

gines, replacement of two 'performing' Bahamian crew men by two good Maritimers, and a new and very competent Chief Engineer and Second Engineer were arranged.

"I can remember telling someone that it took nine days to Halifax and nine days to Nassau, so we'll say that we sailed from Halifax about the 8th or 9th of December, coasting until the southern tip of Nova Scotia, then across to Nantucket Light, the weather rolling us uncomfortably in a beam sea. We didn't see Nantucket Light, but got a reasonable departure by D.F. (direction finder) which had been calibrated in Bedford Basin at Halifax. From Nantucket I shaped a course across to Cape Hatteras.

"About a day out of Halifax, the Chief Engineer informed me that he had discovered the reason or the cause of contamination of our fresh water supply for the boilers, which was stored in the double bottom tanks. Chief called me down to the engine room to have a look at the inside of the condenser, from which he had removed the end plate. About ten percent of the tube ends were plugged with wooden plugs fashioned from broomstick handles to stop them from mixing the cooling sea water with the fresh water condensed from steam. After a brief discussion, the Chief agreed that he could keep the ship going using brackish water in the boilers, provided that he could 'blow down' the boilers daily, entailing a half-hour or so running at dead slow speed. This we did for the remainder of the voyage.

"I had a used chart of 'Halifax to Hispaniola' which I mounted on the dining saloon bulkhead and showed our daily noon position to the engineers and to anyone else interested. The morale of the crew was good. We all seemed to be working toward the same end, that of getting the ship delivered to her owner within a reasonable time. The boys were cheerful, especially after the weather slowly improved south of Cape Hatteras as we steered straight for the Bahamas via the North East Providence Channel. It was indeed comforting and reassuring to see the U.S. Coast Guard daily in the form of a ship or aircraft.

"After sighting the big, candy-stripe lighthouse on Great Abaco Island, we were home free. None too soon, either. We arrived at Clifton, New Providence, with a very empty coal bunker. Clifton was the owner's port of operation, located on the western tip of New Providence Island. Their port captain came out to meet us in a launch. He offered to take the BATTLEFORD alongside, but I politely declined. The final docking was a text book job, a joy. Nevill Roberts was at the foot of the ladder to greet me with a handshake and 'Welcome to the Bahamas'.

"The Chief blew down one boiler immediately. Soon after her arrival, BATTLEFORD was to be converted to an oil burner. She was going on the Miami to Nassau run, carrying stone, sand and cement for construction. The Canadian engineers and crew were asked to stay on if they wished..."



REAL GOLD, Nassau, Feb. 1968, Skip Gillham coll.

BATTLEFORD was renamed (c) REAL GOLD in 1967 and, with a grey hull and a stack that seems to have been buff with a black top, she carried cement and sand from Florida to the Bahamas, but also carried some package freight. To help with this trade, two whirly cranes were placed on deck, although for a short time (until they eventually were removed) she also retained her old kingposts and cargo booms. She was laid up at Marsh Harbor, Abaco, Bahamas, in 1969 and in 1971 was sold to Antilles Lines Ltd. By this time, she had a dark hull - probably black. She operated for this new owner for a while but was laid up at Key West later in 1971 with boiler damage. In October of 1973, she was sold to Mexican interests for scrapping and was towed to Tampico, Mexico. Scrapping was begun in October of 1974 by Laminadora Kreimerman and the dismantling progressed quickly and was completed the following month.