

Arthur Shipbuilding Co. yesterday afternoon for an examination of her hull. Coming up Sunday (December 9th) under command of Capt. S. (sic) Anderson, the 5,000-ton, 400-foot ship grazed a below surface rock while sheltering from the storm on the lee side of Passage Island (sic). She was taking some water as a result of sprung plates, but the damage was not considered serious and she delivered her freight around the lakehead before going into drydock."

On Friday, December 14th, the "News Chronicle" reported: "The FORT HENRY ran onto a shelf while waiting out a storm (sic) on her way to the Lakehead three days ago (? -Ed.). Officials of the shipyard say 30 plates were sprung on the bottom of the boat, and she will spend the winter in drydock. 'It is not a long winter repair job,' says G. McDougall, general manager of the shipyards, 'but we will put small gangs of men to work on her in an attempt to keep them employed through the winter months.' The FORT HENRY limped into port on her ballast tanks, after running on the hidden rock shelf. The ballast tank is a layer of water between the plates and the cargo floor. The 440-foot boat distributed its cargo and then headed for the drydock."

What a fund of misinformation! We are quite aware that officers of ships which have just suffered some calamity, could be severely reprimanded by the owners if they spoke to reporters. Hence, it has been common for reporters to take the liberty of stating whatever came to mind to flesh out a story. In this case, the press reports could not even agree upon the exact date of the accident, much less the severity of the situation. We do believe, however, that Sunday, December 9th was the date of the FORT HENRY's encounter with the rock in the channel off Passage Island.

T.M.H.S. member Capt. John Tackberry has recalled FORT HENRY's narrow escape. "I was third mate on the THUNDER BAY in '56 and while at the Port Arthur drydock that fall, I remember the yard 'super' telling us that it was a miracle that the HENRY wasn't lost. She arrived at Port Arthur floating on her tanktop. I guess what saved her was that she was only a year old."

Thanks to Skip Gillham, we have the privilege of referring to a number of FORT HENRY's logbooks. Her route in 1956 began at Port Arthur's C.P.R. freight shed and Fort William's C.N.R. wharf where she discharged her westbound general cargo and then loaded eastbound freight. She carried no grain that year as her last trip was cancelled due to the grounding. Her usual ports of call were Sault Ste. Marie, Point Edward, Windsor, Leamington, Thorold, Hamilton and Toronto. It was in 1957 that, as per her trip logs, she began to transport grain down the lakes to the ports of Walkerville, Kingston and Prescott.

In 1958, she began a long history of delivering newsprint when she carried a load of it to Cleveland. An unusual trip that year was a load of grain from Duluth to Kingston. She set a speed record when she left the Canadian Lakehead at 4:12 p.m. on July 24 and arrived at Kingston at 6:00 p.m. on July 27, a passage of just under 74 hours. That trip covered a distance of about 1,040 statute miles, and therefore FORT HENRY averaged 14 miles per hour including the time spent canalling! She managed 17 round trips from clearing Windsor on April 9, 1958, until the end of that logbook with her arrival at the Lakehead on September 21st.

FORT YORK joined FORT HENRY in the upper lake package freight trade that year, having been built at Collingwood. FORT YORK was generally similar of hull to FORT HENRY, but she was a stemwinder, as would be all future ships built for the C.S.L. package freight service. In 1959, Davie Shipbuilding delivered to C.S.L. the motorvessel ESKIMO but, although a package freighter, this ship had little effect on the route served by FORT HENRY, as she worked the lower St. Lawrence and far north trades.

By 1961, FORT HENRY's main downbound cargo was paper. She delivered several loads of it to Detroit, and three more to Toledo by September 9. She also opened the Seaway downbound to Montreal that year. An unsourced April 16,