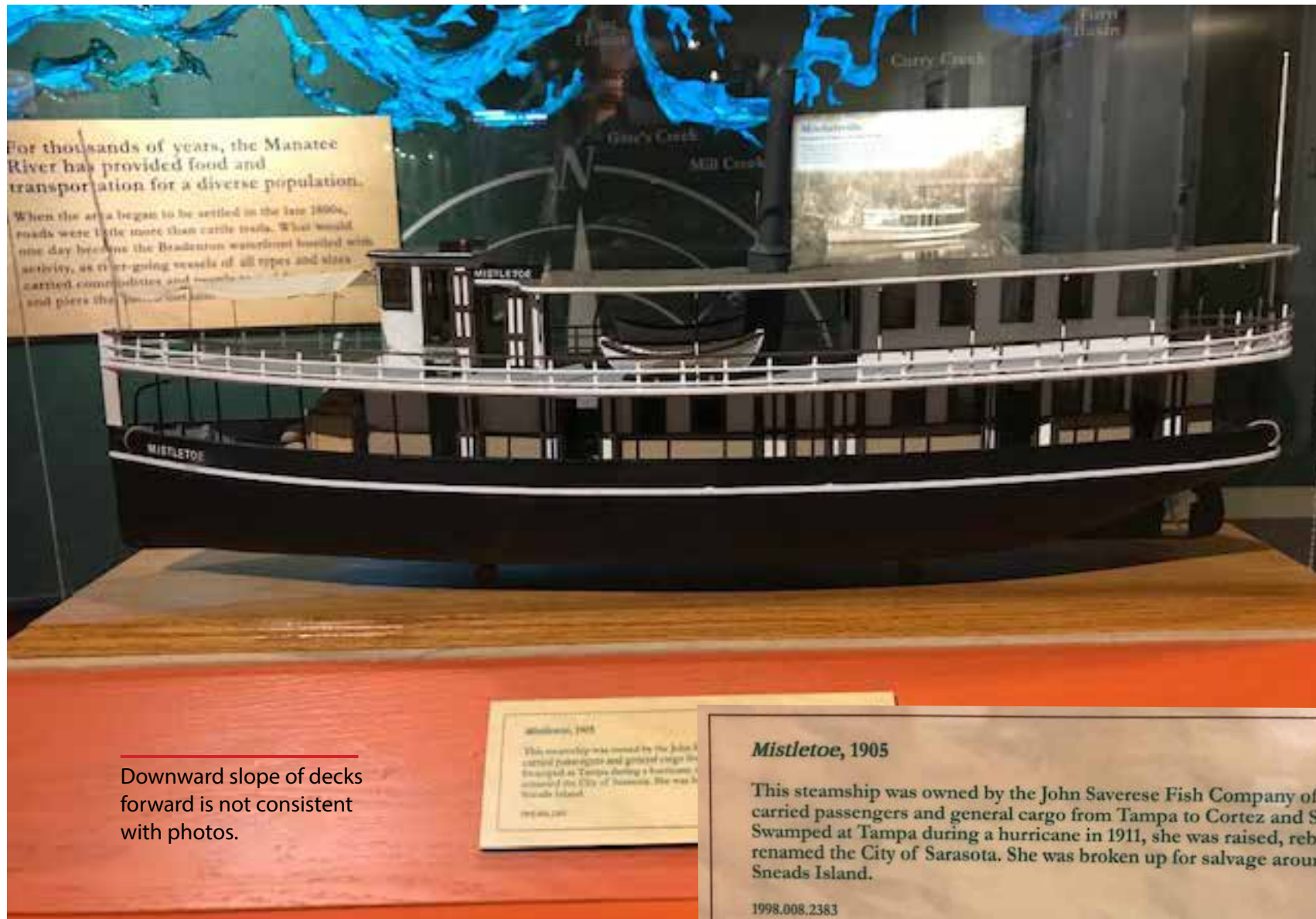
Another selection by the Band met with hearty applause.

Sir John Savarese, the owner, in a short address, thanked the citizens for their interest and the reception tendered the arrival of the steamer and hoped that sufficient patronage would be given it to make its tri-weekly schedule profitable.

Miss Esther Edmondson had been given the honor of naming the boat and daintily gowning in white, she broke over the bow the bottle of champagne, distinctly saying "I Christen Thee, the City of Sarasota." "America" was given by the Band and the citizens invited on board.

A full description was given last week, so will only say that the new steamer is very much larger, and in every way an improvement over the Mistletoe, which for many years was on the run from Tampa to Sarasota, and was so badly injured in the October hurricane while at the Tampa dock, it was deemed advisable by the owner to have her rebuilt and made larger; even her whistle, we hear, has been improved.

Tom Mayers tells that prominent Tampa attorney, Dewey A. Dye, commissioned this model. It was presented to the Bishop Museum in 1993. **Tiffany La Britt**, Curator, found that the builder was Bradenton musician and artist Lee W. Varian (d. 2008).



Images by Howard Howe, Palmetto, FL.

Downward slope of decks forward is not consistent with photos.



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SOMETIMES FOR EXCURSIONS TO DIFFERENT POINTS.
I REMEMBER ONE TIME IN 1903 OR 1904, WHEN THE CHURCHES ALONG THE RIVER GOT TOGETHER AND CHARTERED HER FOR A SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC TO EGHONT KEY.

THERE WAS ANOTHER SMALL SCREW PROPELLER PASSENGER AND FREIGHT STEAMER THE "MISTLETOE," ABOUT 100-FEET LONG, OWNED BY THE JOHN SAVERESE FISH CO., OF TAMPA. SHE RAN BETWEEN TAMPA, CORTEZ, SARASOTA AND RETURN, DOWN ONE DAY AND BACK THE NEXT TAKING PASSENGERS AND GENERAL CARGO. ON THE RETURN TRIP THE CARGO WAS MOSTLY FISH AND OTHER SEA FOODS. CAPT. DOTY THOMPSON WAS HER CAPTAIN AND IT WAS SAID HE COULD MAKE THE TRIP THROUGH THE TRICKY AND SHALLOW CHANNELS BETWEEN THE KEYS AND THE MAINLAND AND IN SARASOTA BAY IN THE DARKEST NIGHT AND FOG WITH HIS EYES SHUT. HER REGULAR ENGINEER WAS JERRY RHODES. SHE WAS SUNK AT HER DOCK IN TAMPA IN THE HURRICANE THAT STRUCK TAMPA IN OCTOBER, 1911. SHE WAS SO BADLY TORN UP IN RAISING, THAT SHE WAS REBUILT AT THE TAMPA STEAMWAYS (LENGTHENED 10 FT. AND WIDENED 5 FT.) AND RENAMED THE "CITY OF SARASOTA."

15 of 40

Transcript

Object Description

Title	Speech by Curtis Stanton "Early Transportation in Manatee County"
Subject	Railroads; Stanton, Transportation;
Description	Mr. Stanton discusses the history of transportation in Manatee County, from shipping to railroads. There is also a biographical sketch of Stanton included.
Author	Stanton, Curtis;
Publisher	Manatee County Public Library System
Contributors	Manatee County Historical Society
Date	04-17-1968
Identifier	MCHS-S-0366
Location	Florida--Manatee County
Rights	Manatee County Public Library System

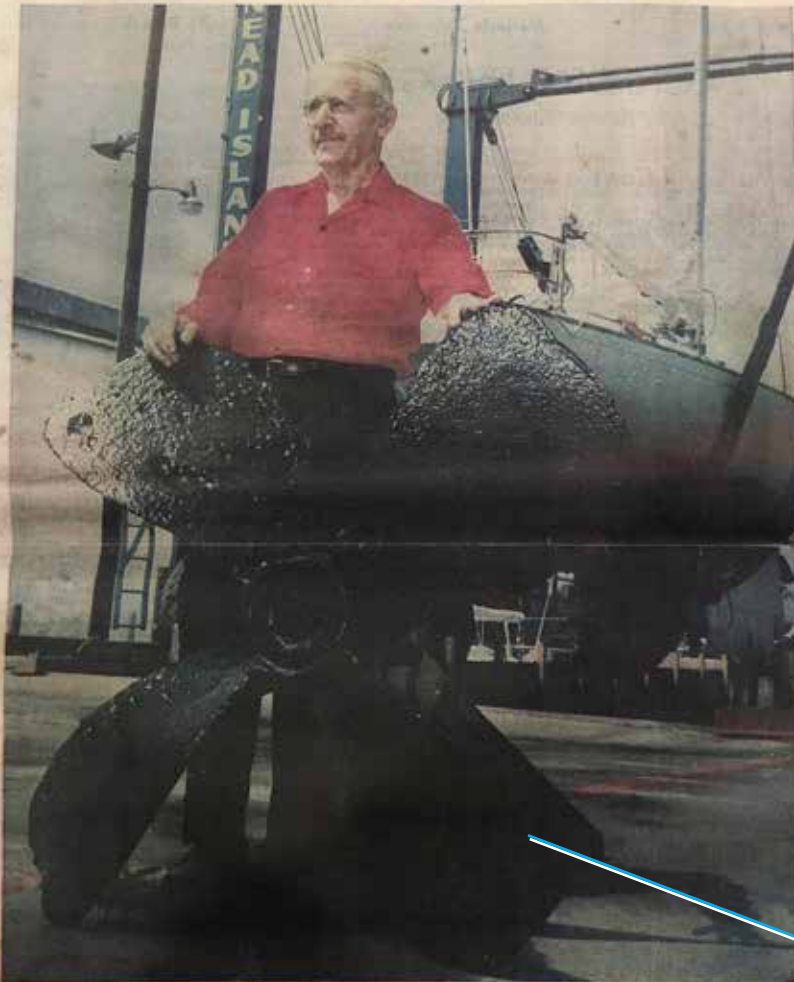
The pertinent part of this message is: *"There was another small screw propeller passenger and freight steamer the 'Mistletoe,' – about 100-feet long, owned by John Savarese Fish Co., of Tampa. She ran between Tampa, Cortez and Sarasota and return, down one day and back the next taking passengers and general cargo. On the return trip the cargo was mostly fish and other sea foods. Capt. Doty Thompson was her captain and it was said he could make the trip through the tricky and shallow channels between the keys and the mainland and in Sarasota Bay in the darkest night and fog with his eyes shut. Her regular engineer was Jerry Rhodes. She was sunk at her dock in Tampa in the hurricane that struck Tampa in October, 1911. She was so badly torn up in raising that she was rebuilt at the Tampa Steam Ways (sic.) (lengthened 10 ft. and widened 5 Ft.) and renamed the 'City of Sarasota.'"*

Above from this speech by Curtis Stanton:
"Early Transportation in Manatee County," 4/17/1968 -
MCHS S-0366

It seems that the 100 foot length is only from oral history, not listed in official documents. Was it claimed and simply repeated by others? 75 to 86 feet is the likely measure and is commensurate with the major lengthening told, of about ten feet.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE THE BRADENTON HERALD

JULY 9th, 1972



Colorful Riverboats Plied The Manatee River
In Its Early History. Story Begins On Page 3

(Editor's Note: Part II of the series on the history of riverboats along the Manatee opens with more details on the "Mistletoe," later renamed the "City of Sarasota." The series, by Curtis Harvey Stanton, is from a speech presented before the Manatee County Historical Society.)

Charles Duckwall, brother of Paul of the Duckwall family of pioneers of Bradenton, was captain, and Jerry Rhodes was the engineer, who was also her engineer when she was the "Mistletoe." (I relieved him in 1914 for a couple of months when her name was the "City of Sarasota.")

A few years later she was laid up. Her engine and boiler were removed (but not shaft and propeller) and her hull was used as a barge in this area. She was finally tied up at the Ed Pillsbury boat yard on Sneads Island where she sank and her hull rotted away. Mr. Jim Alderman, who bought the yard, later removed the shaft and propeller from the old rotted hull. He used the shaft as a weight to hold down his boat railway, and moved the propeller to the yard of his home in western Palmetto. On January 27, 1967, Al Robson of Anna Maria persuaded Alderman to give the shaft and propeller to the Manatee County Historical section of the South Florida Museum.

From 1898, when the independent line steamers was formed to furnish better transportation in and out of this area, the "Manatee," "H. B. Plant" and the "Terra Ceia," and other small power and sail boats, furnished the main water transportation in and out of this area. McKay's cattle boat "Fanita," would take a load of cattle from the pens at Shaws Point to Key West and Cuba.

run, leaving Tampa at 6:00 p.m., stopping by St. Petersburg, and arriving at Manatee River points early in the evening. She would leave the next morning at 7 a.m. for St. Petersburg and Tampa. The "Terra Ceia" filled in on extra trips and hauled Fullers Earth from the Atlantic Refining Co.'s mine about 2 miles above Ellenton. She was also chartered to private parties sometimes for excursions to different points. I remember one time in 1903 or 1904, when the churches along the river got together and chartered her for a Sunday School picnic to Egmont Key.

There was another small screw propeller passenger and freight steamer the "Mistletoe," about 100-feet long, owned by the John Savarese Fish Co. of Tampa. She ran between Tampa, Cortez, Sarasota and return, down one day and back the next taking passengers and general cargo. On the return trip the cargo was mostly fish and other sea foods. Capt. Doty Thompson was her captain and it was said he could make the trip through the tricky and shallow channels between the Keys and the mainland and in Sarasota Bay in the darkest night and fog with his eyes shut. Her regular engineer was Jerry Rhodes. She was sunk at her dock in Tampa in the hurricane that struck Tampa in October, 1911. She was so badly torn up in raising, that she was rebuilt at the Tampa Steam Ways (lengthened 10 ft. and widened 5 ft.) and renamed the "City of Sarasota."

(To be continued).

One of those redundancies. This is the same message, extended, as on page 15, in its print format... just to show that I have seen it!

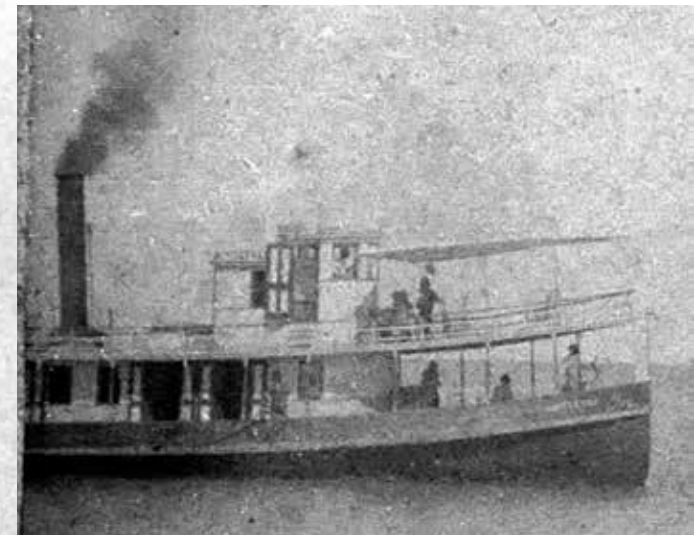
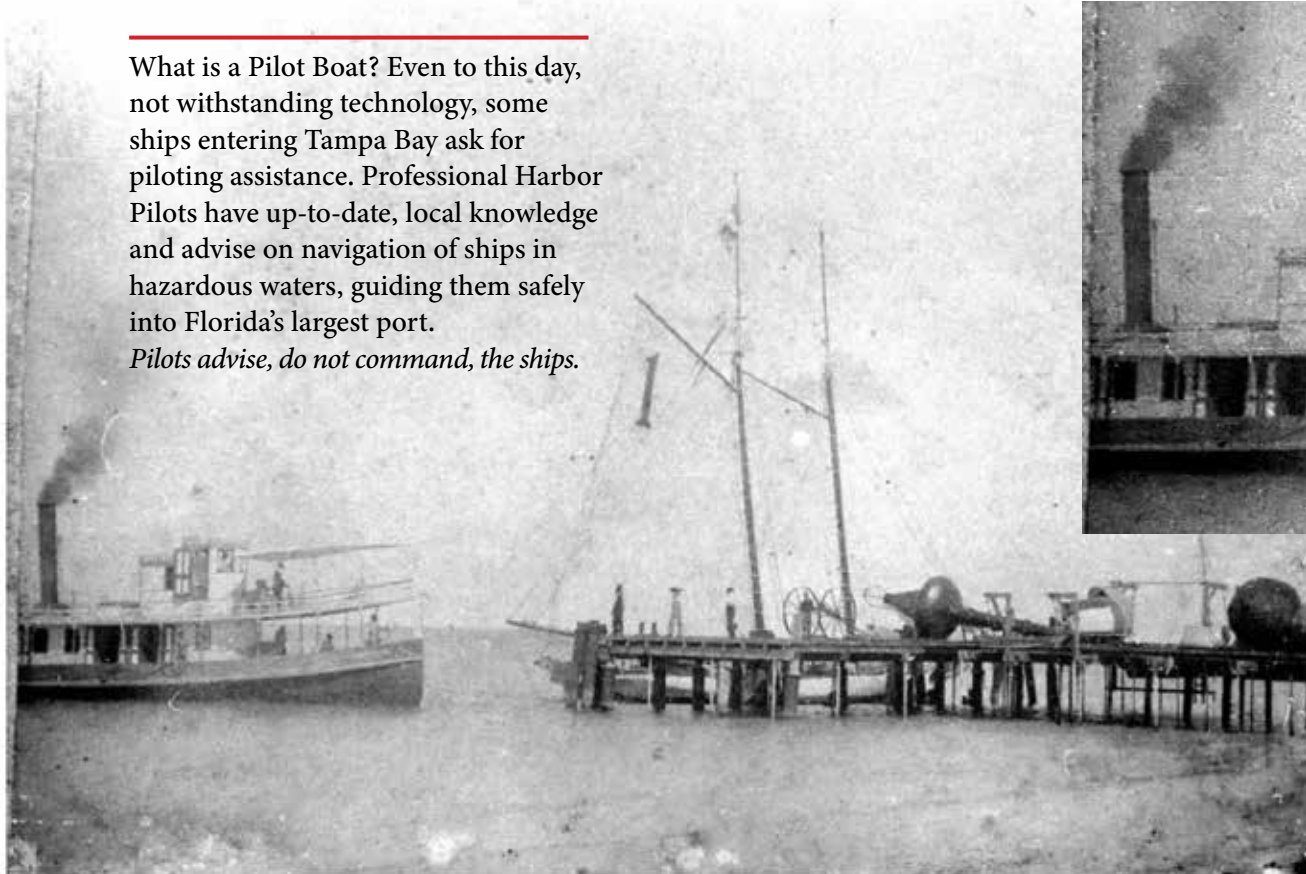
That's the *Mistletoe* propeller in context, for a sense of scale.

Image: Sarasota County Water Atlas History Project



As is apparent, this photo labels the ship in time and in place. This is her sparest configuration, with no accommodations on the upper deck. It shows her shortest stack, a stovepipe in the pilothouse, and access through the port-side rail at the bow for loading and boarding. "Port" is literally the side facing the landing.

What is a Pilot Boat? Even to this day, not withstanding technology, some ships entering Tampa Bay ask for piloting assistance. Professional Harbor Pilots have up-to-date, local knowledge and advise on navigation of ships in hazardous waters, guiding them safely into Florida's largest port.
Pilots advise, do not command, the ships.



Item Description

Title	Pilot Boat "Bell" and "Mistletoe" at Lighthouse Dock
Format	Photograph, JPEG
Description	Pilot boat "Bell" at Lighthouse Dock with sails showing the number 1 and steamboat "Mistletoe" approaching the dock.
Publisher	Manatee County Public Library System
Location	Florida--Hillsborough County--Egmont Key
Subject	United States;
Date	1898-1899
Identifier	M01-08837-A

The site is Egmont Key which guards the entrance to Tampa Bay, now a State Park. The area is treacherous for deep draft vessels and pilot boats gathered there. The island had a lighthouse, fort, and a working population, both military and civilian, so needed supplies delivered.



Image: Sarasota County History Center

Titled "Mistletoe Sarasota," this image also shows the ship with full upper deck accommodations. The stack appears taller than in previous images. The peaked roof is a structure ashore.

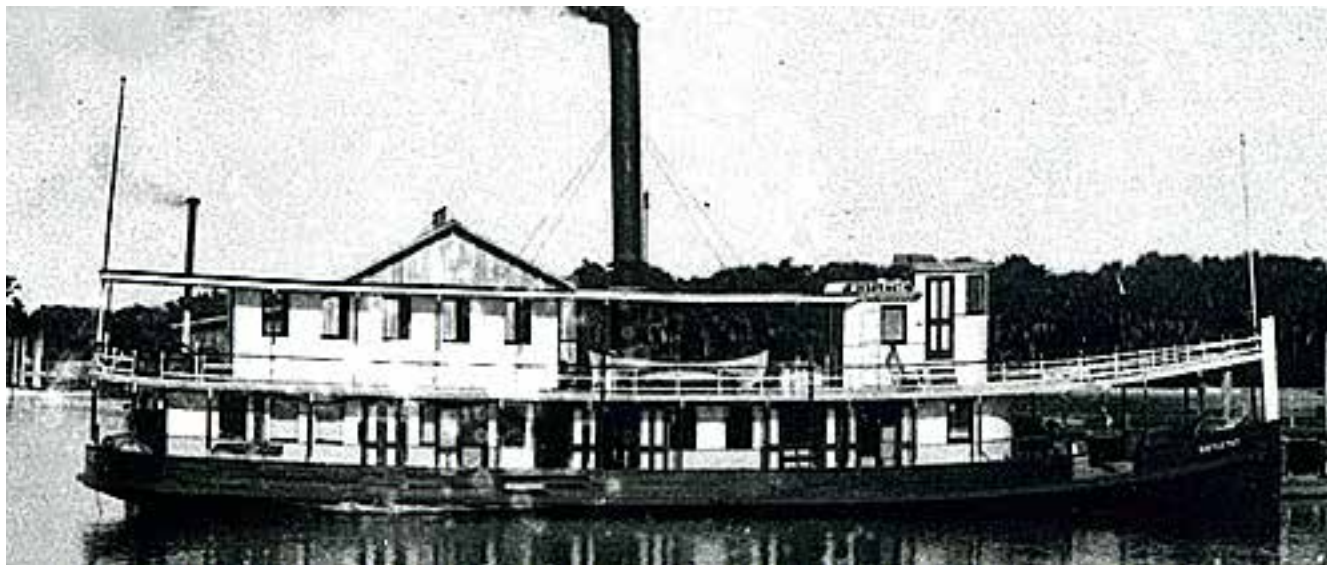
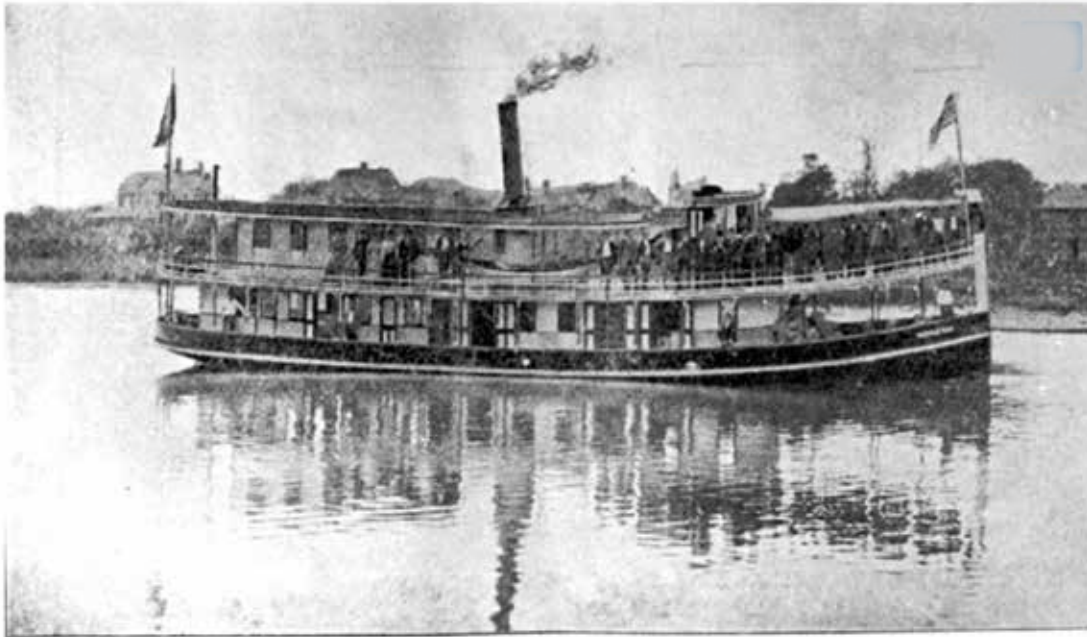




Image: Courtesy of Tom Mayers

This image shows the ship with full upper deck accommodations. Contrast this with the postcard image of *City of Sarasota* (pages 30 and 31), in which that area of the ship is enclosed such that passengers accessed their cabins or any common lounges by central passageways.

S.S. Mistletoe, Capt. Thompson, year 1900
Plying alternate days between Sarasota-
Tampa and way-side docks, Fuel, pine.
Only ice supply source for Sarasota.
Bill Neubauer.



MISTLETOE of Florida Fish & Ice Co.

Item Description

Title	Steamer Mistletoe
Format	Photograph, JPEG
Description	A postcard picture of the 100-foot long steamboat Mistletoe of the Florida Fish and Ice Company, owned by John Savarese of Tampa and Longboat Key. The Mistletoe, which carried passengers and freight, was a familiar visitor to the Manatee River. During the hurricane of October, 1911, she sank while at the dock in Tampa. She was raised and five feet added to her width and ten feet to her length. At this time she was renamed the City of Sarasota, with Charles Duckwall of Bradenton as her Captain. In 1917 she was converted into a barge by Ed Pillsbury of Snead Island. It was not found to be usable and was hauled out of the water and burned. The propeller was donated to the South Florida Museum. From the high bank visible behind the Mistletoe in this view, she is probably in the Manatee River. This picture was copied from the mid-winter 1900 special edition of the Tampa Tribune, which covered Hillsborough and Manatee Counties.
Publisher	Manatee County Public Library System
Location	Florida--Manatee County
Subject	City of Sarasota (Steamboat); Duckwall, Charles; Florida Fish and Ice Company; Mistletoe (Steamboat); Pillsbury, Ed; Savarese, John; South Florida Museum and Bishop Planetarium (201 10th Street West); United States;
Date	1900
Identifier	M01-04941-A

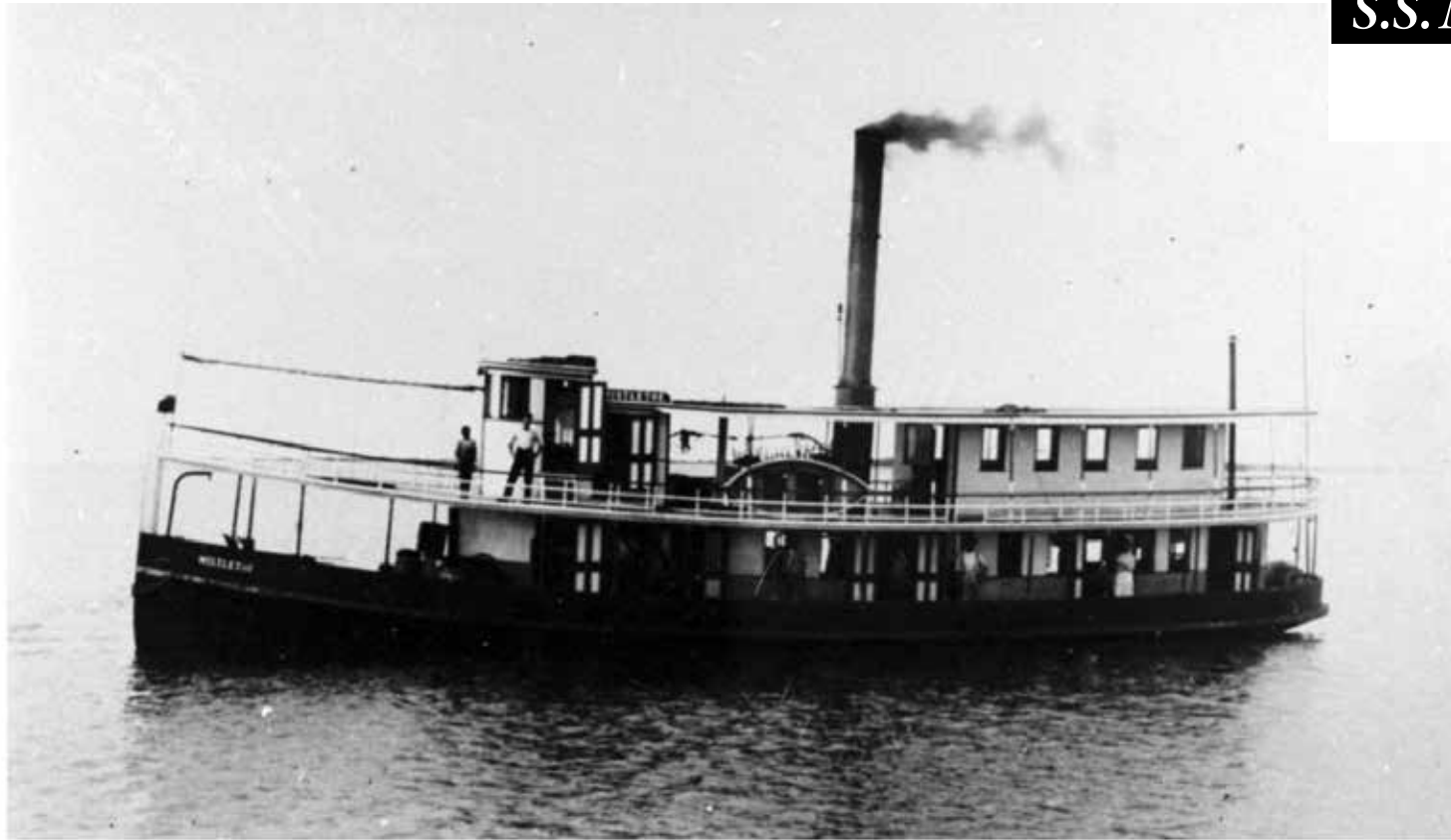
Significant Points:

- Sank Tampa October, 1910
- Raised and 10' added to length + 5' to beam
- Renamed *City of Sarasota*
- Converted to barge 1917 by Ed Pillsbury of Snead Island
- Proved unusable, hauled out & burned
- Photo from Tampa Tribune mid-winter 1900
- 100-foot long?

Remember what the Gershwin brothers told us; "It ain't necessarily so."

The South Florida Museum mentioned was the earlier title of the Bishop. The propeller was transferred to the Florida Maritime Museum in Cortez, which was initiated 2003-2004, under the direction of Roger Allen and the auspices of Manatee County Clerk of the Circuit Court and comptroller, R. B. "Chips" Shore. Dedicated and opened 11/2007.

The author donated creative services to FMM for about ten years.



Item Description

Title	Steamboat Mistletoe
Format	Photograph, JPEG
Description	The small steamer "'Mistletoe'", owned by John Saverese of Tampa. In October, 1911, the Mistletoe was sunk at the dock in Tampa by a hurricane. It was later raised, rebuilt and renamed the "'City of Sarasota'".
Publisher	Manatee County Public Library System
Location	Florida--Manatee County
Subject	City of Sarasota (Steamboat); Savarese, John; Mistletoe; United States;
Date	1908-1910
Identifier	M01-00305-A

This image causes (even more) confusion because just ahead of the stack, there is a rounded shape some mistake for the housing of a paddle wheel. It is actually the ship's boat, resting on its gunnel, upper facing out.

Tampa Steamways



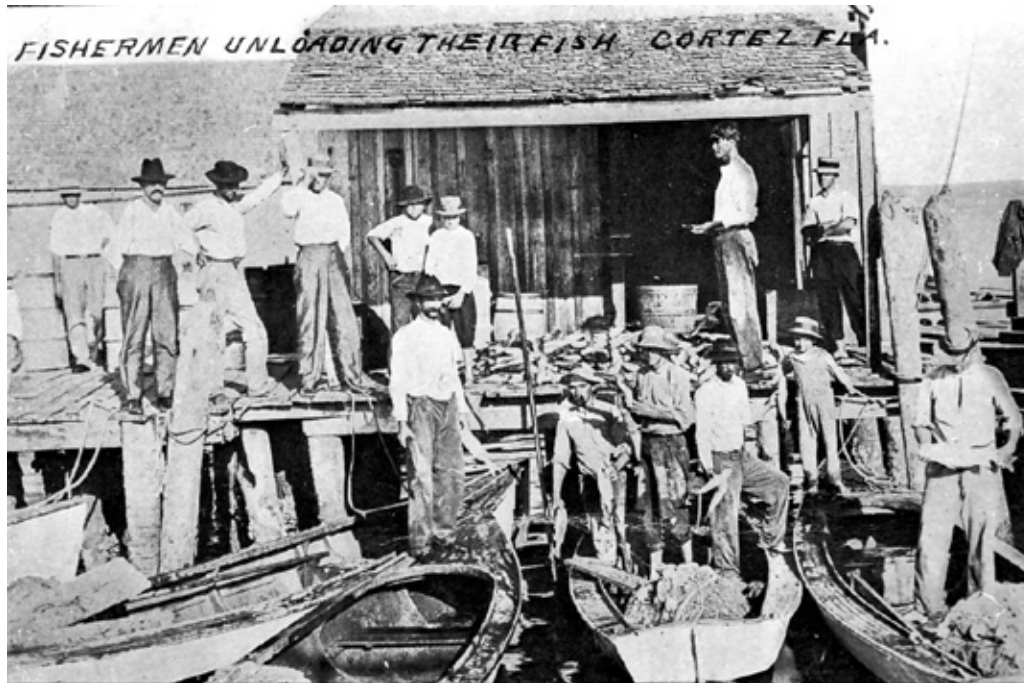
Now, Jean Street Shipyard, a Marina. Tampa Steamways was the operation at which *Mistletoe* was converted, to become the *City of Sarasota*.

"Tampa Steamways owned by Sweat and Henderson, 1899, was located on the east bank of the Hillsborough River at the foot of Henderson Ave."

Photo credit: Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, University of South Florida. Digitization provided by the USF Libraries Digitization Center.

Local Color (in black and white)

The Cortez fishermen and Gillnet Skiffs they would have used, to fill the fish-hold of *Mistletoe*. Mullet and Pompano are specifically reported, but oysters, crabs, spiny lobsters, conches, clams, turtles and shrimp would have shared the cargo space. And, agricultural products, as well.



Tony Pizzo, in the *Sunland Tribune*, says: "Savarese was shipping more than 1,700 barrels of fish per month to all parts of the country. Tampa became the most important fish-shipping center in the South."

What is a barrel of fish? The 1898 tract, *Preservation of Fishery Products for Food*, by Charles Stevenson, describes the use of flour barrels with capacity of 200 lbs. What part was fish vs. ice or salt? Other paragraphs suggest about half and half

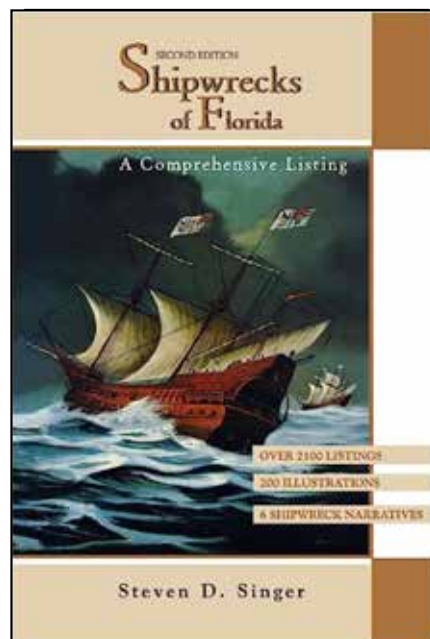


Credit interviews to Manatee County Public Library, **Jonathan Torkos**

A Jerry Patterson, interviewed in 1992, mentions 5,000 crates of tomatoes, plus limes, guavas and avocados. Also, that Savarese employed 500, with 15 sailing vessels and 150 small craft.

Anna Maria Cobb, endorses, in 1984, that *Mistletoe* was first, but "broke down a lot."

John McCarthy, in 1986, said that he could not say, about Cortez as a port of call, but knew she stopped at Longboat Key (off Cortez) and Indian Beach (Sarasota), on her route between Sarasota and Tampa.



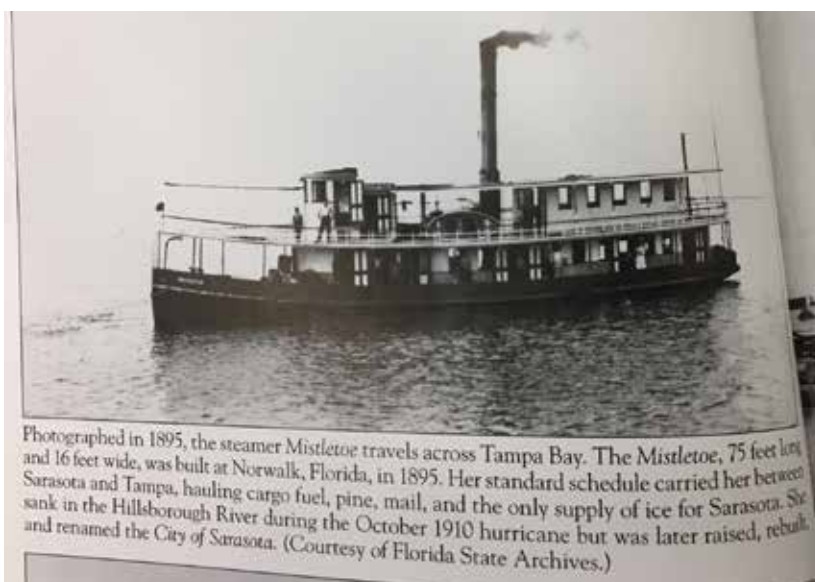
This information below can be found in *Shipwrecks of Florida*, 1992, by Steven Singer:

• **Mistletoe** – Steamer, of Tampa, 43 tons, built in 1885 at Norwalk, Fla., 75.3' x 16.4' x 4.4'; Captain Thompson. Sank at her dock on the Hillsborough River during a storm, Oct. 18, 1910.

• **City of Sarasota** – Steamer, 125 tons, built in 1911 at Tampa, 76.2' x 20' x 4'. Foundered near Tampa, Nov. 5, 1919.

The above are referenced to the "Congressional Information Service (CIS). United States Serial Set Index, Part 1-11, and Records of the National Archives. Washington, D.C. ... From the National Archives are selected records of the U.S. Coast Guard (Record Group 26); the U.S. Customs Service (RG 36); Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation; Steamboat Inspection Service," etc.

Critical! Federal authority disputes much of the local lore on length and destiny (*and, appears to be in error*).



Age: While this book claims 1895 as the build date, 1885 is more probable from records, and one photo captioned 1892. This image, with upper deck accommodations, is not her launch configuration.

MICHAEL BARNETTE

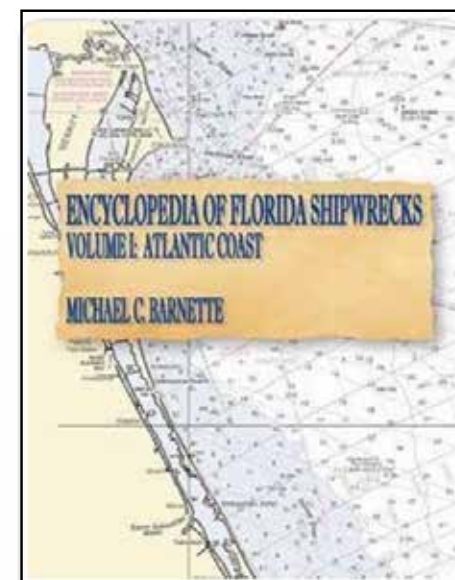


Speaker Details

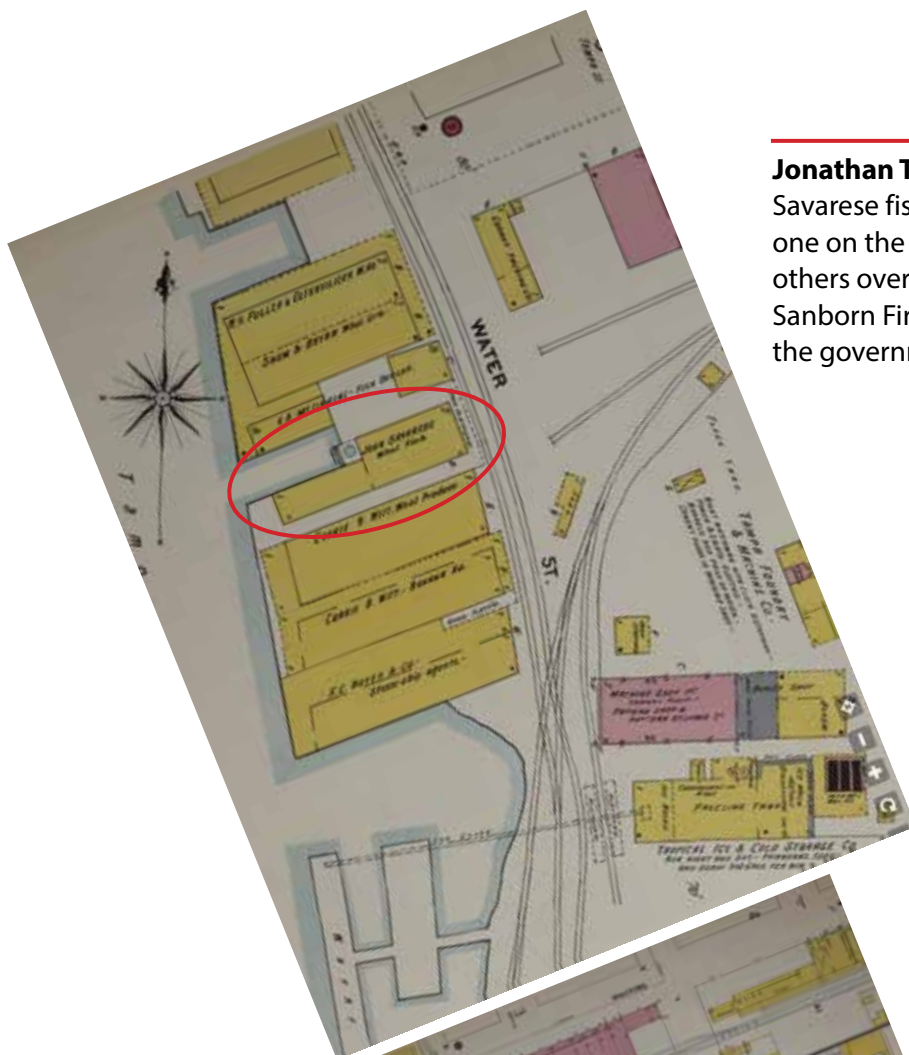
Marine Biologist - Association of Underwater Explorers

About Michael Barnette

An accomplished diver, author, and photographer, Michael Barnette has been actively researching and exploring shipwrecks for almost 25 years, resulting in the identification of more than 80 shipwrecks. In 1996, he founded the *Association of Underwater Explorers*, a coalition of divers dedicated to the research, exploration, documentation, and preservation of submerged cultural resources. He has dived on numerous historic shipwrecks, including the ironclad U.S.S. Monitor, the liner Andrea Doria, the Great White Fleet battleship U.S.S. Virginia, and the H.M.H.S. Britannic, sister ship of the famed R.M.S. Titanic. In 2009, Barnette was elected as a fellow to the Explorers Club. Barnette has published three books on Florida shipwreck and maritime history, the most recent being the definitive *Encyclopedia of Florida Shipwrecks, Volume I: Atlantic Coast*. Michael Barnette is employed as a marine biologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and lives with his wife in St. Petersburg, Florida.



Jonathan Torkos ferreted out the location of the Savarese fish house property/dock in Tampa; this one on the Hillsborough River. There may have been others over the years. This material is from 1903 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps in the possession of the government.

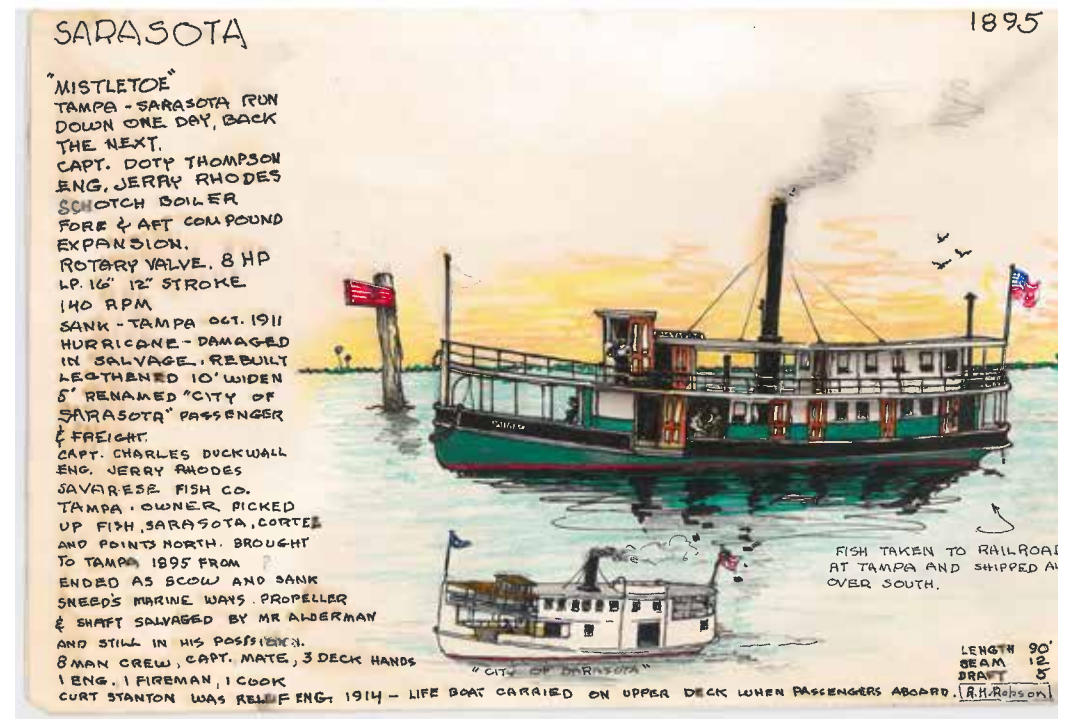




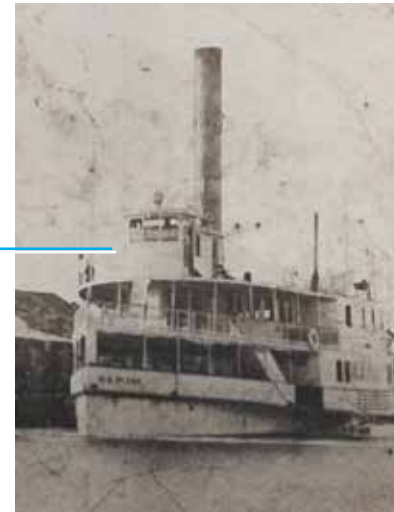
Above, a redundant photo, but here, with some new, clearly, first hand information; personal, but inconsistent. 90 feet is a reasonable estimate, but for a later date!. 12 Foot beam is a unique number. Skinny!

This does have engine information seen nowhere else.

Images on this page and the next are from the Alfred H. Robson collection, provided by **Jonathan Torkos**, Librarian, Historical Resources, office of the Manatee County Clerk.



Below, a charming image. Like all art, it is an interpretation. The word, "scow" is new, with multiple maritime meanings. The green hull color is new as well. She surely looks black in the B/W photos, but it's only paint... and they are B/W photos.



These images set the scene/context.

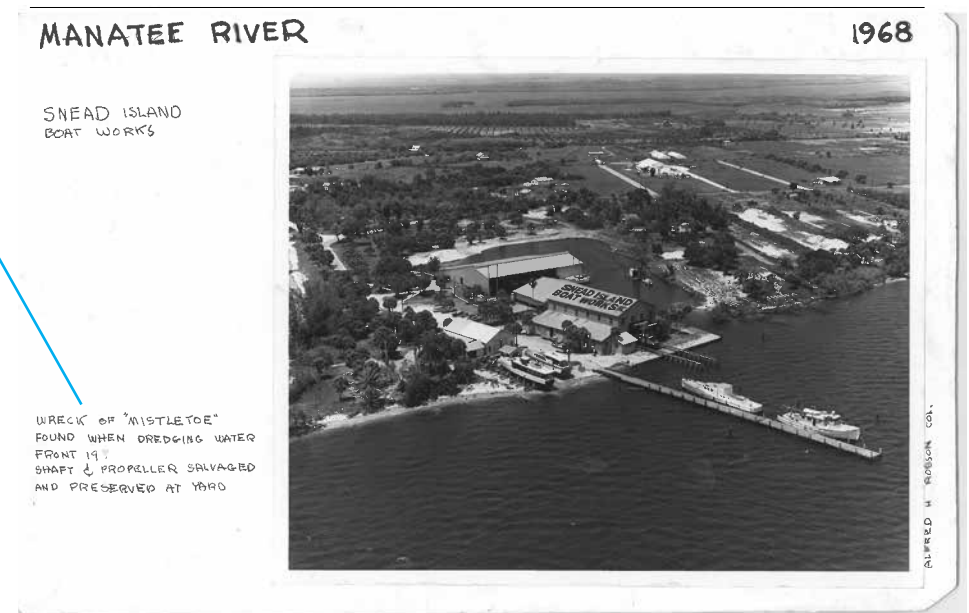
This is the midpoint of *Mistletoe's* run, and describes the channel.

Historical note: The ship at the left is the steel-hulled side wheeler, 125.5' Paddle Steamer, *H. B. Plant*.

At the right, a Man-o-War's eye view. The text is: "MANATEE RIVER - 1968 - Snead Island Boat Works - Wreck of "Mistletoe" found when dredging waterfront 19 (ft?) shaft & propeller salvaged and preserved at yard."

So, this is apparently the site of her demise (as *City of Sarasota*), and in dire straits.

Another view: Gary Alderman, whose family took over management of Snead Island Boat Work in 1936, says, "I am not familiar with a 1968 reveal, only that the propeller was found, just a blade sticking up in sand, on beach after a winter storm ... I do remember no dredging at the time it was discovered."



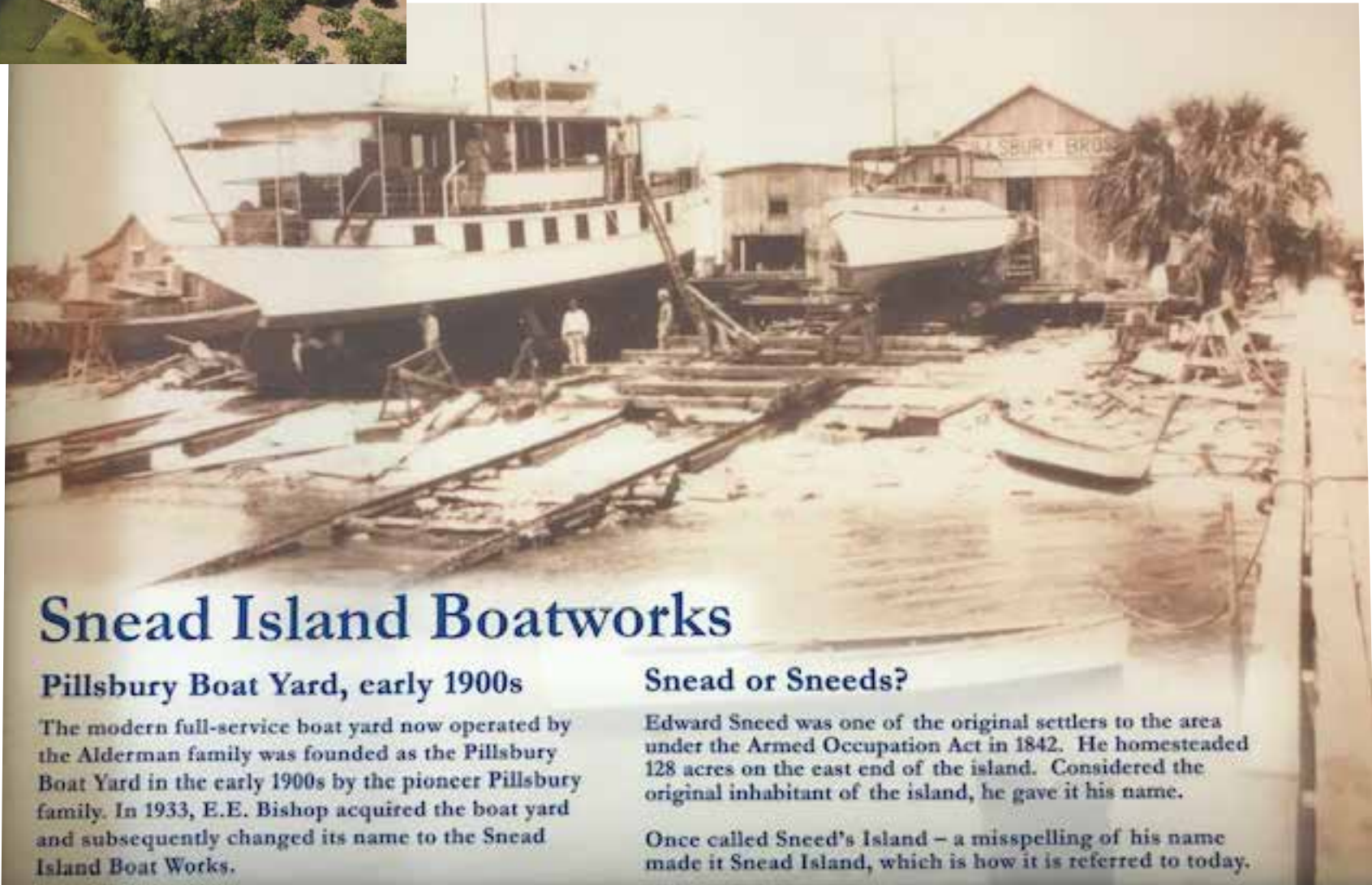
"Sneeds," "Sneads" and "Snead" are loosely interchangeable. That should not be a surprise, as you have gotten this far in the confusing tale.



The *Mistletoe* is said to have been converted to a “barge” and later burned off, or scuttled off, this site.

The yard is currently operated by Gary Alderman and family.

Photo at left, credited to Matt Matthews, shows the yard in 2020.



Snead Island Boatworks

Pillsbury Boat Yard, early 1900s

The modern full-service boat yard now operated by the Alderman family was founded as the Pillsbury Boat Yard in the early 1900s by the pioneer Pillsbury family. In 1933, E.E. Bishop acquired the boat yard and subsequently changed its name to the Snead Island Boat Works.


Snead or Sneeds?

Edward Snead was one of the original settlers to the area under the Armed Occupation Act in 1842. He homesteaded 128 acres on the east end of the island. Considered the original inhabitant of the island, he gave it his name.

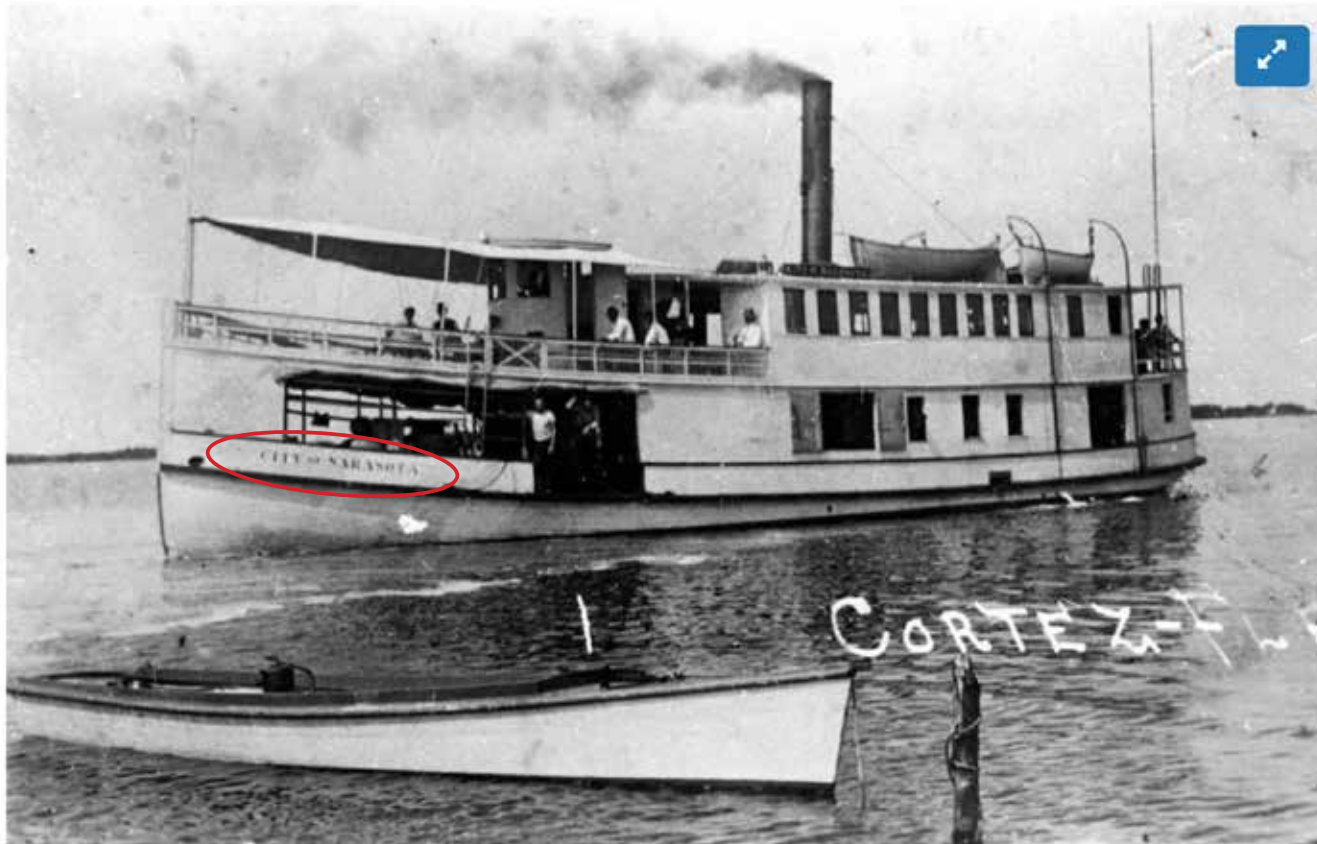
Once called Snead's Island – a misspelling of his name made it Snead Island, which is how it is referred to today.



City Of Sarasota being converted from Mistletoe. Continuing the legend in the same haphazard vein, note the hurricane date here, as 1909!

DESCRIPTION	ORDER	METADATA
IMAGE NUMBER	N040499	
RIGHTS		
COLLECTION	General collection	
GEOGRAPHIC TERM	Tampa (Fla.)	
SUBJECT TERM	Steamboats Boats and boating	
CORPORATE SUBJECT	City of Sarasota (Steamboat)	
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	1 photonegative - b&w - 4 x 5 in.	
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	Rebuilt and renamed (earlier called the Mistletoe) after sinking in the 1909 hurricane. Owned by John Savarese. Later stripped to a barge which sank at Sneed Island boat yard.	





Item Description

Title	City of Sarasota Steamer
Format	Photograph, JPEG
Description	City of Sarasota, a steamboat, with a Cortez fishing boat in the foreground.
Publisher	Manatee County Public Library System
Location	Florida--Manatee County--Cortez
Subject	Boats; City of Sarasota (Steamboat); Fishing boats; Steamboats;
Date	1900-1910
Identifier	M01-03683-A

We're almost done. SS *Mistletoe* is no more. Here we see the *City of Sarasota*. Notice that the accommodations are now built all the way out to the full beam of the ship.

Her aft stovepipe is gone. Perhaps in the conversion, plumbing or ductwork was added to convey hot water or warm air to the cabins. I speculate that electric lighting would have been another improvement.

Note the date assigned as 1900-1910. This ship, *City of Sarasota*, did not exist in that timespan.

ODDITY: This ship carried passengers for at least 5 years, and only one other photo can be found of her in service (see next page).

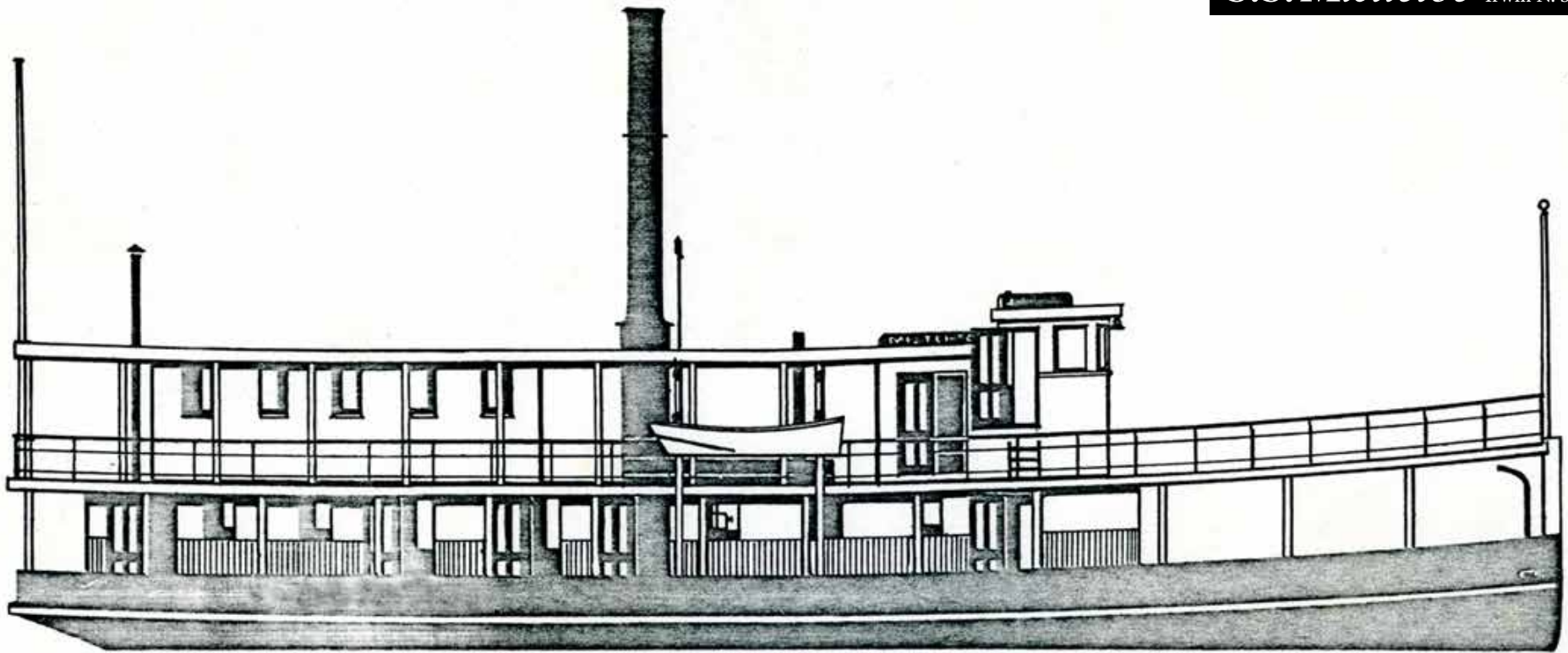


Item Description

Title	Steamer City of Sarasota
Format	Photograph, JPEG
Description	The steamboat City of Sarasota is seen in Tampa Bay.
Publisher	Manatee County Public Library System
Location	Florida--Hillsborough County--Tampa Bay
Subject	City of Sarasota (Steamboat); Steamboats-- City of Sarasota ; United States;
Date	1900-1910
Identifier	M01-01604-A

A suitable image for the end.

It may very well be that remarks on her added beam to 20 and 22 feet can be accounted for, not by expansion of the hull structure, but by widening the accommodation decks to extend over the main deck-hull, port and starboard – feasible because passengers are very light vs. the density of bulk cargo.



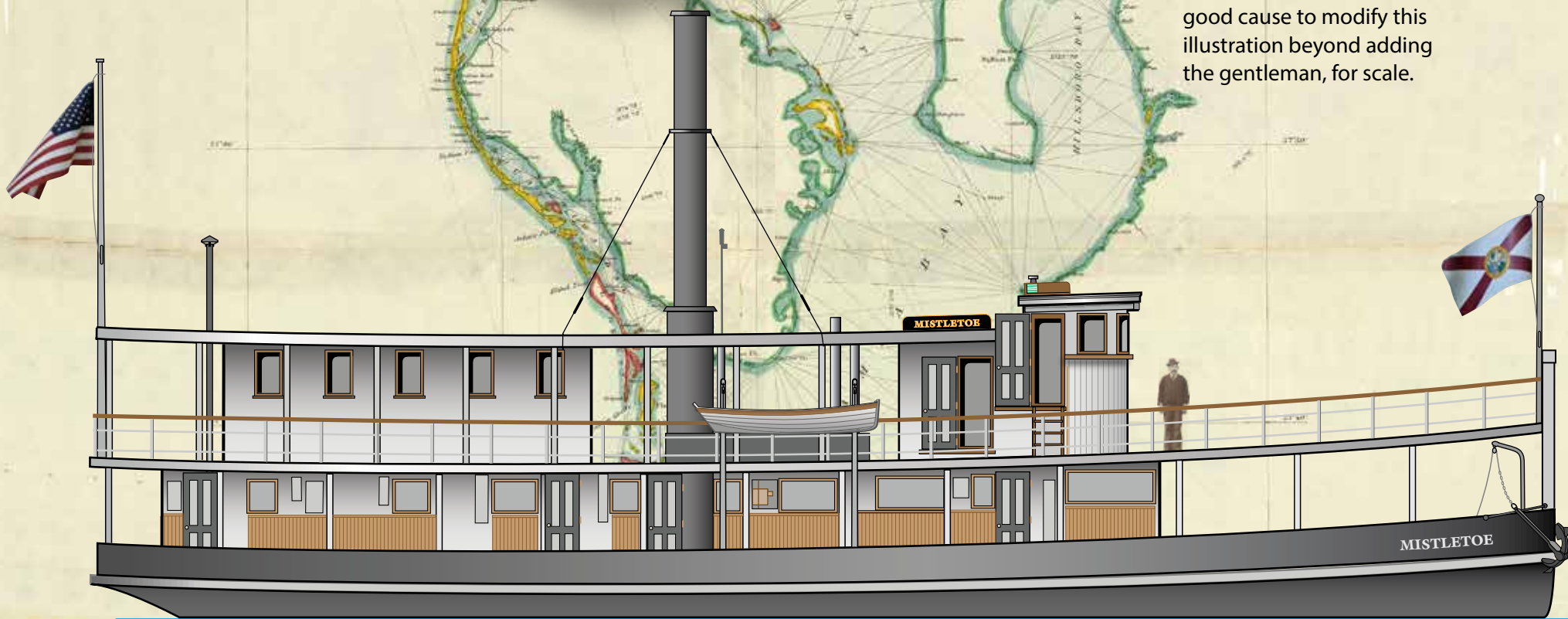
Mistletoe 1905

Owned by the John Saverese Fish Co. of Tampa. Carried passengers and general cargo from Tampa to Cortez and Sarasota. Swamped at Tampa during a hurricane in 1911, she was raised, rebuilt and renamed the "City of Sarasota". Partially dismantled around 1917, later sunk at Sneads Island.

This well-drawn illustration bears evidence of having been photo-copied, giving some clue as to its date, but otherwise I have seen no provenance. Hurricane date, spelling of Saverese and Sneads are incorrect and the hull is "streamlined" to a degree.

Image: Courtesy of Tom Mayers. Please note that many of the images herein are held by multiple municipalities and organizations, and rarely show the originator.

In the end, I did not find good cause to modify this illustration beyond adding the gentleman, for scale.



Irwin Schuster
2004 © 2023

S.S. Mistletoe

1892 - 1917 • Owned by the John Savarese Fish Co., Tampa, FL
Carried passengers, ice and general cargo between Tampa, Cortez and Sarasota.

SS Mistletoe of Florida's Mid-Gulf Coast

Conclusions:

My interest is in the **ship**, *SS Mistletoe*; A good deal less in her working history, but that comes along with the research, and became the rudder that wagged the boat.

The where and when of her working life and end seem reasonably solid as told. Her beginnings are a lot less so.

I was not prepared for the amount of contradiction over her size, and the utter lack of hard evidence, such as plans. For the last couple of centuries, builders, engineers, architects of the western world have produced and worked from drawings. It is true that many plans have not survived, but there is no hint, in the case of this ship, of documentation of her genesis or modifications. Length is fundamental. Size, as they say . . .

So, here we are. The length of 100 feet (nice round figure), seems to me to be a legend, told and retold with no basis. Tom Mayers tells that Savarese bought her at 54 feet and had her lengthened to 75 feet at Brown's Boat Yard in Tampa. That yard has not been located in records, so hearsay for now, as Tom allows.

Michael Barnette points out that a 54 foot, gas, screw *Mistletoe* #203605 was built in 1906 and remained on the register ALONG with *City of Sarasota*, for years!

If our ship #91750, at around 75 feet, had a 10 foot extension in 1911, that would bring her up to the 86 foot number written of, and in photos, but contested by the official Government reports, according to Singer!

I regret not being able to accomplish my mission, but hope this collection will be useful to others.

— Irwin N. Schuster 12/08/2023

My most sincere appreciation...

to the collegial folks who contributed effort and knowledge, in the interest of getting this history right.

Gary Alderman, Snead Island Boat Works, Inc.

Michael C. Barnette, Maritime Historian, Author, Diver and Photographer

Fairlie Brinkley, Tampa Bay Ship Model Society, editor, etc.

Tori Chasey, Supervisor, Florida Maritime Museum

Astrid Drew, Archivist, Steamship Historical Society of America

Katie Fleck, Manatee County Community and Veterans Services Department

Captain Howard Howe, Tampa Bay Ship Model Society

Tiffany La Britt, Curator of Collections, Bishop Museum of Science & Nature

Captain Tom Mayers of Lands End Marina

Krystin Miner, Supervisor, Manatee Village Historical Park

Mathilde Pateau, Registrar & Collections Specialist, FLMM

Jonathan Torkos, Manatee County Librarian, Historical Resources

Proverb: *When you own a clock, you know what time it is. If you own two clocks, you are never sure!*



Irwin N. Schuster
Tampa, FL 33647
irwin.schuster@verizon.net

11/2023

About the Author/Editor/Collector:

Born in St. Petersburg to parents Harry & Goldie Schuster, in business on Treasure Island, and raised on St. Petersburg Beach. Indeed, self-crowned, "Sandspur Royalty," as the St. Pete Times recorded my first birthday in 1936, as, "First Baby of the Beaches!" My parents and other family were shopkeepers on Corey Ave, as documented in a couple books of the, "Images of America" series.

Never more than a couple hundred yards from the Gulf or Boca Ciega Bay. Boat owner from the age of 14. I attended Sunshine School in Pass-a-Grill, Disston Junior High, St. Pete High and graduated Georgia Tech, majoring in Industrial (product) Design. After my active duty as an Artillery Officer in the Army Reserves, a career choice sent me to the suburban Boston area to work as a design engineer for a major defense contractor. It was there that I met and in 1961, married Elizabeth Martell, then working for the same company in a different facility.

Moving back into consumer product design, I took positions in a few different design consulting offices, starting in Philadelphia, then back to the North Shore of Boston, where, in 1981, Irwin Schuster/Designer, Inc. was launched, to provide product, advertising and graphic design services to a wide variety of markets; sportswear and equipment, athletes, medical products, food, vending, electronics, services, toys and games, and manufacturing.

"The Bette" and I begot and raised three sons, and I maintained an interest in small craft, but with the boys and business, rarely got on the water. I turned to historical boat model-making in the '90's as the boys went off on their own. I joined the USS Constitution Model Shipwright Guild and served as Secretary, then Newsletter Editor. On moving back to Florida in 2001, I associated with the Tampa Bay Ship Model Society and soon took on the Secretary/Newsletter Editor job; producing the monthly *Ship's Log*. I still hold that position in 2023.

I belong to, and contribute content to, *The Nautical Research Guild (Journal)*, *Traditional Small Craft Association - Ash Breeze* and until its demise, *Messing About in Boats* magazine. I closed my business in 2018 after about 55 years as a design consultant. I now donate my services primarily to Audubon projects.

Boat and Ship Models:

- *America* - Schooner Yacht
- *Armed Launch* - Coastal, ca. 1800
- *Baby Bootlegger* - Gold Cup Racer
- *Bay of Fundy Scow Sloop*
- *Bibelot* - Sonder Class Racing Sail
- *Breck Marshall* - Cape Cod Catboat
- *Britannia* - Sydney Harbor Racing Skiff
- *Cedar Key Sharpie**
- *Chesapeake Bay Log Canoe*
- *Chas. Cohill* - Delaware Racing Cat
- *Cortez Sprits'l Skiff* - paper
- *Egret* - Biscayne Bay Sharpie* - Munroe
- *E-Class Ice Yacht*
- *Florida One-Design* - Gandy*
- *Fish Class One-Design**
- *Gerda III* - Danish Buoy Tender
- *Gulf Coast Scow Schooner* (2)*
- *Great South Bay Scooters*
- *International One-Design*
- *Il Pipistrello* - Fantasy Trimaran
- *Lancha Chilota* - Chilean Fisherman
- *Little Bird* - California Sloop - Rabl
- *Lola* - Sloop Yacht - Aage Nelson
- *Long Island Skipjack*
- *S.S. Mascotte* (2) Plant Steamer
- *Maxie* - New Zealand Commuter Yacht
- *Melonseed Recreational Sloop**
- *Moby Lobster* - Fantasy Diorama
- *New Haven Oyster Tonging Sharpie*
- *Piscataqua Gunning Skiff*
- *Pompano* - Market Sharpie*
- *Puritan* - 1885 America's Cup Defender
- *Rozinante* - Herreshoff Canoe Yawl
- *Seminole Dugout**
- *SubmaScharck* - Undersea Fantasy
- *The Annie* - Cedar Key Schooner
- *Vesper-Argonaut* - Rushton Canoe
- *Weedon Island Dugout**

... and about 9 restorations

* **Gulf Coast vessels**