

Friday, August 9th, 1918, was not a good day for the A. McVITTIE. Bound from Oswego, New York, to Montreal with a cargo of coal, and under the command of Capt. J. A. Ferguson, she stranded on Rock Island in the St. Lawrence River. The Wreck Commissioner's report gave no additional details, except to say that the loss to the steamer was only partial (as opposed to total).

The December, 1918, issue of "Canadian Railway and Marine World" carried details of another mishap suffered by the McVITTIE that same year. We can do no better than to quote the newsmagazine's report: "The Montreal Transportation Co.'s s.s. A. McVITTIE, while upbound, light, November 15, struck the tow path head gate of Lock 12 on the Welland Canal, and carried out both upper gates. The heel path lower gate was damaged somewhat and unstepped, but was not carried out into the level below. It was, however, necessary to replace it with a spare gate. The banks on both sides of the canal at the head of Lock 11 were badly washed out by the water released, the estimate of the damage done being \$7,500. The gates were stepped and navigation resumed after a delay of about 22 hours. The same three gates were carried out by the s.s. PAWNEE in August, and the filling at the head of Lock 11 was practically completed when it was washed out again (by the McVITTIE incident).

"The vessel, A. McVITTIE, was undamaged, and the master and mate seem unable to explain the reason for the accident. The master stated that he gave the signal to reverse and the engineer stated that he reversed, but the master is convinced that the vessel did not have the usual vibration at the reverse. The mooring wire was making sparks in the compressor, and witnesses agree that the vessel was moving at a moderate speed. We are indebted to L. D. Hara, Superintending Engineer, Welland Canal, for the details of the accident."

During September of 1919, the A. McVITTIE was drydocked at Buffalo by the Buffalo Dry Dock Company for inspection and repairs. Fortunately for us, two excellent photographs, one from the bow and the other a stern shot) were taken of her by the shipyard's staff photographer on Friday, September 12th. These pictures show a steamer that appeared to be in relatively good condition, although certainly well past her prime as a result of her many years of extremely hard use. It would be interesting indeed to know what the inspectors had to say about the condition of the McVITTIE because, despite her drydocking, the steamer was very near to the end of her career.

During October of 1919, and only about a month after her Buffalo drydocking, the McVITTIE suffered considerable damage as a consequence of an encounter with typical autumn heavy weather during a transit of Lake Ontario. As a result, she was considered to be inoperable, and she was laid up at Kingston, Ontario. There, on Friday, November 21st, 1919, she began to take on water, and she soon settled to the bottom. It was decided by her owner that she was not worth repairing and, not surprisingly, she was abandoned to the underwriters in 1920.

The "Mills List" (more formally, Canadian Coastal and Inland Steam Vessels 1809-1930) indicates that the McVITTIE was scuttled in 1920, and we take this to mean that she was lifted from her resting place and purposely sunk out in lake Ontario. We have no record of the McVITTIE being one of the many hulls which languished for years in the Portsmouth "boneyard", so we must conclude that the steamer was not allowed by the underwriters to lie around that long before disposal.

Interestingly, the A. McVITTIE remained in the Canadian register until 1924, with the Montreal Transportation Company shown as her owner, even though the M.T.Co. had been formally absorbed into Canada Steamship Lines Ltd. by 1921. Doing the final paperwork on the McVITTIE apparently was not a high priority.

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Ed. Note: Remember to watch for the McVITTIE photopage which will come to you with a later issue. We sincerely regret the delay in being able to illustrate this feature for you.

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