The Wreck of Ohioan

The freighter Ohioan was built for the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company of Maryland in 1914. The company was one of the most important shipping firms of the early 20th century, owning the largest single fleet of American freighters. Ohioan was a part of the company’s attempt to double its size between 1910 and 1915.

Ohioan worked in the Atlantic for the first six years of her career, including several years with the U.S. military during WWI. After the war, Ohioan began sailing a coast to coast route through the Panama Canal that she continued running for the remainder of her career.

In October 1936 Ohioan was carrying a cargo of washing machines, trucks and general merchandise to San Francisco. She ran aground off Point Lobos after her pilot lost his bearings in the dense fog. The cargo was salvaged over the next few months and the wreck remained mostly intact off Point Lobos until torn apart by a winter storm in 1938. Ohioan’s stern post and boiler can still be seen at low tide.