

[Page 8 - Remembering Rum-Running Days](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 11](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1975/6/1

Captain Jack Willis: Oh, yes, we'd go right into port. We wouldn't lay off on Rura Row. We went right in New York, East River. We went in and discharged. 45,000 cases at a time. Go in one way and corae out the other. Back to St* Pierre and load up and back again* The people that were handling the cargo • discharging • were all picked up before the ship got in. They were drunks, dope fiends and everything. All the scrap? ings of New York. And they had thera into a place and gave thera food and stuff until the ship got in • kept thera there in a shed. So when the ship was finished discharg? ing, they would take them all back into the van, to the same place, and pay them off 20 or 30 dollars for discharging the boats • only take thera two or three hours • give thera a kick in the rear and away they're .gone. Until the ship would corae back again. Then two or three days before she arrived they would gather those fellows around a- gain and have thera all ready when the ship docked. They would have thera down there in the vans. But the third time we went in we weren't supposed to go in. There was supposed to be a message sent to us to keep away. Somehow there was a mistake raade in the message. So we went on in. When we got in off Battery Place, tug boat carae out. Said, "Christ, you fellows shouldn't be in here at all. Beat it." Well, by the tirae they got talking about it, it's too bloody late now to go out. So we go up the Hudson. And we anchored in full view of Sing Sing. We were in trouble. We were sup? posed to carry on to a place way up the Hudson River. We got a message telling us to drop the anchors and leave her. The revenue cutter is on its way up so get away, get ashore. So we dropped the anchor and everybody got down in the boats. I got back up the ladder again and got myself a couple bottles of whiskey and back down again • and we put her ashore. And there was a big ice house • sawdust and everything in it • but it had been neglected for some tirae • this is where we went to hide until a bus carae for us. After a while the bus came and we went to the New Yorker • officers and en? gineers. We left the wireless operator in charge of the crew to wait until the bus came back to pick thera up. They were not to wander around, people might see them. But they did wander around and the police came and picked them all up. My brother was in the bunch. We were in the Hotel New Yorker now. We were talking to the old raan when this Big Louie came in. He had a grip and plunked it down. "Are you people ready to go back to the ship if everything is all clear?" We said, "Sure." But in the meantime a message came through. It was too late. The revenue cutter was along? side and the ship's under arrest. So he reached in his bag, picks up a roll of money • bag was full of money • rolled up, big rolls • and fired this at the captain. "Take this and head for Montreal." So we all got on the train. The old man paid all our passages, we had all we wanted • and when we got to Halifax the captain and I lived all winter, kept our families, on the money that was left over. And coraing on toward Frank McKnight Ltd. Everything Musical " 279 Charlotte Street Sydney 539-5030 Frank McKnight Ltd. Everything Musical " Picnic Tables Well-water Ice Cubes Morrison's General Store WRECK COVE Enjoy your' ' favorite seafood C Cape Breton CHOWDER HOUSES Three locations: .Baddeck Iniet



?? Neii's Harbor ?? Port Morieri Cape Breton's Magazine/8 CO-OP Btfilding Sufiplies
and Harbour Homes • yowr best Cape Breton Source of FUE-ASSEMBLED HOMES
iiiiil COHAGES Complete stocks of lumber, building suppiies. Plumbing, Heating and
Electcical materials. W? cater to th? building public CO"OD