

11 Days on Stony Point

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From the 1870's on passenger boats plied the north shore picking up fish from fishermen, carrying freight, and any passengers that wished to travel up the shore. At first these craft were every small and inadequate for open lake sailing. All were built of wood and many had paddlewheels instead of propellers. By the 1890's the propeller-equipped boats had taken over from the paddlewheel ones. Some of these passenger packets were of respectable size while others remained small so they could enter shallow water at different stops along the shore. All of them hugged the shoreline as they made their way to and from Duluth. Without radar, sonar, or navigational aids the safety of these ships and their passengers relied on the skill and experience of the captain and crew. While accidents occurred with startling frequency, there was never any disaster on the north shore with any great loss of life.

One of the incidents that had potential for disaster was the grounding of the C. W. Moore of the United States & Dominion Transportation Company (Booth Fisheries line) on Stony Point on December 1, 1903. The C. W. Moore was probably traveling at full speed at night when she suddenly ran hard aground on the rocks. Luckily she was stuck tight so there was no danger of her sinking in deep water at the moment. The tug Schenk was summoned out of Duluth to try to pull her off of the rocks. This attempt failed so on December 2nd a contract was made with Eli Jacques to lighten the ship. At the time of the grounding the C. W. Moore had a cargo of heavy machinery and supplies onboard. It took until December 11th to finally get her free from Stony Point's rocky grip. A large hole had been punched through the bottom of the ship so it had to be taken immediately to the dry dock at the shipyard. It was an ordeal that had lasted 11 days, but everyone was safe.