

Ships-Steamers – Lydonia II

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1911 – The Lydonia II on White Lake, and an undated phot of William Lydons, owner of the vessel.

In addition to the passenger steamers that came through the White Lake harbor, we were also visited by some large personal yachts. One such yacht was the Lydonia II.

The Lydonia II was a 212 foot steel hull vessel constructed for William A. Lydons, Commodore of the Chicago Yacht Club, by Pusey & Jones of Wilmington, Delaware, in 1911, at a reported cost of \$225,000. She was launched on July 25, 1911, and replaced the Lydonia I, which had been completed for Lydons just two years earlier.

Two articles were found in the Montague Observer that mentioned the Lydonia visiting the area. One was in 1913 and another in 1917.

The U.S. Navy purchased the Lydonia from Lydons on August 21, 1917, for \$170,000, for use as a patrol vessel during WWI. She was commissioned as USS Lydonia (SP-700) on October 27, 1917. Arriving in the Azores in December 1917 and she joined the U.S. Navy squadron operating along the Atlantic and Mediterranean sides of the Strait of Gibraltar.

She returned to the United States in February 1919, was decommissioned in August 1919 and transferred to the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. She served primarily along the East Coast and in the Atlantic Ocean. The Lydonia remained with the Coast & Geodetic Survey until being retired in 1947.

William A. Lydon was the President of the Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company which he founded in 1890 along with Fred C. Drews. Lydon was born in New York in November 1863 and died in Chicago in October 1918 just short of his 55th birthday.