The More Northerly Route

John Beswarick Thompson
“Commissioner is pleased to inform you His Majesty the King has awarded you and Acting Corporals Peters and Hunt a Bar to existing Polar Medal Stop All others on second Northwest Passage voyage awarded Polar Medals Stop Acknowledge receipt this message by wireless.”

Telegram to Henry Larsen, 3 July 1946
The crew of the *St. Roch* on the day the ship left Halifax in 1944.

Eighty-six days and 7,295 miles later, the men and their ship were in Vancouver—having sailed there through the Northwest Passage.

R.C.M.P. Reference Library
A Photographic Study of the 1944 Voyage of the *St. Roch* through the Northwest Passage

By John Beswarick Thompson
To the late Captain Frank Harley R.C.N. (Ret’d), who, before his untimely death on 30 December 1972, charted the course of the restoration of the St. Roch with the same skill and humanity as Henry Larsen commanded the little ship between 1928 and 1948.
Contents

10 Preface
15 Acknowledgements
16 St. Roch 1944: A Chronology
19 Preparations
57 Voyage
137 Vancouver
159 Afterward
180 Sources of Photographs
181 Bibliography
184 About the Author
This is a story of a voyage of a ship and her crew.

* * *

The voyage was a trip made in 1944 from east to west – from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Vancouver, British Columbia – through the Northwest Passage. It was not the first time that the Passage, that long-sought shortcut between Europe and Asia, had been conquered. Roald Amundsen had completed it in his ship, the Gjoa, in 1906. Slowly and skillfully navigating the shallow waters along the northern edge of the North American continent, Amundsen spent several years crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Arctic.

The voyage of the present story was along a different path than Amundsen’s. It followed the more northerly route of the Passage, through the deep waters of the arctic archipelago. It was the first time that this shorter route – first attempted by William Parry in 1819; tried by other explorers in the nineteenth century (and later taken by the supertanker, Manhattan in 1969) – was successfully navigated. The voyage took only 86 days.

The ship was the St. Roch. A small wooden vessel only 104 feet long, she had been built in 1928 by the Burrard Dry Dock Company of North Vancouver, B.C. to serve as an Arctic supply and patrol boat for the R.C.M.P. Every year, from 1928 to 1939, the sturdy St. Roch had sailed the Arctic Ocean. During this time she had spent eight winters locked in the ice. In 1940 the ship set out from Vancouver on a secret mission to sail from west to east through the Northwest Passage to demonstrate Canadian sovereignty over the arctic islands at a time of war. Her eastward course was along Amundsen’s shallow coastal route. Over 27 months later, in October 1942, the St. Roch arrived in Halifax. She was the first ship ever to travel from the Pacific to the Atlantic through the Arctic Ocean. In July 1944, following an extensive refit, the St. Roch set off again on a “secret mission” to the North. Less than three months later, on 16 October 1944, she arrived in Vancouver, the first ship to conquer the Northwest Passage in both directions.

The crew of 1944 numbered 12 and included an Inuit guide taken on board with his family at Pond Inlet. The Captain of the St. Roch was Henry Larsen, already a legendary figure in the North. He had commanded the ship since its maiden voyage 16 years earlier. “Never before I thought,” wrote Larsen in 1944, referring to the ship’s supplies, “had anyone prepared so badly for an Arctic voyage.” He might well have been alluding to his crew of that voyage. He had a wireless operator who had never sent a message and a cook who cooked best on dry land. Two men were around 70 years old while two others were still teenagers. His only two professional seamen joked about having been shanghaied on board. Yet these men, brought together from far scattered points by Larsen to become the crew of the St. Roch in the year 1944, did what few men before them had done. They brought their ship through the Northwest Passage.

In time, this voyage and the one made in 1940-42 were recognized as major Canadian achievements. Due to the efforts of a number of dedicated individuals, the St. Roch was saved following her retirement in 1954, and was put on public display by the City of Vancouver in 1958. Four years later the St. Roch was declared to be “of national
historic significance” by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. In 1968 the Board recommended that the ship’s appearance be restored so that she would look as she had done during the 1944 voyage through the Northwest Passage. Work began on the restoration in February 1971.

* * *

It was at this point that my involvement with the St. Roch began. Great changes had been made to the ship in the intervening 27 years. As an historian with the National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, I was asked to find out, in as much detail as possible, what the vessel looked like during her second trip through the Passage. Armed with this information, the marine engineers could correctly repair and restore the ship, and the curator could acquire the appropriate fittings, furnishings and gear to make the St. Roch come alive again.

I began by collecting as many 1944 photographs of the ship as I could find. It soon became obvious that although there were many pictures of her exterior, there were very few of the interior. Nobody, it seemed, took photographs inside a small, dark ship. I had to take a new tack.

The most inviting course seemed to lie in trying to find the men who had sailed on the St. Roch in 1944. Surely they would be able to fill in many of the missing details. I knew that Henry Larsen had died in 1964. I thought there was little chance that the two old-timers of the crew, Rudy Johnsen and Ole Andreasen, would still be alive. But what of the others? Where were they?

Starting with a list of their names and addresses taken from a 1945 article in the Canadian Geographical Journal, I began thumbing through Canadian telephone directories. There was a Frank Matthews listed in the Port aux Basques, Newfoundland book. A call revealed sadly that he had died about a year and a half before. However, I was told that his friend and fellow Newfoundlander on the St. Roch, Stan McKenzie, was living in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. A phone call brought me in touch with him. He averred that he had not kept track of the St. Roch since he had served aboard her, but had visited Henry Larsen when his former captain was living in Lunenburg in the early 1960s. He thought he still had a pretty good idea of what the inside of the ship looked like in 1944, and said he would be happy to help. He did not know the whereabouts of any of the other crew-members.

Back to the telephone books. William Cashin, my list noted, had come from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Five families of Cashins were listed in the Halifax directory. As luck would have it, on my first call I reached Bill Cashin’s brother. The man I was looking for was living in the Yukon. At Carmacks, to be exact. Unfortunately, he had no telephone. A letter would have to do. (I did not know at that time how difficult Bill Cashin would be to reach. Nine months passed before I finally spoke with him for the first time on the telephone.) But at least I now had found two of the crew-members.

Two others, Lloyd Russill and G. B. Dickens, had names sufficiently uncommon to prompt me to double-check various
Canadian phone books for their whereabouts. None of the Dickens in New Brunswick, however, could help me find the former cook. Mrs. Russill of Wauchope, Saskatchewan believed that the former radio operator on the St. Roch was a relative, but she had no idea where he was.

I then learned from Alex Stevenson, Chairman of the N.W.T. Historical Advisory Board, that Panipakuttuk, the Inuit guide who had joined the crew of the St. Roch at Pond Inlet, N.W.T., had died only a year before my search began. About the same time I discovered, in a batch of press clippings, the obituary of Rudolph Johnsen. He died in Vancouver in 1966 at the age of 90. Later I learned that Ole Andreasen had been the first of the crew to pass away, also in Vancouver, in 1946.

At this point, the R.C.M.P., a most helpful ally in the pursuit of men, responded to my request for help. Stan Horrall, historian of the Force, informed me that most of the crew of 1944 had been special constables, sworn in only for the voyage, and that no record had been kept of their whereabouts. Three of the crew, however, had been full-time police officers and, for pension purposes, their addresses were still kept on file. One, G. W. Peters of Chilliwack, B.C., had died in 1969. The others were Patrick G. Hunt of Winnipeg and James M. Diplock of St. Catharines. My call that evening to Pat Hunt introduced me to the only man living who had made both trips through the Passage in the St. Roch. He was uncertain whether his memory would help us much (it did), but he promised as much assistance as he could provide.

Early the next morning I reached Jim Diplock, then on the night shift of the St. Catharines police force, before he went to bed. He had made a hobby of going around to schools in the area with a film of the St. Roch and talking about the ship to the students. He was eager to help. He also thought that he still had the address of Lloyd Russill. Three months later it turned up in the clutter of an old drawer. He was so excited with his discovery that he called long distance to tell me the news and forgot to reverse the charges.

It was little wonder that I had been unable to locate Lloyd Russill in Canadian telephone directories. He had moved to the United States. It eventually took a month of futile calls to California before I finally tracked down the former radio operator at his new address at Encinitas, near San Diego. He said that he remembered the St. Roch fondly—even had a painting of her in his den—and, like all the others, he offered to do what he could to help us restore the old ship. Lloyd Russill was the fifth and last crew-member I managed to track down. Six had died. I never found Dickens, the cook.

* * *

The next stage of the project took me, along with Frank Harley, the marine engineer in charge of the restoration, across the continent from Nova Scotia to California to visit each of the five men. With us we brought the photographs, a blank isometric drawing of the interior of the ship, a tape recorder and a bottle of good cheer. We hoped to restore the St. Roch with sufficient accuracy to make the ship look lived-in. We hoped that when we were finished, a member of the crew of 1944 could visit the vessel and find her looking as she had done in the past. Accordingly, we asked questions as general as
what colour the ship was painted and as picayune as what brand of cigarettes each crew-member smoked. One by one, each man added what he could recall of the St. Roch in 1944. In the end, our drawing, which had been blank, was full of lively detail. “It was,” as Jim Diplock put it, “going back a long way for small things.”

Each man also gave us more photographs of the trip. Taken by amateurs on small box cameras – often under adverse northern conditions – these pictures were sometimes fuzzy and faded, but they were invaluable in the restoration. They also added a human dimension to the voyage, showing the crew hauling in buckets of water, poking through northern caches and smiling happily at the end of the trip.

After the former crew-members had finished describing the material things that had been on board, they began to talk about the little things that had happened during the trip. I was fascinated. Twenty-seven years before each man had come to the St. Roch from a different place and later each had left the ship to go his separate way. Only the voyage which they had all shared united them. Yet every one of them had a different view of that journey. It was not one voyage. It was each man’s voyage.

Moreover, some of the crew who had died had left written accounts of the trip. Henry Larsen, who, according to Pat Hunt, “wouldn’t say a bad word about anybody,” recorded his kindly impressions of the journey in his book, The Big Ship. In north magazine, Panipakuttuk published his reminiscences of the voyage, filled with the poetry of his fears and delights. Finally, first mate Ole Andreasen, the old Norwegian-
Of the many persons who offered generous assistance in the preparation of this work, the author wishes to express most grateful acknowledgements:

To Mr. Bill Cashin, Mr. Jim Diplock, Mr. Pat Hunt, Mr. Stan McKenzie and Mr. Lloyd Russill, former members of the 1944 crew, for providing their personal photographs and, by allowing quotes from our interviews with them to be used, in essence, for the writing of this book.

To Mrs. Henry Larsen, Vancouver, B.C., and Mr. Gordon Larsen, Beaconsfield, Québec, for allowing the use of photographs and documents from the collection of the late Henry Larsen.

To Mrs. G. W. Peters, Chilliwack, B.C., for information regarding her late husband, chief engineer of the St. Roch in 1944.

To Mrs. Mary Cousins (formerly Mary Panegoosho), Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan, for information about Panipakuttuk and his family.

To Mrs. Kay Mowbray, Carmacks, Y.T., for her great help in reaching her next-door neighbour, Mr. Bill Cashin.

To Mr. Mitchell Owens, South Gloucester, Ontario, who served on board the St. Roch until Pond Inlet, N.W.T., where he left the ship to take up detachment duties there, for the information he provided regarding the appearance of the ship in 1944.

To Mr. S. W. Horrall, Historian, Liaison Branch, R.C.M.P., Ottawa, Ontario, for assistance in obtaining the addresses of several of the former crew-members, and in locating many useful photographs from the R.C.M.P. Reference Library.

To Mr. Leonard G. McCann, Assistant Curator, Vancouver Maritime Museum, Vancouver, B.C., for the log of Ole Andreasen, for photographs, and for many helpful leads.

To Miss Nadine Manning, Photo Library and Archives, National Film Board of Canada, Montréal, Québec; Mrs. Dorothy Caie, Crawley Films, Ottawa, Ontario; Mr. Kai Boggild, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Mr. R. Lynn Ogden, City Archivist, Vancouver, B.C.; and Mr. Michel Bouchard, Information Services, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario, for aid in locating photographs.

To Mr. Alex Stevenson, Chairman of the Northwest Territories Historical Advisory Board, Ottawa, Ontario, for information regarding the North.

To McClelland and Stewart for publisher's permission to quote liberally from the book, The Big Ship.

To Mr. Alfred C. Wildsmith, Mr. Richard Fairweather and Mr. Charles Brunet, Architectural and Engineering Branch, Restoration Services Division, Marine and Industrial Section, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario, for their help and co-operation over a number of years in the restoration of the St. Roch.

To Sheila Crutchlow, Pamela Fry, Heather Hamilton-Wright and Mr. Eric Plummer, Public Information Branch, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario, for their enthusiasm in the preparation, editing and production of this book.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Jan.</td>
<td>Docked: Marine Railway, Dartmouth, N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Jan.</td>
<td>Undocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Mar.</td>
<td>Redocked to remove engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Apr.</td>
<td>Undocked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
<td>Replaced on slip for installation of new engine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 June</td>
<td>New superstructure completed, ship painted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 June</td>
<td>Off slip. Drawing of the new general arrangement made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 June</td>
<td>Trials carried out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 July</td>
<td>Left Halifax for the Arctic. Forced to return due to engine trouble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 July</td>
<td>Left Halifax for the Arctic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 July</td>
<td>Arrived Sydney, N.S. for repairs of defects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 July</td>
<td>Left Sydney for the Arctic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Aug.</td>
<td>Arrived Pond Inlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Aug.</td>
<td>Left Pond Inlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Aug.</td>
<td>Arrived Melville Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sept.</td>
<td>Through the Northwest Passage to Holman Island. Ordered to proceed to Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Sept.</td>
<td>Arrived Tuktoyaktuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Sept.</td>
<td>Left Tuktoyaktuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Sept.</td>
<td>Arrived Herschel Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Sept.</td>
<td>Left Herschel Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Sept.</td>
<td>Passed Point Barrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Oct.</td>
<td>Arrived U.S.A. Naval Base, Akatan, Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Oct.</td>
<td>Left Akatan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Oct.</td>
<td>Arrived Port Neville, B.C. (Vancouver Island)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Oct.</td>
<td>Left Port Neville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Oct.</td>
<td>Arrived Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Oct.</td>
<td>Public attention focused on ship and crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Oct.</td>
<td>Formal presentation made to the crew by the Navy League of Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Dec.</td>
<td><em>St. Roch</em> moored to dock in Esquimalt, B.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I made a couple of trips to Ottawa that winter and received new orders to return to the Arctic during the summer of 1944 to carry out specific duties and if possible try to return to Vancouver by a different route of the Northwest Passage. This time I said I would like to try the more northerly route... This was the real Northwest Passage, I felt, and it had never before been navigated... I was sure this would become the northern route of the future. The main thing was for someone to try it, and if it could be proved that a small ship like the St. Roch could make it, then others would surely follow."

St. Roch, Lunenburg, 1943.
Before her refit
*Larsen Collection
“Again our mission was kept secret and we had a great deal of trouble getting all the work on the ship completed in time.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 181
"We had a new and much more powerful diesel engine installed. With its three hundred horsepower, it was twice as powerful as the one we had before. . . . With a new deck house the St. Roch had a new look and was certainly much more efficient than before."

The new deckhouse
R.C.M.P. Reference Library
“My main problem, again, was to assemble a crew.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 182
Henry Larsen in his cabin on the St. Roch, 1944
Larsen Collection
“I therefore considered myself lucky when I was able to obtain the services of an old-timer from the Arctic who was well known to many RCMP people from the Commissioner on down. Rudolph Johnsen, an old Dane, became my Second Engineer. He had been in turn trapper, trader and engineer on various Hudson’s Bay ships through his years in the Arctic since 1900.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 180

“He once trekked 1,500 miles by dog team to Herschel Island in the Arctic, where famed Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen was frozen in. Amundsen, who became lost in the Arctic in 1928, received the first mail he had seen in a year, and failed to even offer Mr. Johnsen a cup of tea. Another time Mr. Johnsen nursed Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefanson [sic] back to health when he was sick from fever, far from medical aid.”

*Vancouver Province*, 30 June 1966

“A marvellous man. He made one of the first trips down the Mackenzie River from Edmonton by dog team to take the mail into Herschel. All by himself. They damn near killed him when he got there. They thought he was a government man. Remarkable man.”

Pat Hunt

“He was quite an old man when I met him in 1944. He was quite the guy. I never met another guy like him. He was so friendly. He was quite a womanizer...”

Bill Cashin

“He was quite old, you know. He was a good old guy. Rudy had lived, you know.”

Lloyd Russill

“He was a nice shipmate. A real gentleman. You couldn’t find any better.”

Stan McKenzie

“A prince of a fellow...”

Jim Diplock
“Commissioner Wood, who never forgot his old friends from the Arctic, suggested to me that I try to get Ole Andreasen and give him a job for as long as he wanted. He was around sixty-five years old, and was far from well off, having given all his profits as a trader away, mostly to needy Eskimos.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 182

“Ole, Rudy and Larsen and the late Commissioner at that time, Wood, were all pals in Herschel Island days. That’s why those two old fellows were on the boat.”

Pat Hunt

“I set much store by Ole Andreasen... I did not really know exactly the sort of man Ole was going to be, but he had at least the admirable quality of cheerfulness under all circumstances and an absolute inability to see how anybody could be lonesome anywhere, no matter how isolated or remote from various things that ordinary people enjoy. This I knew from my experience with him on my second expedition (spring, 1912).”


“He was with Stefansson in the Arctic. When it came to being stuck in the ice, he’d be one of the guys I’d depend on.”

Jim Diplock

“The salt of the earth that boy... Very little education but you could stake your life on that boy.”

Pat Hunt

“Ole was a nice man. He really was a nice man. He was no seaman now... after all, he was an old man. He was up in the Arctic for 35 years and what he did know about ships he had forgotten... Ole and I were on watch together.”

Stan McKenzie

“Old Ole was a real northerner...”

Bill Cashin

Ole Andreasen,
First Mate
“Of my old crew [from the Northwest Passage trip of 1940-42], Corporals Peters and Hunt both volunteered for the voyage.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 182

“Bill Peters used to be stationed in Aklavik. He was in Aklavik a long time before he joined the *Roch*. He had been on the *Roch* quite a while too.”

Jim Diplock

“Pete had a pretty rough life when he was growing up. He had to look after himself. He’d knocked around. He was a taxi driver in Winnipeg for awhile. He was a very, very competent man. Quiet. Minded his own business.”

Pat Hunt
Left to right:
Bill Peters, Pat Hunt, Henry Larsen, the
only men to make both trips
through the Northwest Passage
on the St. Roch
Larsen Collection
"I’d been on the St. Roch during the first Passage in 1940-42 but I’d left her after that and was posted to the West. Well, one day in the winter of ’44 I got a call from Larsen. ‘Pat,’ he said, ‘we’re going to take the ship back to Vancouver through the Passage and I’d like to have you on board.’ Now I felt that I couldn’t afford to waste the time sitting for years in the Arctic like I had before. I’d lost experience in active police work, and I’d seen fellows who I had gone through training with after they had had that experience and I hadn’t. So I said I was sorry but I couldn’t go back.

A little while later Henry wrote me a letter. He appreciated my feelings but he said he was awfully anxious to get me on the trip. Possibly there’d be a promotion if I did come back with him.

He called me again sometime later. Had I made up my mind? And I agreed to go.

Before we left in 1944 I was made acting Corporal.

And you know it’s funny. I really wanted to go. Well, when I got to Halifax, Henry took me on board the ship and he pointed out the new deckhouse and the new engine and all that. He was really proud of the old ship. Then he took me into his cabin. For a drink. And it was quiet. And we looked at each other. And like two darn kids we started blubbering, we were so happy to see each other again. Grown men. Police officers. Tears."

Pat Hunt

"Pat Hunt was a very sociable fellow, very easy to be friends with."

Stan McKenzie

"Pat had an awful lot of work to do and it kept him busy. He was a capable man at anything."

Jim Diplock

"Things didn’t bother me . . . nothing made me stew. I’m working here. You’re the boss. If you want me to do something I’ll do it. That was my attitude all the way through life. I was Larsen’s kind of helper or adviser. Let’s face it, Larsen was a seaman. O.K. He had to have somebody do the office work. I was it."

Pat Hunt
"L.G. Russill became my radio man..."

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 182

"I was in the Marine Section of the Air Force. I was three years in the Air Force and never got into the air. We had radio operators in the Marine Section. When they weren't working at sea they'd stand around our shop and drink coffee. They had heard about the *St. Roch* and a couple of them had gone over to look at it, but they didn't want to take a trip up north for a possible three years... I was ready to move on. So that's what gave me the idea about going on the *St. Roch*.”

Lloyd Russill

“Of course I wasn't a radio operator. I was a technician. I'd taken the Morse Code but I'd never ever taken a message. I'd never sent a message or received one until I was on the *St. Roch*. Honest. First message I sent we were out near Newfoundland and we were lost. Henry asked me to call up to the shore station and get a bearing.”

Lloyd Russill

“Good old Lloyd and his big grin...”

Jim Diplock
"... two hardy fishermen from Port Aux Basques [sic], Newfoundland [joined us], Stanley McKenzie and Frank Matthews."

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 182

"Frank Matthews and I went down on board the ferry running to Dartmouth to see one of the mates we knew and Larsen knew this mate and the mate knew that Larsen wanted some men, so he was telling us about the *St. Roch*. We weren't very interested in a little ship like that anyhow. Well we met Larsen on the ferry and we got talking and we went to Dartmouth and we were so interested, the three of us together, at what each other had to say, the ferry had docked and left again without our knowing it and we were on our way back to Halifax. So we went back to Dartmouth and went aboard the *St. Roch* and he talked us into going. 'Well, what have we got to lose,' we said and we took a chance on it."

Stan McKenzie

"Stan used to claim – he was joking around of course – that he and Frank had been shanghaied aboard the *St. Roch*."

Lloyd Russill
"We used to get a big bang out of the two Newfoundland boys."

Pat Hunt

"You had Stan and Frank up in the forecastle and the stories they told... Frank about all his adventures on the coast of Africa... but Frank was a steady man."

Jim Diplock

"A very experienced seaman."

Stan McKenzie
“Again the Police had no additional regular members to spare, except one young constable unknown to the rest of us, a James Diplock, who became our fourth regular police member.”

Henry Larsen, The Big Ship, p. 182

“I had volunteered for the North just after I joined the force, and was in training in Regina. Nothing had happened so after I finished training, I went to Ottawa to take riding for three months. One day the corporal in charge of the riding called me in to his office. He had been on the St. Roch, I believe, and he asked me if I wanted to go North on the ship. I had been to sea in a freighter to the West Indies at 16. But I just happened to be at the right place at the right time and I jumped at the chance.”

Jim Diplock

“I was just 19 . . . having a ball. To me the voyage was a piece of cake.”

Jim Diplock
“A seventeen-year-old boy, William Cashin, who was working at the Dartmouth Ship­yard, also joined us . . . .”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 182

“I was rigging on ships and I worked on the *St. Roch*. I got to know old Ole and Rudy and Bill Peters. They needed men and old Sergeant Larsen asked me about going on the *St. Roch*. I wanted to go to sea but I was only 16 at the time and I was too young for the Merchant Marine. So Henry got permission from Commissioner Wood for me to go on the *St. Roch* by being sworn as my guardian. He was my legal guardian.”

Bill Cashin

“I was more or less the boy seaman.”

Bill Cashin

“Billy Cashin was just a nice young kid that had never done any of this before.”

Stan McKenzie
“Dickens was cooking on one of our [R.C.A.F.] little Air-Sea Rescue boats before he came to the St. Roch.”

Lloyd Russill

“He was quite peculiar. . . . We both didn’t have watches. We used to have quite a few arguments and we also got along in a funny sort of way.”

Lloyd Russill

“Now the cook was a first class cook for a roast of beef or a pastry or something like that – you couldn’t beat him – but give him a goose or a duck and you might as well throw it over the side.”

Stan McKenzie

“He cooked best when we were tied up to the dock.”

Jim Diplock

“. . . and G. B. Dickens turned out to be a good cook.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 182
“Larsen wouldn’t say a bad word about anybody.”

Pat Hunt

“Larsen wouldn’t say a bad word about anybody.”

Pat Hunt

“He was around pretty near all the time. He was a really good captain. He knew his way around. He was a good man in the ice. He was a good navigator. He was a good seaman.”

Stan McKenzie

“Old Hank was good. Old-fashioned. He didn’t take no goddam fooling around.”

Bill Cashin

“He was not a haughty man ... he wouldn’t have made the impression he did on the natives. And they came from miles around to see him.”

Jim Diplock

“He was a really fine man. He was really nice. I liked him. We were just little kids. He spoiled us.”

Mary Panegoosho Cousins (One of the little Inuit girls who travelled on the St. Roch between Pond Inlet and Herschel Island.)

“He was a man’s man. His love was the sea. He deserved all the recognition he got. . . . Great man. . . .”

Pat Hunt
"Just before we left Halifax, Commissioner Wood, who was always very interested in the St. Roch, visited us. Larsen gave him a tour around the ship and when he got to the engine room Bill Peters says 'Would you like to hear the new engine, sir?' Pete was awfully proud of his engine, you know. Well do you think he could get that damn thing going? The thing just groaned and groaned and wouldn't start. And there's the head of the R.C.M.P. standing there waiting. Knowing Pete I just died for the guy. God, I felt sorry for him that day."

Pat Hunt
“A day or so before our departure I decided to sample some of the canned food. . . . The appetizing smell of the stew gave us high hopes, but when the plates full of stew were placed in front of us we almost gagged, each and every one of us. . . . I asked the cook whether he had emptied the salt shaker into the stew, but he assured us that he hadn’t used any salt at all, nor had he tasted the stew. . . . We opened several more cans, but they were all the same. This was not funny.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 183

“Our only consolation was that soon, perhaps, we would come across bears and seals and perhaps even fish.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 183
The St. Roch's mess
R.C.M.P. Reference Library
“Never before I thought, had anyone prepared so badly for an Arctic voyage.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 183
Larsen and crew, Halifax, July 1944

Left to right:
Top: Mitch Owens (Extra to Pond Inlet); G. B. Dickens; Frank Matthews; Bill Cashin; Ole Andreasen
Bottom: Jim Diplock; Bill Peters; Pat Hunt; Rudy Johnsen; Henry Larsen

Missing from photograph:
Stan McKenzie; Lloyd Russill

R.C.M.P. Reference
Library
Voyage
“19 July
10:30 a.m. Left Halifax Ship yard for New Found Land . . . 3:30 p.m. return to Halifax Ship yard account Engine troble [sic].”

“Mate's Log of the 1944 Voyage of the 
St. Roch” (hereafter cited as “Log of Ole Andreasen;” all excerpts from this diary remain as they were written)

“We proceeded under-way from Halifax at 10.20 a.m. of the 19-7-44, and had travelled approx., 40 miles before the trouble in question made an appearance. Water was spurt­ ing in all directions in the engine-room and we had no alternative but to return to port.”

Henry Larsen to A. N. Eames, 
O.C. “H” Division, 22 July 1944
“22 July
Left Halifax shipyard for New Found Land.”

Log of Ole Andreasen
“30 July
No land in Sight, not many Ice burgs. There
is only two men steering on our watch and
three men on other watch.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“We called it the old Norwegian watch – go on
and never come off!”

Stan McKenzie

“With our watches you didn’t have time to
read. . . . Just pray you get to sleep in time to
wake up.”

Jim Diplock


Pat Hunt
Clockwise from top left:
Cashin Collection; Russill Collection;
Larsen Collection; Vancouver Maritime Museum;
Russill Collection
“3 Aug.
Wi are some wheare at S. Coast of Baffin Land . . . wi got in to a Lot Ice as the Ice were too tight packt, wi tried to work over to toward green land. This ice is not a solid flow, but all Broken up, and a few Ice burgs amongs it.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“Now it was impossible to keep away from this ice. Now one night Frank Matthews was on watch and we were plowing right along. The old man was asleep and we were running open water and there was this big ice-floe ahead of us. Frank looked at it – it was kind of twilight – thought it was a low cloud and, geez, he hit that thing head on, wide open.”

Stan McKenzie

“The solidest low cloud I ever felt. . . .”

Jim Diplock
"4 Aug.
About 11 a.m. wi tied up to a large peace ice and took in 150 Buckets frish water. Foggy all forenoon."

Log of Ole Andreasen
Fresh drinking water on the *St. Roch* was obtained from pools on top of the ice-floes. Shown here is the bucket brigade. Russill Collection
"8 Aug.
S/Sargt. Larsen Kild a Bear polar."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"There's Cashin running 'cause the bear started to get up. We pulled up to the ice-floe. The bear looked like he was dead. We went out to put a rope on him and the bear started to get up. So you can see Cashin heading for the ship and Diplock shooting at the bear."

Lloyd Russill

"I was up that ladder so fast. . . ."

Bill Cashin
"8 Aug.
"Wi all helped skin and cut up the Carkes."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"The members of the crew who had never seen a polar bear before were all excited and were soon on the ice skinning the animal, butcher knives flying in the air. A couple of boys even managed to cut each other's fingers. To save any serious loss of fingers, Ole and I finished skinning the bear...."

Henry Larsen, The Big Ship, p. 184
From a film made by Larsen on the 1944 voyage
Larsen Collection
"13 Aug.
At anchor Pond Inlet. Wi are onloading
freight around 15 or 20 Ton. . . . There is
about 150 natives trading with the Pond
Inlet Trading Post during the winter but there
is only 5 famelys here at precent helping us
onloading."

Log of Ole Andreasen

“At Pond Inlet the Natives came on board
and they didn’t go home. . . . They smoked
roll-me-own Ogdens and they’d drink tea."

Lloyd Russell
“Before we left [Pond Inlet] we took aboard an Eskimo by the name of Jo Panippakussuk [sic] and his family . . . Jo was a natural sailor . . . a good hunter . . . .”

Henry Larsen, The Big Ship, p. 185

“Joe was my father’s older brother. I liked him. I really loved him. I never met a man like him again. He was talkative. A very outgoing person. He’d make jokes. He’d make jokes with Larsen. He’d really tease Larsen.”

Mary Panegoosh Cousins
Joe Panipakuttuk joined the crew of the *St. Roch* at Pond Inlet to serve as a guide and hunter, should the ship have been forced to winter in the Arctic.

Hunt Collection
“The Eskimos were really great people. I cannot think of anything but nice things about the Eskimo people.”

Lloyd Russill

“The Eskimos have an amazing sense of direction. One time in the Passage we weren’t sure where we were. Even Larsen was unsure. Then the Eskimo woman [Panipak] looked at the coastline and checked with the chart. ‘That’s where we are,’ she said. That’s where we were!”

Jim Diplock
“I pulled this little girl’s tooth one day. I was in my cabin and they came in. They didn’t speak, but all of a sudden I heard a hiss like a snake. There she was with her tooth sticking out. I had some needle-nosed pliers so I pulled it. They were cute, quiet, little kids.”

Lloyd Russill

“I hated the trip. I was very young and I was always worried. The older people didn’t worry but it was terrible living in the tent on the deck. The water would come right into the tent and I got scared. And the food was so awful. Oh, the smell of the spaghetti that the cook would bring to my uncle at the tent. I never smelled anything so bad. It was really crummy. I hated the trip. I’ll never forget it.”

Mary Panegoosho Cousins
The little Inuit girls who made the voyage through the Northwest Passage on the *St. Roch* in 1944: Pallug; Mary Panegoosho; and little Soopi Viguq
*Russill Collection*
“17 Aug.
Drop anchor at a native camp. Wi Bought
4 more Dogs . . . the natives had plenty
Dogs. . . .”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“One dog took the arm of my coat – I had a
leather jacket on fortunately – and it sank
in its teeth . . . I just about cleared the
mast!”

Jim Diplock

“Those were real mean dogs we had on board,
now I’m telling you. One day I slipped and
a dog grabbed me by the ass of the pants and
took a piece out of me. I picked up a great
big piece of rope that was froze and I gave it
to that dog. Old Larsen came up behind me.
He had his mouth open about two feet.
While he was hollaring at me, the dog grabbed
a hold of him and the old man took a
piece of 2 by 4 and he nailed that dog. Then
I turned around and had the laugh on him.
I said, ‘It’s alright for the dog to bite me,
but when he bites you it’s a different thing,
isn’t it?’”

Stan McKenzie
“17 Aug.
Kild another Bear. The native Kild the
Bear, in about 5 shots.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“Panny shot that bear. We saw it swimming
around this little berg. The berg came up to
a point quite steep on one side. Stupid bear
would climb up, get on the top, then
whrooom down into the water. It was having
a ball.”

Jim Diplock
“18 Aug.
Wi have steamed slow speed on the Lee Side
of a Large Ice flow sidens 8 a.m., account of
To much sea and wind. A fair blow...”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“. . . the wind was so strong the water was as
white as a snow storm . . . the swells were
big and the bow of the boat would disappear
from time to time in the water. I was very
frightened.”

“The Reminiscences of Joe Panipakuttuk,”
north, Jan.-Feb. 1969, p. 10
“20 Aug.
Drop anchors in 6 Ftns. water at Beechy Island ... S/Srgt. Larsen and a lot of Crew been on shore.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“I placed the monument upon the raised flagged square in the centre of which stands the cenotaph. ... I could not have selected for Lady Franklin’s memorial a more appropriate or conspicuous site [15 Aug. 1858].”


“Tribute is also due to those early explorers whose sacrifices and exploits blazed most of the trail we took. ...”

“I felt that I was on hallowed ground. ... I fancied I could see the tall majestic ships of Franklin who wintered there 99 yrs. before.”

“20 Aug.
(Beechey Island) The Ships crew pict up some specimen here.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“The relics from this point were only a few small pieces of coal, and some wood which we believe is the remains of the yacht Mary, described as a vessel of 12 tons, and placed there in 1852 by Sir John Ross with the hope that the survivors of the Franklin Expedition might have made use of it.”

Henry Larsen to C. K. Grey
O.C. “E” Division,
9 November 1944
Larsen, Diplock
and McKenzie with the remnants of the Mary
R.C.M.P. Reference Library
“21 Aug.
A Lot more Sea girls around this morning....”

Log of Ole Andreasen
*Information Canada
"22 Aug.
Kild 2 walruss. . . ."

Log of Ole Andreasen
“22 Aug.
We kild 2 more walrose....”

Log of Ole Andreasen
“22 Aug.
McKenzie Trow the Lead for 6½ Hour, and
I were at the wheel 6½. Wi sure run up
against a Lot Ice Last watch.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“We were up there in the old snow and the
old frost. Of course being a seaman and a
Newfoundlander, I was used to that kind of
stuff. But Larsen set the watches and geez
they were murder. You throw a 12 lb. lead
for 6½ hours with a ship making 10 knots
and you’re working. I guess you’re working!”

Stan McKenzie
Without sonar, soundings had to be taken with a lead weight on a chain
Larsen Collection
"27 Aug.
Crew whent on shore with 2 Dorys to Pik up
a Record and a lot of Curieux on Dealey
Island."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"We anchored close inshore and set out to
examine the massive cache which . . . had
been built in the spring of 1853 by Captain
Henry Kellett, who had spent the winter
there with HMS Resolute. The cache was par­
tially destroyed and its contents had been
scattered by marauding bears."

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 186

"Going through the cache we found 2 car­
casses of polar bears. The skulls were there
with the teeth in them. Henry told the Es­
kimo to take them down and lay them by the
boat. Here comes Bill Cashin and sees these
big skulls laying on the beach so Cashin
picks up some rocks and knocks the teeth
out of them. Henry comes along and there
are his skulls all broken up. . . ."

Lloyd Russill

"That's where I ruined a polar bear's head on
old Hank. Oh, it was an enormous thing. He
was going to take it back. I didn't know
anything about it, so I took a rock and
smashed the teeth out of it. Oh geez, was he
ever savage about that!"

Bill Cashin
Cashin at Kellett’s Cairn
Larsen Collection
“27 Aug.
Wi are taking a Lot of this old stuff with
us. . . .”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“We picked out a few good tins of ‘Ox Cheek
Soup’ made in 1850 by a manufacturer op­
posite East India House in London. They
bore the following directions for opening:
‘Take a hammer and chisel and cut out one
end while being careful not to let flakes of
paint which cover the cans get into the
soup.’ ”

Henry Larsen, The Big Ship, p. 187
"28 Aug.
Wi Seen musk oxe on shore Main Land. . . ."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"I searched the land with a telescope and saw no sign of live animals. All I could see were huge rocks. Mr. Larsen said these were musk oxen, these very things I thought to be rocks. So I looked again through the telescope and the rocks began to move."

"The Reminiscences of Joe Panipakuttuk,"
p. 12
"3 Cept.
At the Northern end of Prince of wheels strait wi are making 8 miles pr. Hour from then on, S. trou the strait . . . very little Ice seen trou the strait."

Log of Ole Andreasen
Numbers were substituted for place names in radio reports to headquarters of the position of the *St. Roch*. "Number Fifteen" referred to Walker Bay, near Holman Island, considered the western end of the Passage.
“Restfully, the St. Roch rode at anchor – as though catching her breath... It was mid-afternoon of Sept. 4, 1944. For the first time the northern route of the North-west [sic] Passage had been traversed.”

Henry Larsen, “Our Return Voyage,” p. 313
"4 Cept.
Drop anchore Homan Island . . . a lot of natives came aboard."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"They came out on board and we opened up a couple of quarts and we had a few drinks. You see we'd gotten through the part of the Passage that nobody else had. Everybody was feeling pretty good."

Stan McKenzie
"5 Cept.
Wi got answear to wire from Ottawa 7 a.m.
to Pracied to Vancouver ... wi left Holman Island . . . ."

Log of Ole Andreasen
ARMY MESSAGE
(OUTGOING)

TO

STAFF SERGT LARSEN
R. C. M. POLICE
COPPERMINE N.W.T.

OTTAWA SEPTEMBER 4TH, 1944

CONGRATULATIONS PROCEED VANCOUVER STOP GOOD LUCK

S.T. WOOD

Sent to 5042 at
10.15 PM by WOT
and marked URGENT.
“9 Cept.
Tuktoyaktuk. This is the hardest blow of the
year, the hardest blow we had for some
times.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“Disaster at Tuktuk – about noon on 9th
September the worst storm in years struck
Tuktuk post with a 75-mile-per-hour gale
lashing up a raging flood tide.”

*The Moccasin Telegraph/Magazine for HBC
Fur Traders,*
March 1945, p. 24

“In Tuk we bounced in – literally bounced
in – drawing 13 feet in seas that went down
to 9 or 10 feet.”

Jim Diplock

“... the boat rocked as though it were going
to turn over...”

“The Reminiscences of Joe Panipakuttuk,”
p. 14
At the wheel
McKenzie Collection
"14 Cept.
"So it don’t look good in getting around Pt. Barrow this fall."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"I can remember the day before we left Tuktoyaktuk . . . we were kind of waiting for the old man to make up his mind if we should try the run or not. It was up to him to decide to try for Point Barrow or not."

Lloyd Russill

"I don’t think Larsen wanted to come out. . . . He loved the North. He didn’t like it outside. But we wanted out."

Jim Diplock

"Up there in the Arctic we didn’t really look forward all that much to being stuck in all that snow and cold for any 3 years. We sort of felt maybe Larsen wasn’t too happy about getting through in one year, so whenever Frank was at the wheel and the old man wasn’t around, boy, it would be ‘full speed ahead.’"

Stan McKenzie
Larsen surveying the ice
*Boggild Collection
“20 Cept. 
At Herschel Island onloading . . . 24 below 
Zero this morning . . . 15 Tons Coal, Bread, 
Flour etc. got to bee onloadet allso empty 
Drums.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“We got to Qikirtarjuag [Herschel Island] 
during the night. There was a house ready 
for us there. Mr. Larsen said that he was 
going to leave us because he wanted to go 
on through to Vancouver. He left and we 
were alone there.”

“The Reminiscences of Joe Panipakuttuk,”
p. 14

“We could almost feel the ice closing behind 
us as we headed west as quickly as we could. 
The Eskimo family stayed behind in one of 
the abandoned warehouses, well supplied 
with everything we now didn’t need.”

Henry Larsen, The Big Ship, p. 190

“Our friends on the St. Roch left. Herschel 
Island was just a ghost town. It was lonely 
and new and strange. It was terrible.”

Mary Panegoosho Cousins
Unloading at Herschel Island
Russill Collection
“24 Cept.
It were Sure Dark as wi whent around Pt.
Barrow but wi made it O.K.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“It was darker than the devil. I was sounding.
I said, ‘No more bottom.’ The old man said,
‘We’re around!’ So we called up the old
sounding lead.”

Stan McKenzie

“That call was what I had been waiting for;
it meant we were ahead of the polar ice
pack. . . .”

Henry Larsen, “Our Return Voyage,” p. 316

“Master Mariner Henry Asbjorn Larsen knew
then that he had turned Point Barrow into
the Bering Sea. He knew that he had done
what no other man had done: navigated
the legendary Northwest Passage from west
to east and back again.”

Time, 30 October 1944, p. 8
“26 Cept.
A frish breeze as wi gets abreast of the Cape with white caps, wi Put the Dory Down from the Davids to the Main Deck last night and Lashed same to ring bolts at the Main Hatch. So everything are Raddy for Sea and bad weather again.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“On the way out Ole Andreasen had a big bunch of underwear he wanted me to wash out for him. So I figure the easy way to wash them, I dumped a can of lye in the water. I threw them in and let them soak. Geez, what a gooey mess I had. All that was left was the buttons.”

Bill Cashin
“1 Oct.
Drop anchor . . . at U.S.A. Station. Wi were ask to come on shore and take Bath and there is a canteen where wi can buy a can Beer if wi want to. . . .”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“'The St. Roch had heavy hausers. At Akatan there were American sailors standing on the dock while we were heaving our lines ashore and one guy looks at the lines we threw him and he says 'What the hell are you tying up? The Queen Mary'?”

Jim Diplock
At the U.S.A. Naval Base, Akatan, Alaska
Russill Collection
"That’s me in the coat the Eskimo lady on board made for Dickens, the cook. . . . At Akatan Dickens sold his coat – I sold my radio – to an American. He got a better price than he paid for it. $150, I think."

Lloyd Russill

"At Akatan we sold Newfoundland 20¢ pieces to the Americans for $5.00, pieces of ivory, skins and fur parkas. A bunch of con artists when it comes to money."

Jim Diplock

“We had coats on board – artigis they were called – that the Eskimo woman made for us out of cloth. . . . Got rid of some in the Aleutian Islands. Gave some of them to the American Navy officers . . . these fellows were pretty good to us.”

Stan McKenzie
"6 Oct.
Wi are 296 miles from Unimak Pass. . . .
Since 6 last night big Sea running, fore sail and stay sail set."

Log of Ole Andreasen

“I saw this big wave coming and I jumped inside the door and I forgot to close the door and the wave came right in behind me. Old Rudolph, he was coming up from the engine room and it washed him right back down into the engine room.”

Bill Cashin

“Then there was Ole Andreasen’s famous course correction just out of Akatan – boy, there was green water right over the wheelhouse.”

Jim Diplock

“The going got heavy out of the Aleutians, so I thought ‘We better take those sails in or we’re going to lose the Jumbo [mainsail].’ Frank and I got out and hauled the Jumbo down. . . . I took a heaving line and I went up the spar and put a down’ll on the for’s’l [downhaul on the foresail]. When I came down there was two or three fellows tangled up in that line and I really got mad . . . being used to this kind of stuff as a Newfoundlander and all.”

Stan McKenzie
“8 Oct.
This is the start of a havy blow... Wi hade a very Dirty night from Sunday to Monday, very havy sea and wind on the starboard beam. The ship were sure Rooling some.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“That storm in the Pacific – I think the wind blew all the way from Australia... It was God Awful. We didn’t see the cook for three days. We thought Cashin had been washed overboard. We all slept on the floor. The whole mast disappeared under the sea.”

Jim Diplock

“Lots of times during the storms we had nothing to eat.”

Pat Hunt

“I was sick for about three days. It was so rough that I put my mattress on the floor between my desk and the bunk and didn’t move... Just come out of Akatan, a belly full of beer, just hit the open sea and hit the storm. Oh wow..!”

Lloyd Russill

“Everyone was seasick but me – including Larsen.”

Stan McKenzie
“10 Oct.
Open up Engine to full Speed. . . . On our
way to Vancouver.”

Log of Ole Andreasen
"14 Oct. Wi are still at anchor at Port Neville [Vancouver Island].... Wi are catching a salmon or two and some other kind of fish. There is fish jumping in the water here.... This is a nice place to fish."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"Caught a lot of fish. We filled the lifeboat up with them. Starboard boat. Salted salmon. Very good."

Lloyd Russill
"16 Oct.
6:15 p.m. Wi arrived at Holman #1 Dock Vancouver. So end our trip via the North-west Passage, 1944."

Log of Ole Andreasen

“There was nobody to meet us at the wharf. Canada was still at war and had no time for frivolous things.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 190
“16 October
I was just about ready to go ashore with the rest of the crew to find a restaurant with a good meal when an old-time friend, Superintendent Jim Fripps of the RCMP, arrived to greet us....”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 190
Superintendent Fripps, Commander Smith, R.C.N. and Henry Larsen on board the St. Roch on the evening of her arrival in Vancouver

Vancouver Sun
“This account of our ... voyage would not be complete if I did not pay tribute to every member of my crew. Their co-operation and skilful attention to duty under some of the most trying conditions that man has ever been called upon to endure cannot be too highly praised.”

“In that first picture we looked a little serious I guess. So the photographer said, ‘What the hell’s the matter with you guys? Aren’t you happy to be here in beautiful Vancouver? How about a smile?’ So we smiled.”

Lloyd Russill
“17 Oct.
Plenty of reporters and visitors aboard. So wi are having a holiday today.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“Eighty-six days through the Passage... It was a record. We’d done something. We were happy about it.”

Pat Hunt

“It’s something I’m very proud of.”

Jim Diplock

“And Frank and I were back in Newfoundland for Christmas.”

Stan McKenzie
Clockwise from top left: Larsen Collection; Hunt Collection; Hunt Collection; R.C.M.P. Reference Library; R.C.M.P. Reference Library; Vancouver Sun; Hunt Collection
"18 Oct.
Still a lot of visitors and reporters aboard today."

**Log of Ole Andreasen**

"I remember one woman who came on board, set foot on the ship, and was sea-sick immediately."

**Jim Diplock**
"20 Oct.
Staff Sargeant Larsen whent home with his
Wife to Victoria...."

Log of Ole Andreasen
“30 Oct.
Wi all went to Citty Hall and Navy League
for Lunch and Precents.”

Log of Ole Andreasen

“What could be more fitting than to have the
crew
Of the good old St. Roch, both staunch and
true,
To honor this club, where the man of the sea,
Is always made welcome, whosoever he be.”

Souvenir Menu of Luncheon for
Staff Sergeant Larsen and Crew
30 October 1944 at 12:15

“Navy League, City, Honor Crew of St. Roch
For Epic Voyage.”

Headline
Vancouver News-Herald
31 October 1944
"1 Nov.
There is still a few visetors comming aboard ship to day."

Log of Ole Andreasen

"Larsen invited some dignitaries from Van­couver on board the St. Roch for a real sea­man’s dinner. Salt pork and pea soup. Un­fortunately the soup was left under the fuel tank in the galley, and I guess it had a small leak in it. Anyway, the soup acquired a very unseamanlike taste to it. Nobody – except one man whose politeness was beyond the call of duty – wanted seconds."

Pat Hunt
Promoted
To the rank of Sub-inspector, December 1944,
Henry A. Larsen.

*R.C.M.P. Quarterly*, April 1945

“As with my earlier promotions, this one too,
I realized was due to my serving aboard the
*St. Roch* in the Arctic. I felt a deep sense of
gratitude.”

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 194
"I also took some time out to look back on our latest voyage. It had been an eventful trip and the *St. Roch* had nobly upheld the traditions she had established during the past fifteen years."

Henry Larsen, *The Big Ship*, p. 191

"We were lucky and had the breaks."

Henry Larsen, cited by J. Lewis Robinson, "Conquest of the Northwest Passage by R.C.M.P. Schooner *St. Roch*," *Canadian Geographical Journal*, February 1945, p. 73
C. P. Dettloff in The Beaver, March 1945, p. 7
Afterward
St. Roch: launched 7 May 1928 at Burrard Dry Dock in Vancouver. The ship made two voyages to the North following 1944, the first to Cambridge Bay, N.W.T. where she was frozen in during the winter of 1945-46, the second to Herschel Island, Y.T. in 1947 where she spent her twelfth and last winter locked in the arctic ice. After 1948 the development of air transportation in the North made the St. Roch less vital in R.C.M.P. operations in the western Arctic. In 1950 the vessel was transferred to Halifax. Making the voyage this time the easy way through the Panama Canal, she became the first ship to circumnavigate the North American continent. Four years later the St. Roch returned to Vancouver via Panama on her final voyage after being sold by the R.C.M.P. to the City of Vancouver. In 1958 she was placed in dry dock on permanent display.

In 1962 the vessel was declared of national historic significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada which later recommended that the ship be restored to her appearance in 1944. Work on the restoration began in February 1971. An historic reminder of Canada’s contribution to arctic exploration, the St. Roch was officially opened to the public on 16 October 1974 – 30 years to the day that she arrived in Vancouver following her second conquest of the Northwest Passage in 1944.
St. Roch entering
Vancouver Harbour, 12 October 1954,
at the end of her last voyage
R.C.M.P. Reference Library
On 4 December 1944 Ole Andreasen noted in his log, "The Cook was Paid of to day and Left the Ship tonight." Nothing more is known of him. No recent picture is available.

Born 1879 at Fredrikstad, Norway. After leaving the ship in 1945, he retired from half a century of hard life in the Arctic to live in Vancouver. The first of the crew to pass away, he died in 1946.
Henry Larsen

Born 30 September 1899 at Hvaler, Norway. Commissioned a sub-inspector of the R.C.M.P. in December 1944 and an inspector two years later, he continued to command the St. Roch during her last two arctic voyages of 1945-46 and 1947-48. In 1949, having been master of the ship for over 20 years, he moved to Ottawa to take over command of “G” Division of the Force, which controls the police work in all of northern Canada. Following 1944 many honours were bestowed upon him. He was a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, a Fellow of the Arctic Institute of North America and an honorary member of the Royal Geographical Society. He was awarded the Patron’s gold medal by the Royal Geographical Society and was the first to receive the Massey Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society for outstanding personal achievement in the exploration, development and description of the geography of Canada. Promoted to Superintendent in 1953, he sailed the St. Roch from Halifax to Vancouver through the Panama Canal on her final voyage one year later and was later instrumental in having his beloved ship preserved. He retired from the R.C.M.P. in 1961 after almost 33 years of service. Following a brief illness, Superintendent Larsen died in Vancouver on 29 October 1964 at the age of 65.
Upon retirement from the R.C.M.P., 7 February 1961
R.C.M.P. Reference Library
**Rudolph Johnsen**

Born 1875, in Copenhagen, Denmark. He stayed with the *St. Roch* longer than any of the other crew-members of the 1944 voyage, not leaving the ship until she was transferred to Halifax in 1950. He then returned to the Arctic where he had spent 50 years of his life and remained there until 1953 when he retired to Vancouver. In 1954, after the *St. Roch* returned to British Columbia, he became caretaker of the ship at the special request of Henry Larsen. He remained a close friend of Bill Peters while he lived in Vancouver. He died at the age of 90 on 29 June 1966.

**Bill Peters**

Born 15 July 1911 in Winnipeg. Served as chief engineer on board the *St. Roch* during her voyage to the Arctic in 1945-46 and then left the ship to take up various postings with the R.C.M.P. in British Columbia. He was promoted to sergeant in May 1955 and retired from the Force in 1961 after over 26 years of service. He died suddenly at Chilliwack, B.C. on 14 August 1969 at the age of 58.
From his obituary, *Vancouver Province*, 30 June 1966

At the opening of the Vancouver Maritime Museum, 11 June 1959
Vancouver Maritime Museum
Frank Matthews

Born 18 June 1916 at Port aux Basques, Nfld. Returned to Newfoundland in December 1944. Sailed aboard various fishing vessels and later worked on construction projects in Labrador. From 1963 until his sudden death from a heart attack on 22 January 1970, he served as the maintenance man of the Port aux Basques Vocational School. The school yearbook of 1970 was dedicated to his memory.

Joe Panipakuttuk

Born 1914 at Pond Inlet, N.W.T. He and his family remained on Herschel Island until August 1945, when the St. Roch arrived from Vancouver and brought them to Cambridge Bay where they spent the next winter. In April 1946 he set off with his family by sled for the eastern Arctic. After a very difficult journey they reached Fort Ross where the H.B.C. ship Nascopie brought them back home to Pond Inlet, two years after they had left there on the St. Roch. From 1948 to 1963 he was a Special Constable for the R.C.M.P. and he served in Craig Harbour, Dundas Harbour, Alexandria Fiord, Grise Fiord and Pond Inlet. He spent his retirement years writing his memoirs and stories he had heard as a youth. He died in March 1970 at the age of 56 in Pond Inlet.
Pat Hunt
Born 17 March 1914 at Moosomin, Sask. Remained as Clerk on board the St. Roch after 1944 and spent his third winter in the Arctic on the ship in 1945-46. In July 1947 he left the St. Roch and was posted by the Force to Saskatchewan where he spent ten years as a prairie policeman. In 1957 he was transferred to Manitoba. There, in 1960, he resigned from the R.C.M.P. and joined the newly created Planning Section of the Manitoba Department of Highways. He is currently Executive Assistant to the Chief Engineer of the same department and lives in Winnipeg.

Stan McKenzie
Born 1 July 1918 at Port aux Basques, Nfld. The only member of the crew to remain on the sea, he returned to Newfoundland in December 1944, later serving as a seaman in the Merchant Marine and after the war on various freighters out of Nova Scotia. Won his engineer's ticket and worked as chief engineer on a number of small vessels and as a shore engineer at Yarmouth, N.S. In December 1955 he joined the first crew of the M. V. Bluenose, CN's ferry between Yarmouth and Bar Harbour, Maine, as a junior engineer and is now third engineer aboard the ship. He lives in Yarmouth, N.S.
Both pictures taken on board the partially-restored *St. Roch*,
Vancouver, B.C., 27 February 1973
Dave Clark
Lloyd Russill

Born 18 Feb. 1922 at Wauchope, Sask. Spent Christmas at home in Beaver Lodge, Alta. in 1944 and then enrolled in a radio operator's course at the Calgary Technical College. Following July 1945 he spent 15 years in the Alberta oil industry surveying and shooting wells. In 1959 he joined the mining industry and served as an electronics technician with several companies, first at Lynn Lake, Man., then Toronto, Salt Lake City, Utah and finally San Diego, California. There he joined the Scripps Institute of Oceanography of the University of Southern California in 1969. Presently, he is the Senior Electronics Technician on board the Glomar Challenger, an oceanographic research ship engaged in deep sea drilling of the ocean's crust, and spends six months of every year at sea again. He lives in Encinitas, California.

Jim Diplock

Born 13 December 1924 in Toronto, Ont. Has continued with police work after leaving the St. Roch in 1944. Served with the R.C.M.P. in British Columbia and Saskatchewan before being transferred to Halifax in 1946 to work in the Marine Division of the Force. He left the R.C.M.P. in June 1947 and returned home to Ontario. Served with the police in the Toronto and Niagara districts since then. Now a 21-year veteran of the Niagara Regional Police, he is the sergeant of the Grimsby Detachment and makes his home in St. Catharines, Ont.
On board the *Glomar Challenger*, 1972
Russill Collection

Assisting with the first stage of the restoration of the *St. Roch*,
Ottawa, Ontario, 28 October 1971
Bruce Easson
Bill Cashin

Born 7 June 1927 at Eastern Passage, N.S. Remained a seaman on the St. Roch during the rest of her arctic service and wintered on board the ship at Cambridge Bay, N.W.T. in 1946-47 and at Herschel Island, Y.T. in 1947-48. He was the only member of the crew to settle in the North, returning there after leaving the Force in the fall of 1949. He has held various jobs in the mining and construction industries of the Yukon. He lives in Carmacks, Y.T.

Joe Panipakuttuk’s Family

The whereabouts of the members of Joe Panipakuttuk’s family who were passengers on board the St. Roch during the trip through the Northwest Passage – Panipak, Joe’s mother, died February 1963 at Pond Inlet, N.W.T.; Letia, his wife, Pond Inlet; Arreak, stepson, Pond Inlet; Elijah Kudlu, son, Pond Inlet; Annie Pallug (now Anne Ledbetter), daughter, Edmonton, Alberta; Mary Panegoosho (now Mary Cousins), niece, Buffalo Narrows, Saskatchewan; Soopi Viguq (now Sophie Brulé), daughter, Resolute Bay, N.W.T.
"If I had not got off the boat when I did, I might have ended up like Ole Andreasen or Rudy Johnsen as far as the North was concerned. There was something about the Arctic that gets into you at some stage of your life and if you ever succumb to it... There's something about it. You get up there – I don't know – you probably won't understand what I'm talking about. There's an inner feeling.

"I remember one particular night when the sun set. It was quiet. The boat was in the ice. War was on. And I remember thinking 'You just seem to be on the top of the world.' You were on top somewhere and you were looking down on all that was going on in the world. And you'd listen to the radio and they'd bombed London, bombed Berlin. All these shelters had been destroyed. Two thousand people drowned in some shelter under the streets of London. And I wrote in my diary that night that here we were sitting at the top of the world where it was all peaceful and you were with nature. There was no war and everybody was happy. They were living together. The only food they had was what they caught: rabbits and deer, fish and seal. The Eskimos playing around with their kids. Moonlight night. The kids were all on the ice playing ball. And just a few miles away, they were bombing the hell out of everybody. And you wondered about mankind."

Pat Hunt
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boggild Collection</td>
<td>Capt. K. H. Boggild</td>
<td>Halifax, N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrard Dry Dock Collection</td>
<td></td>
<td>North Vancouver, B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashin Collection</td>
<td>W. Cashin</td>
<td>Carmacks, Y.T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cousins Collection</td>
<td>Mary Panegoosho Cousins</td>
<td>Buffalo Narrows, Sask.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dettloff Collection</td>
<td>C. P. Dettloff</td>
<td>Vancouver, B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunt Collection</td>
<td>P. G. Hunt</td>
<td>Winnipeg, Man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larsen Collection</td>
<td>Gordon Larsen</td>
<td>Beaconsfield, P.Q.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKenzie Collection</td>
<td>Stanley McKenzie</td>
<td>Yarmouth, N.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C.M.P. Reference Library</td>
<td>R.C.M.P. Headquarters</td>
<td>Ottawa, Ont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russill Collection</td>
<td>Lloyd G. Russill</td>
<td>Encinitas, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Roch Restoration File</td>
<td>Department of Indian and</td>
<td>Ottawa, Ont.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Maritime Museum</td>
<td>Vancouver, B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Province</td>
<td>Vancouver, B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Sun</td>
<td>Vancouver, B.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Primary Sources
Manuscript Material:

Beaconsfield, Québec,
The Papers of Henry A. Larsen

Encinitas, California,
Collection of Lloyd G. Russill

Ottawa, Ontario,
R.C.M.P. Headquarters Division,
St. Roch Correspondence Files.
Files S1200-17, S1200-216

North Vancouver, B.C.,
Burrard Dry Dock Company,
St. Roch File and Press Clippings

Vancouver, B.C.,
Vancouver Maritime Museum,
The Log of Ole Andreasen
Transcriptions of Taped Interviews
Conducted by Frank Harley and John Thompson:

William Cashin,
Carmacks, Y.T.
17 June 1972
(Conducted by Frank Harley alone)

Mary Panegoosh Cousins,
Buffalo Narrows, Sask.
25 October 1973
(Conducted by John Thompson alone)

James M. Diplock,
St. Catharines, Ont.
28 October 1971

P. G. Hunt,
Winnipeg, Man.
5 December 1971

Stanley McKenzie,
Yarmouth, N.S.
15 September 1971

Lloyd G. Russill,
Encinitas, California
16 February 1972
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Canadian Mounted Police Reports and Other Papers Relating to the Two Voyages of the R.C.M. Police Schooner <em>St. Roch</em>. King's Printer, Ottawa 1945.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Vancouver News-Herald</em>, 31 October 1944.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Vancouver Province</em>, 30 June 1966.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
John Thompson has been employed for the past five years as an historian with the National Historic Parks and Sites Branch of Parks Canada, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

A native of Hudson, Québec, he graduated from McGill University with an M.A. in Canadian history.

Before joining Parks Canada, he was employed in the fields of journalism and education. He worked as an advertising copy writer, an assistant editor on a weekly newspaper and taught both literature and history at Stanstead College, Stanstead, Québec.
In the radio operator's cabin on board the *St. Roch* during its restoration, 27 February 1973
Dave Clark