

In the spring of 1967, STONEFAX was sold back to the Algonquin Corporation, and on April 17th, she went back into service. In 1968, she was brought into Canadian registry (with the same Official Number as before) and her owner became the Hall Corporation of Canada. Her port of registry was Montreal, and the Canadian List of Shipping recorded her tonnage as 4509 Gross and 2989 Net. There came a further change in 1969, when the owning company was reorganized as the Hall Corporation (Shipping) 1969 Ltd., Montreal.

During these last few years of her life, STONEFAX was involved in several minor strandings, but each time she was refloated without significant damage. As examples, she went aground in the St. Clair River off the north end of Walpole Island on May 18, 1970, and on December 4th of the same year, she was ashore for a day in Lake St. Clair.

Old age and years of extremely hard use, however, finally caught up with STONEFAX and, when she laid up at Hamilton for the winter of 1970-1971, it was the end of her career. On May 15, 1971, STONEFAX was sold to United Metals Ltd. - Strathearne Terminals (Hamilton) Ltd., and on May 20th, she was resold to Steel Factors Ltd., Montreal. She then was resold to Spanish shipbreakers, for dismantling in Europe.

The venerable STONEFAX did not linger long before taking her departure from the lakes, and on May 28, 1971, she was towed out of Hamilton harbour by the McAllister tugs SALVAGE MONARCH and DANIEL McALLISTER. She made a relatively uneventful passage down Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence canals, and on arrival at Quebec City on May 31st, she cleared almost immediately behind the Polish ocean tug JANTAR, in tandem tow with the former Norlake Steamships Ltd. steamer ALEXANDER LESLIE. The tow crossed the Atlantic in safety, and arrived at Santander, Spain, on June 19, 1971, after which the breakers made short work of the two aged lake vessels.

Thus ended the career of one of the Great Lakes' most interesting self-unloaders. She had enjoyed a wide variety of trades, and when first converted to a self-unloading sandsucker, had the distinction of being the first ship in the world ever to be fitted with equipment capable of sorting gravel by size on board, so that it could be unloaded into separate piles without the need for additional sorting ashore. She had served a number of different fleets, and survived two major accidental sinkings, either of which might easily have ended her life. But she endured all of this, and saw 67 years of operation, a tribute to her West Bay City builders and the owners who subsequently had the foresight to convert her to serve specialty trades.

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Ed. Note: Our thanks to Ron Beaupre for finding some of the information used in preparing this feature, and to T.M.H.S. secretary, John H. Bascom, for working up the basics of the story while your Editor was taking some mental respite in the sunny Caribbean.

Readers seeking to know more about the salvage exploits of Capt. John Roen would do well to read Roen Steamship Company, The Way It Was, 1909-1976, published privately in 1983 by John H. Purves. The author worked for the Roen organization from 1928 until its dissolution in 1976. The few typos, etc., which appear in the text can easily be forgiven in view of the wealth of historical material contained in its 119 pages.

As ever, of course, those interested in the Hall Corporation fleet history must read The Wishbone Fleet, published privately in 1972 by T.M.H.S. member Daniel C. McCormick, of Massena, New York. Regrettably, the Hall fleet survived only a decade and a half after the appearance of Dan's most important volume, and the demise of the fleet could scarcely have been foreseen back in those palmy years of prosperity.

As always, we should be glad to hear from any members who have additional information on the operations of SINALOA - WILLIAM F. RAPPRICH - STONEFAX.

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