

SINALOA rather slowly unloaded her cargo of coal at the foot of Polson Street, and by April 14th, she was carrying the name (d) STONEFAX. She then proceeded down into the Ship Channel and under the south Cherry Street bridge. There she remained for several days, undergoing refit work. Her funnel, however, continued to be painted all black during April and not until early summer did STONEFAX receive the usual Hall "wishbone and 'H'" design in white on her black stack.

One might well wonder how the steamer came by her new name. The "fax" suffix came to be considered as something of a Halco "trademark" during the 1960s and 1970s, in view of the fact that four of the fleet's ships carried it. The suffix, however, did not originate with Hall, but came into the fleet by way of the canal-sized, self-unloading steamer COALFAX, which Hall acquired in 1956 from the Coal Carriers Corporation Ltd., of Brockville, Ontario. This boat was the first self-unloader to operate under Hall Corporation ownership, and so she was something of an innovation to its trades, even though she was not by any means a new vessel when purchased.

SINALOA was the second self-unloader to be acquired by the Hall interests, and so it was deemed appropriate for the "fax" suffix to form part of her new name, regardless of the fact (fax?) that the name was not indigenous to the fleet and its actual original derivation may not have been known by the new owners. (The name is said to have been a coal-shipper's play on the words "cold facts".) In any event, the suffix was given to the newly-acquired steamer, and the prefix "stone" was added as a description of the major trade in which Hall intended the steamer to serve. It was planned that STONEFAX would operate primarily on the stone trade from Colborne, Ontario, into the Clarkson, Ontario, plant of the St. Lawrence Cement Company, and during the 1961 season, STONEFAX hauled a record 700,000 tons of stone into this plant. The run was particularly profitable as it involved no canalling.

STONEFAX spent her first few years of Hall operation duly and successfully serving her new owners. The only incident of any nature of which we have knowledge is one of December 20, 1963, when she became trapped in ice on Lake St. Clair whilst engaged in late-season navigation which, usually, was not the forte of such venerable hulls.

During the winter of 1961-1962, STONEFAX had been laid up along the north (Commissioners Street) wall of the Toronto Turning Basin, at which time she was converted from coal to oil fuel by Ship Repairs & Supplies Ltd., Toronto. This work involved the installation of oil bunker tanks at the forward end of the boilerhouse, where the coal bunkers previously had been located. No outwardly visible changes in the ship's appearance resulted.

The winter of 1964-1965 was a bit unusual for STONEFAX. She had been booked to spend the winter at Port Weller Dry Docks for some necessary maintenance, but because of winter work on the lower section of the Welland Canal, she was unable to reach the shipyard. Accordingly, while Seaway Authority workmen spent the winter repairing the upper sill and gates of Lock One, STONEFAX nestled within the drained lock, where the shipyard attended to the necessary work. When the canal opened to traffic on April 1st, 1965, STONEFAX, which since had been refloated and pulled back out of the lock, was one of the first upbound vessels, passing up the canal on the first day of navigation to load a cargo of stone at the R. E. Law dock at Humberstone.

At 5:20 a.m. on Friday, October 14, 1966, the career of STONEFAX very nearly came to a close. The steamer was downbound in the Welland Ship Canal, with a cargo of 7,000 tons of potash consigned to Oswego, New York, and she was in the reach between Bridge 12 at Port Robinson and Bridge 11 at Allanburg, when she met the upbound Norwegian salty ARTHUR STOVE.

A contemporary press report quoted STONEFAX watchman Ray Gauthier, who was on deck getting lines ready for the passage through the Guard Gate and Lock Seven, as stating that he ran to the pilothouse and heard the master order the helm hard to starboard. He said that it seemed to him that ARTHUR STOVE