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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1976/12/1

A Visit with Capt. George Dolomont I was born Harbour Breton, June 18, 1888 • on the west coast of Newfoundland, 42 miles in from St. Pierre. Fortune Bay. I came to Cape Breton on December the 13th, 1913. I came out of "school and I'll tell you the kind of fellow I was; I didn't fear nor care for nothing. I was the best boy in the school and the worst. I was to teach. My aunt was holding this school for me. But that summer we were out on holidays and the beautiful ships were coming in, the white sails, loaded with fish. My cousin said, "George, that's the place for us." I said, "You said it." Teaching wasn't our line' My father was same as I am • captain out of a ship. He ran what we call a trader. Load with salt and all kinds of goods, trading all a- round Fortune Bay. Come back with fish. I came to Cape Breton in 1913. Arrived in North Sydney after staying in Port aux Basques two days with a gale of wind. Came over and came to Baddeck and bought a house • just a little shack of a house you'd call it. We weren't doing nothing. We had a little money. And the Blue Hill was coming to Baddeck. Capt. Dan MacRae was captain then. A hell of a fine man. I went to him and he said to me, "Your chances of getting on the Blue Hill are as good and perhaps better than mine." First I worked with him, fixing the Blue Hill, looking after the Marion. The two boats were together, froze in for the winter. We put a new boiler in the Blue Hill. She had two boilers at this time but one went afire going into Baddeck, around the light • burned and the stack dropped right down on deck. I worked with them, helping the engineer, my uncle Emanuel Ongo. And when the boat was ready in the spring • no captain. Capt. MacRae was finished. Actually walking around do? ing nothing. A lawsuit was on. And the ice is gone and the mail is ready. They put me on the boat. I had only a mate's certificate. Five days. Still no skipper. Called up Capt. Jim MacDonald, lives up the shore. I ran a week with him. He lost his house. We came back in the morning, his house was gone. So they got another captain from Sydney, a Frenchman. He was 76. We made 6 trips. Turned out he had no ticket. By this time Johnny Arsenault came. His father was firing all his life on the Marion • old Joe Arsenault • but we didn't get along and he didn't get on there. So we got Capt. Richard Burke from Ingonish • and I went mate. Ran the mail, and in our spare time we used to haul targets on a big long line about 3-400 feet long. We'd tow it and they'd fire at it. practising. War was on now. The Canadian Navy was practising. We would haul the target from Beinn Bhreagh to the Grand Narrows bridge. They'd be a mile, mile and a quarter off Beinn Bhreagh, Capt. George Dolbmont in the wheelhouse of the SHENACADIE, and todaTT shooting right for the Grand Narrows bridge. And the Blue Hill ended her bones in the basin at Little Bras d'Or. She sank up there. Just wore out. Put there to die. If it was blowing too hard or too much ice, we had to transfer the mail over? land and meet the train, ife had people bonded for that v/ork. It'd be almost all in the wintertime. It'd be pretty god- darned bad for us not to go in the sum? mertime. Once we stayed in two days, at the wharf, taking the mail out overland. We were just sitting down, not paying any attention, blowing a gale of wind. Mail's going overland. Company's paying for that. This is the Shenacadie. One of the owners came down. I



told him, "I don't get no kick out of this laying at the wharf with a bunch of you guys uptown talking about the skipper. But if any of you wants to come a trip, I'll take them to Iona and I'll take them right through the Grand Narrows bridge too." Oh, blowing. You wouldn't see Iona wharf. The old fellow came down; he wants to go. Now I'm going to do all I can to get all the water I can over her, see. Running up, he says, "Nice here, Captain, isn't it?" "Yeah, beautiful." We got to Maskill's Harbour; that's where the lighthouse is. Time and time I see those people. "Captain," they said, "you were going down there in the x wintertime • sometimes we'd see a light and some more times no." It'd be dark and a gale of wind. Sometimes we had to go into the harbor there too. Not very often. Lots of water in there. Cape Breton's Magazine/31