

Wakerobin, 1927

WAGL-251



The trillium flower or any of several plants that bloom early in the spring.

Builder: Dravo Construction Company, Neville Island, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Length: 182'

Beam: 43'

Draft: 4' 02"

Displacement: 622 tons

Cost: \$187,500

Commissioned: 15 April 1927

Decommissioned: 18 December 1948

Disposition: Transferred to US Army Corps of Engineers

Machinery: 2 horizontal non-condensing steam engines; 550 SHP; 2 Babcock & Wilcox three-pass, sectional-header boilers, oil-fired; stern paddle-wheel, staggered buckets; 11' 4" in diameter.

Deck Gear: Steam-powered winch

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 9 knots

Cruising: 5 knots; 1,690 mile range

Complement: 33 (1930)

Armament: None

Electronics: None

Tender History:

The *Wakerobin* was constructed as a river tender for service in the upper Mississippi River. She was designed to work in tandem with a construction barge that she pushed off her bow. She was the last stern-wheel tender built for the U. S. Lighthouse Service. She was commissioned on 15 April 1927 and was assigned to the 13th Lighthouse District at Rock Island, Illinois.

During World War II she was assigned to the 9th District and was stationed at Keokuk, Iowa and then Vicksburg, Mississippi. From Vicksburg she was used to tend aids to navigation on 438 miles of the lower Mississippi River, from Mile 400 to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In early 1945 she underwent a refit and was then transferred to Memphis, Tennessee where her area of operations included the area between Cairo, Illinois to the mouth of the Arkansas River.

Due to "exorbitant" operating and maintenance costs, *Wakerobin* was laid up at the Coast Guard Depot at Paris, Tennessee and placed "out of commission in reserve" on 18 December 1948. She was loaned to the "U.S. Army Engineers Corps" on 18 April 1949 and the transfer was made permanent on 20 April 1955.

Photographs:



USCGC *Wakerobin* [WAGL-251]; "View of Coast Guard Cutter WAKEROBIN."; Photo No. St.L. 05034502; 3 May 1942; photographer unknown.

Wakerobin was a 182-foot, 622 ton, stern paddlewheel river tender. She was steel-hulled and had a wood and steel superstructure. She had two horizontal steam engines powered by two coal-fired Babcock & Wilcox section header boilers. Her maximum speed was 9 knots and she had an economical cruising speed of 5 knots. She was commissioned into the US Lighthouse Service in 1927 and was decommissioned and placed in storage in 1948. She was temporarily transferred to the Army Corps of Engineers in 1949 and in 1955 the transfer was made permanent. During her Coast Guard service she was stationed in Memphis.



USCGC *Wakerobin* [WAGL-251]; "View of Coast Guard Cutter WAKEROBIN."; Photo No. St.L. 05034501; 3 May 1942; photographer unknown.

In 1948 the always parsimonious Coast Guard noted in an official report that "the cost of operation of the *Wakerobin* is approximately twice that of diesel cutter *Foxglove* engaged in similar, but more arduous duties." The Coast Guard then decommissioned *Wakerobin*, ending the era of side and stern paddlewheel cutters.

Sources:

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

Douglas Peterson. *United States Lighthouse Service Tenders, 1840-1939*. Annapolis: Eastwind Publishing, 2000.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft of World War II*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1982.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft, 1946-1990*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990.

