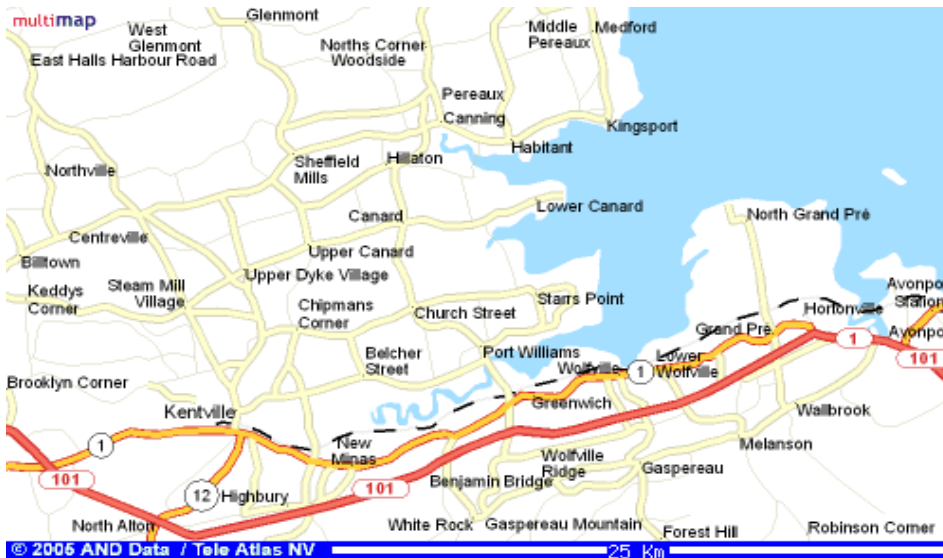
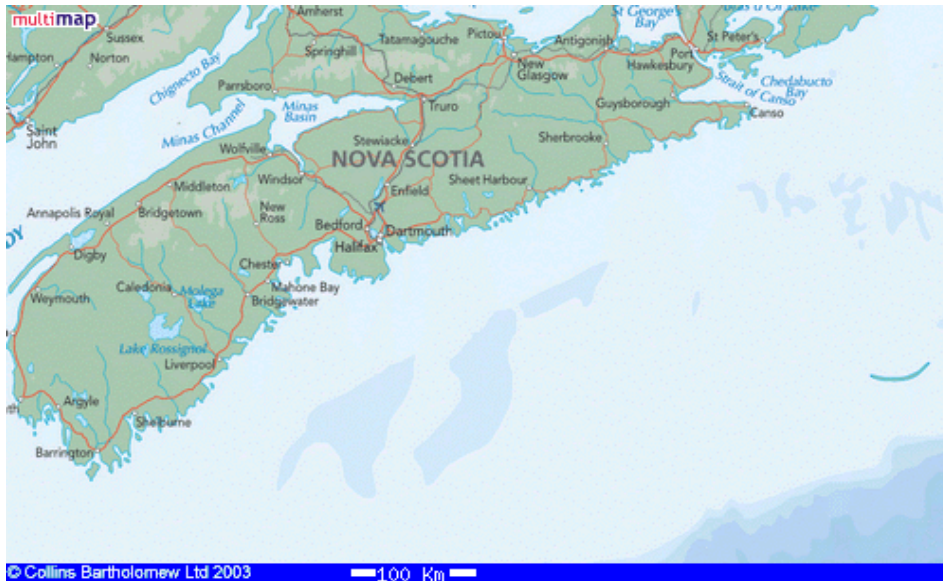


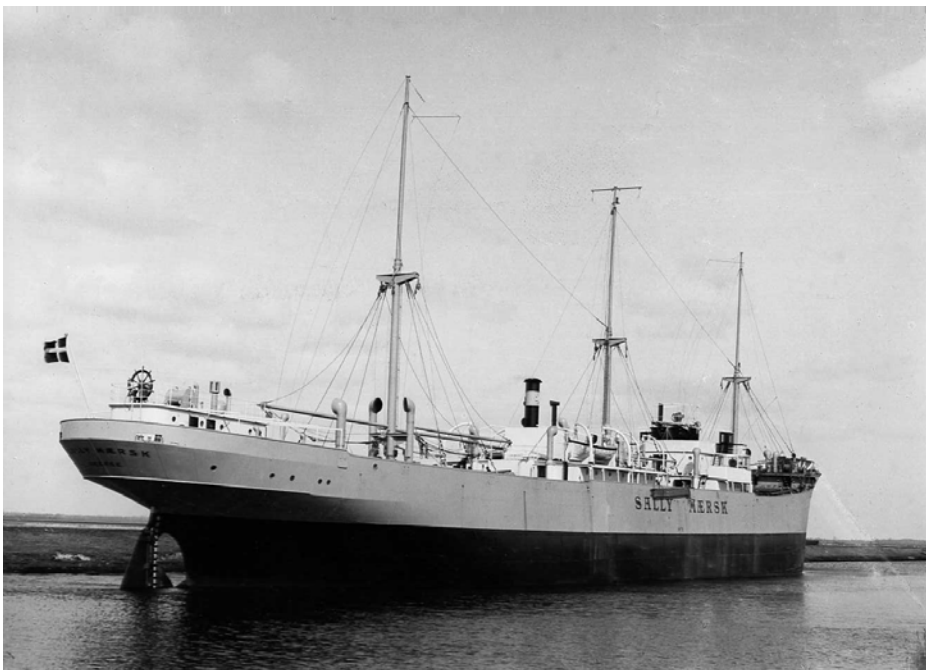
**The Largest Apple Cargo Out of Port Williams, Nova Scotia, Convoy SC-42 and the last Merchant Ships to visit Port Williams.**

Port Williams is in the Annapolis Valley at the mouth of the Cornwallis River. At one time it was a busy port especially in the fall of the year when loads of apples and potatoes were shipped to far away places. The Danish vessel Sally Maersk lifted the largest cargo of apples out of the port. She lifted 32,283 barrels on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1935, according to the history of Port Williams "The Port Remembers". This cargo was loaded in 22 hours and consisted of 600 truck loads. Most of these trucks carried 56 barrels. If each truck carried 56 barrels this would be 577 truck loads. According to this same history there were 16,000 acres of orchard in the Cornwallis Township by 1936.



1935 must have been a good apple year. Following close on the wake of MV Sally Maersk was the second largest vessel to lift apples from Port Williams. SS Schurbek came complete with her Nazi swastika flying.

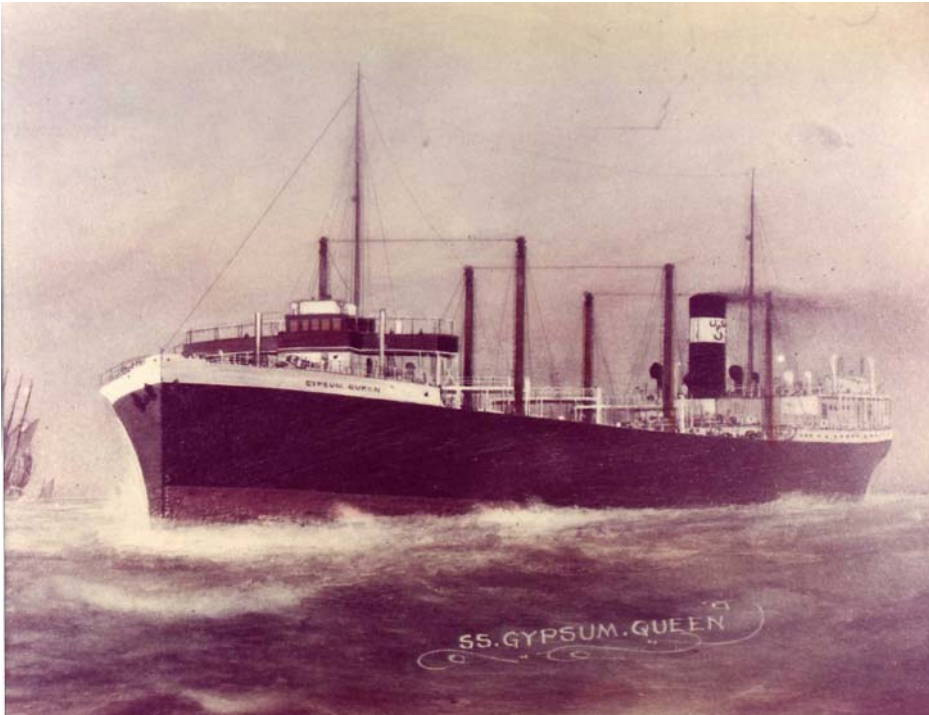
MV SALLY MAERSK  
3,252 tons  
3 masts, shelter deck type  
International Signal Letters OXXA  
Built Odense, Denmark, 1923  
Owner A. P. Moller  
332 x 44.2 x 26.2  
Port of Registry Aalborg, Denmark  
6 cylinder oil Engine



SS SCHURBEK  
2,448 tons  
Cruiser stern and ice strengthened  
International Signal Letters DHUU  
Built Flensburg, 1930  
Owner Knohr and Buchard  
307 x 45.5 x 19.7  
Port of Registry Hamburg, Germany  
Fitted with radio direction finding

Three of the four Gypsum ships using the Bay of Fundy in 1935 were identical sisters. Gypsum Empress at 4,034 gross tons had been built in 1929 and was slightly larger than the other three that were built in 1927 at 3,915 gross tons each. The other three were Gypsum King, Gypsum Queen and Gypsum Prince. Gypsum King was the only one of the four that survived World War II.

The Sally Maersk that lifted 32,283 barrels of apples out of Port Williams in 1935 and the Gypsum Queen that transported gypsum ore from the Bay of Fundy that same year joined Convoy SC-42 in August 1941. This convoy consisted of 64 merchant ships and sailed from Sydney, Nova Scotia, August 30<sup>th</sup> bound for the United Kingdom laden with over a half-million tons of supplies. The warships escorting this convoy were four Canadian ships; the destroyer Skeena and the three corvettes Orillia, Kenogami and Alberni. The Skeena led this convoy with a corvette on either side of the convoy and the third corvette astern for protection from the German U-boats. This convoy was spread out over an area of some 25 square miles of sea as it proceeded up to within five miles of the southern tip of Greenland, then on to Iceland and the United Kingdom.



The U-boat commanders at this time were still experimenting with their form of patrol that became known as the wolf pack. U-boats in a wolf pack were strung out in lines rather than a single U-boat on patrol in a defined area. The U-boat, U-85 made a chance sighting of Convoy SC-42 as she headed for her station on the northern tip of her patrol line within a few miles of the Greenland coast. The ensuing sea battle is well documented in the history of World War II. At least eight U-boats, twice the number of Canadian warships, participated in this attack. Two corvettes, Chambly and Moose Jaw had been on a training exercise off Newfoundland when they learned of this attack. They steamed at top speed to assist the four Canadian ships escorting this convoy.

This sea battle off Greenland terminated with the loss of 16 of the 64 merchant ships in Convoy SC-42. Sally Maersk was lost by submarine torpedo and sank at 47 minutes past 2 AM, September 10<sup>th</sup>. Gypsum Queen met the same fate 19 hours later at 19 minutes past 9 PM. Fifteen minutes after the loss of Gypsum Queen the only U-boat destroyed, U-501, was sunk by the two corvettes Chambly and Moose Jaw that had been on a training exercise. The U-501 was making her first operational cruise and most of the crew in Chambly and Moose Jaw were making their first sea voyage. This sea battle convinced the German command that the U-boat packs were superior to the lone

U-boat on patrol. The lines of U-boats known as the wolf packs would plague the Atlantic until the termination of World War II.

The captain of U-501 was a rarity in the German submarine service. U-501 surfaced, stopped her engines and when Moose Jaw ran up along side she found most of the Nazi crew on deck with their hands up. As the corvette closed, the U-boat captain leaped from his own deck to the deck of the corvette, not even wetting his feet in the process. Moose Jaw sheered off to prevent further boarding. Chambly put a boarding party on U-501 and found the Nazi crew anxious to leave, indicating she had been scuttled and was about to sink. The boarding party took the risk of a quick investigation with the hope of obtaining some secret equipment. With a sudden lurch U-501 began to settle. The boarding party made a quick dash to safety but stoker William I. Brown was sucked into the swirl and drowned.

My father retired from the Royal Canadian Navy as the Chief Blacksmith and for most of his career was the General Iron Sheet Metal Instructor at the Mechanical Training Establishment, HMCS Stadacona. The members of this establishment could make anything. We had a number of items around our home they had made and knives were a big item. A ships badge was another item and a brass cribbage board on a hardwood base was my favourite. Dad said the guy who asked them to make this cribbage board had been lost at sea. Stamped on this cribbage board is Bill Brown, RCNVR.



The history of Port Williams "The Port Remembers" states: In 1973 the MV Eskimo made two trips to Trinidad and Barbados with apples, carrots and canned goods. In 1975 the German ship Antares the widest ship ever to dock here and with a carrying capacity of 6,000 tons brought a cargo of soybean meal from Chicago.

I remember working the Antares. She had international call sign DLXR and was owned by Schmidt and Company, Flensburg, Germany the same port that built Schurbek.

I knew the Eskimo. She was a little freighter of 300 tons built in 1969 and about a tenth of the size of the Sally Maersk. She was registered in Copenhagen, Denmark but was so small she did not carry a radio officer. We used to work her on radiotelephone speaking to the captain direct. Her international call sign was OVXB and she had an 8 cylinder oil engine of 800 brake horsepower with a controllable pitch propeller. She was 187 x 33 x 11 feet. It was hard to believe that the Eskimo kept going as long as she did. With the high cost of fuel and the little cargo she could carry she must have produced a very small profit if any at all. The port of Port Williams is also so small that it will never be of any further use as a deep sea port.

The A. P. Moller group of companies owns one of the largest fleets at sea. Like most fleets they recycle the same names over and over. A recent Sally Maersk was a gas tanker of 15,070 cubic metric tons. I was the radio officer, for a few years, in the Gypsum Queen built in 1947 to replace the Gypsum Queen lost in Convoy SC-42.

Spurgeon G. Roscoe  
Halifax, Nova Scotia