

As a hopper-bottomed sludge carrier, her job was to take on loads of dredged material (spoil) from the actual dredges, and then carry it to designated dumping sites approximately eleven miles away, where it would be discharged by the opening of the gates in the ship's bottom.

Each of the companies participating in the Consortium Ile d'Orleans had to contribute a number of vessels to the project, and ISLE ROYALE was provided by the McNamara firm. Accordingly (and in pleasant contrast to the rather shocking livery adopted by Richelieu Dredging), ISLE ROYALE was painted in traditional McNamara colours, with an all-black hull and white cabins with red trim. Her stack was black, with two thin red bands and a wide white band. We are not certain whether she ever was given the usual black letter 'M' on the white band which most McNamara vessels have carried over the many years of the company's operations.

The North Traverse project was so extensive that it took several years to complete. At the end of the work, the huge dredging and support fleet was split up and each ship was returned to her owner. Most of them had been so extensively altered for their specialized service that they were not useful in any other trade, and in addition many of them were of rather advanced age. Accordingly, very few of the ships saw any active operation after the North Traverse. ISLE ROYALE was returned to McNamara, and she was laid up in the company's shipyard/boneyard at Whitby. As far as we are aware, she never turned her wheel again.

We should note that, during the course of the dredging project, the Canadian register recorded the owners of ISLE ROYALE as Richelieu Dredging Corp. Inc. & McNamara Corp. Ltd. & The J. P. Porter Co. Ltd. During 1977, the vessel's ownership was transferred to the McNamara Corporation Ltd., Willowdale, Ontario, and it would remain as such for eleven years.

For quite some time, it had been suggested that the McNamara yard was an eyesore and that it would have to be removed if redevelopment of the Whitby waterfront area were ever to be given serious consideration. Plans were put off, however, until finally it was announced that the McNamara shipyard and drydock would be closed during August of 1988. The company then set to work disposing of some of the hulls that were languishing in the yard, and ISLE ROYALE was one of them.

Early in 1988, ISLE ROYALE was sold to Marine Salvage Ltd., Port Colborne, for scrapping. She was towed away from Whitby by the Great Lakes Marine Contracting tugs THUNDER CAPE and ELMORE M. MISNER, and they arrived at the Marine Salvage yard at Ramey's Bend, Humberstone, on April 29, 1988. ISLE ROYALE was put into the scrapping berth, inboard of E. J. BLOCK, and the work of dismantling the vessel progressed rapidly during the summer months.

With the breaking up of ISLE ROYALE, there disappears another of the vanishing veterans of the North Traverse dredging project. Perhaps more importantly, however, her demise takes away one more memory of the now-defunct Hall Corporation fleet, which for so many years was one of the most prominent Canadian lake fleets.

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Ed. Note: Our special thanks go to Ron Beaupre for his assistance with this article and, in particular, with the accounts of the various OREFAX accidents. Appreciation is also due to Dan McCormick for his invaluable research into the history of the Hall fleet, which produced The Wishbone Fleet back in 1972.

And although several good photos were taken of OREFAX as she lay aground on Battersby Island, the best by far were part of a series taken by our late Treasurer, James M. Kidd, who just happened to be passing by aboard HILDA MARJANNE on the very day of the OREFAX stranding. One of them accompanies this feature.

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