

EAST RIVER FERRY BOATS

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Some of you may have seen my HO scale East River ferryboat diorama at the past Sunrise Trail Division Winter Meet. Although ferries are not rail oriented, they were and still are "people movers" here in the Metropolitan New York City area.

I became interested in the New York City Department of Marine and Aviation ferries fleet because, as a child, I rode from College Point, Queens, to Classon Point, Bronx and return on those boats a few times. That particular service was abandoned in April, 1939 when the Bronx Whitestone Bridge was opened to allow vehicular traffic a direct route to the "The 1939-1940 World's Fair" in Flushing Meadows.

John "Red Mike" Hylan, Mayor of New York (1918 -1926) was dedicated to eliminating all private transit companies that operated in the City, including ferry boat operators. During his administration, 16 boats, the largest class of ferries built to a single design for any New York operator were ordered by New York City and delivered between 1925 and 1931. This effectively municipalized all East River ferry operations. The boats were known as the 151 foot class. As newly constructed vehicular bridges were built, ferry service to those areas was abandoned and boats were retired.

Originally, the boats were named after city councilmen. Some years later, they were renamed for the various areas they served. The last 151 footer was sold to and operated by the Department of Army for their Governors Island service. The vessel ran until 1964.

I started my research at the South Street Seaport Museum where I was able to acquire a set of elevation drawings once published in the February 1926 issue of the periodical Marine Engineering and Shipping Age. This allowed an accurate model to be constructed.

While on a rail marine cruise of New York Harbor, I observed and quickly photographed the two remaining ferry slip bridge towers on the Bronx shoreline at Mott Haven. I then drove to the land side and took more pictures.

That left only the float bridge to be researched. I noticed from a video on YouTube that the recently renovated South Street Governors Island ferry terminal still had the original 1899 bent wood float bridges. After sending a copy of my passport to the proper authorities, I was allowed to take photographs and measurements.

The model diorama featured in this presentation followed. The entire project took a few years to complete but it was a lot of fun and quite educational.

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SOME SELECTED FERRY ROUTES OPERATED BY THE CITY OF NEW YORK

South Ferry, Manhattan to 39 th Street, Brooklyn	discontinued 1935
East 42 nd Street, Manhattan to Broadway, Williamsburg	operated 1901 to 1909
East 92 nd Street (earlier East 86 th Street), Manhattan to Astoria Boulevard, Queens	discontinued circa 1936
East 134 th Street, Bronx and the Hospital on North Brother Island	discontinued 1963
East 134 th Street, Bronx and Riker's Island, Queens	currently operated by the Department of Corrections
East 134 th Street (later City Island, Bronx and Hart's Island	currently operated by the Department of Corrections
Classon Point, Bronx and College Point, Queens	discontinued April 29, 1939
South Ferry, Manhattan to Saint George's Staten Island (The Type B boats were considered too small for this service)	Currently being operated
And one other important ferry line:	
East 34 th Street, Manhattan to the LIRR Station in Long Island City (This line operated by a subsidiary of the LIRR and not the City of New York)	May 1868 to March 3, 1925

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SUMMARY OF THE NEW YORK CITY 151 FOOT CLASS FERRY BOATS

There were sixteen vessels in this group, also referred to as Type B ferry boats.

<u>HULL</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>BUILDER</u>	<u>SERIAL</u>	<u>DATE</u>
224299	"Wm. T. Collins"	Staten Island Shipbuilders	Yard 755	August 1925
This vessel was later renamed " Astoria " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
224504	"Edward Rieghlmann"	Todd Shipyards	Yard 33	August 1925
This vessel was later renamed " Bushwick " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
224986	"Maurice Connolly"	Todd Shipyards		September 1925
The name of this vessel has also been reported as " President Connolly ", Connolly was Queens Borough president 1911 to August 1928 leaving office due to criminal charges. This vessel was later renamed " Elmhurst " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
225176	"Frank A. Cunningham"	Staten Island Shipbuilders	Yard 757	December 1925
This vessel was later renamed " Flatbush " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
225335	"Joseph A. Guider"	Staten Island Shipbuilders		1925
This vessel was later renamed " Flushing " during 1932. This vessel was sold to the U.S. Army for use on the Governor's Island Ferry by 1956 and was renamed " Sgt. Cornelius Charlton ". This vessel was broken up during 1964.				
224522	"John A. Lynch"	Staten Island Shipbuilders	Yard 753	March 1925
This vessel was later renamed " Harlem " circa 1934. This vessel was sold to the U.S. Army for further use on an unknown date and was renamed " Maj. General Wm. A. Hart ".				
225151	"Joseph O'Brien"	Sully -Van	Yard 91	November 1925
This vessel was later renamed " Jamaica " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
229173	"Melrose"	Todd Shipyards	Yard 48	December 1929
This vessel was sold circa 1940 to the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps and renamed " Lt. Robert Shannon ". No further information.				
230778	"Murray Hill"	Todd Shipyards	Yard 50	June 1931
Retirement and disposition unknown.				
224506	"Murray Hulbert"	Kyle and Purdy Shipyards	Hull 32	1922
This vessel is also reported as being built by Todd Shipyards. This vessel was later renamed " Rockaway " circa 1934. This vessel is known to have been used on the Bronx – Rikers Island route, and the Rikers Island – Harts Island route. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
224384	"John H. McCooley"	Todd Shipyards	Yard 36	October 1925
This vessel was later renamed " Seagate " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
224305	"Julius Miller"	Todd Shipyards	Yard 34	August 1925
This vessel was later renamed " Stuyvesant " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown. The name " Stuyvesant " was later reused by the City of New York.				
224321	"Henry Bruckner"	Staten Island Shipyards		1925
This vessel was later renamed " Tremont " circa 1934. No other information.				
230782	"Washington Square"	Todd Shipyards		June 1931
Retirement and disposition unknown.				
225171	"Henry A. Meyer"	Staten Island Shipyards		1925
This vessel was later renamed " Williamsburg " circa 1934. Retirement and disposition unknown.				
228664	"Yorkville"	Todd Shipyards		April 1929
Retirement and disposition unknown.				

There an additional vessel considered as a one of the Type B ferry boats but is not considered one of the 151 foot class:

	"Bird S. Coler"	Kyle and Purdy Shipyards		1922
This vessel was later renamed " Fordham " circa 1934. This vessel is associated with the hospital route from the Bronx to North Hero Island, the prisoner transfer route from the Bronx to Rikers Island, and the two routes serving the City's Potter's Field on Hart Island. Retirement and disposition unknown.				

FERRYBOAT COLOR SCHEME UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE AND AVIATION

While the bright yellow scheme currently sported by the Staten Island Ferry is quite well known, the 151 foot class predated those colors.

1. Hull and Guard Beams:	Dark Gray
2. Guard Face Plate:	Black
3. Cabin Area:	Bright Red
4. Cabin windows:	White
5. Belt Rail Moulding:	Black
6. Thin Moulding above windows:	Black
7. Steps, ladders and railings leading from upper to lower decks:	Gray
8. Flagpole:	White
9. Pilot House, outside:	White
10. Pilot House, interior:	Dark Tan?
11. Pilot House roof:	Medium Gray
12. Upper Deck:	Light Gray
13. Cows:	Medium Gray
13. Lifeboats & rigging	White
14. Staircase housing on upper deck:	Light Gray
15. Staircase roof on upper deck:	Medium Gray
16. Various storage boxes on upper deck:	White w/ Medium Gray tops.
17. Running light brackets:	Light Gray w/red or green boards.
18. Smoke Stacks:	Black
19. Main Deck gangway Floor up to treadplate sheathing:	Dark Brown stain.
20. Treadplate deck areas:	Burnished dark brown rust.
21. Newell posts, safety gates and gate support posts:	Weathered black
22. Inside walls of main deck and gangways up to about 6 feet:	Dark Gray
23. Gangway walls above 6 feet:	White
24. Men's and Women's cabin interiors:	Light Brown

Did I miss anything?

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