



Columbine, 1892



Columbine: a flowering herb of the genus *Aquilegia*, having variously colored flowers with five conspicuously spurred petals.

Builder: Globe Iron Works, Cleveland, Ohio

Length: 155'

Beam: 26' 6"

Draft: 15' 2"

Displacement: 643 tons

Cost: \$92,125.83

Commissioned: September, 1892

Decommissioned: May, 1927

Disposition: Sold on 22 July 1927

Machinery: 2 compound inverted fore & aft steam engines; 2 cylindrical single-ended coal-fired Scotch-type boilers; 800 IHP; single propeller

Performance & Endurance:

Max:

Cruising:

Deck Gear: Wood steam-powered derrick

Complement: 21

Armament: None

Electronics: Submarine signal apparatus; wireless radio set (1918)

Tender History:

The 1892 United States Lighthouse Tender *Columbine* was one of two sea-going tenders of the *Lilac* Class, the other being the tender *Lilac*. These two tenders were authorized in 1890 and the contract for their construction was let the following year.

The *Columbine* was assigned to the 13th Lighthouse District as an engineering tender. Upon her completion she was sent through the Welland Canal, the St. Lawrence River, and via the Atlantic seacoast to New York where she was delivered to the Lighthouse Service in September, 1892. She was completely fitted out at the General Depot, Staten Island and on 30 October 1892 she steamed for Portland, Oregon via the Straits of Magellan. It was reported that on this voyage that she “proved to be an excellent sea boat.”

In 1911 she transferred to the Sixteenth Lighthouse District and was based out of Ketchikan, Alaska. In 1915 she transferred to the 19th Lighthouse District in Hawaii. From 17 to 19 January 1916 she was instrumental in saving the bark *British Yeoman*. During World War I she served in the Navy from 11 April 1917 to 1 July 1919 and was assigned to the 14th and 5th Naval Districts, during which time she was outfitted with a radio.

She was rebuilt in 1920 and was laid up in 1923. She returned to duty in 1925 and was assigned to the 9th Lighthouse District at Puerto Rico. During her time here she assisted in the salvaging of the Cunard steamship *Franconia* when that vessel grounded in the harbor of San Juan.

Her service there ended on 16 March 1927 and she was ordered north to Portsmouth, Virginia, arriving there on 8 April 1927. Her crew was transferred to the new tender *Acacia* and the *Columbine* was laid up. She was then surveyed and recommended to be sold. She served as the SS *Columbine* until 1942 when she was abandoned.

She spent her career servicing aids to navigation but did participate in a number of rescues and assistance cases for which she was awarded two Life-Saving medals and a Letter of Commendation from President Woodrow Wilson. She was in commission for over 32 years, steamed a total of 400,920 miles (the most in one year was 17,187).

Sources:

Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

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

"The Lighthouse Tender 'Columbine' Retired After Long Service." *Lighthouse Service Bulletin* Vol. III, No. 2 (June 1, 1927), p. 194.

