

[Page 12 - Chiasson from Cheticamp: Working on Coastal Vessels](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 65](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1994/1/1

I'd say there were about 7 or 8 all run? ning down towards Cheticamp. You could have been in a collision at any time. But at the time, I didn't know any better. The skipper was very nervous--we used to laugh at him sometimes--but now I can see why he was nervous. I was young and I didn't re? alize the danger there was. So we were very, very fortunate, very for? tunate that way along the coast. Because I've seen us leaving Halifax the same thing, dense fog, you won't see anything. In those days (before radar) you had to (rely) on the compass, just a magnetic compass. If you had a deckload of (steel) drums, for example, that used to work the compass, you couldn't depend on your com? pass. It used to draw the compass, because of the steel. Your compass is going to be out. I often think, how we ever made it. Not only for danger, but for the navigation of the boat. There were so many little coast? ers in those days, and nobody had radar in those days. On this side of the Strait, it's not bad for fog--but from Halifax in the summer months, it's always foggy. We'd leave Hal? ifax, and our first port of call as a rule would be Isaac's Harbour. Then we'd make our next port of call--Larry's River. There was Port Felix. We'd go in through, sometimes. White Head. Canso. We'd go to St. Peters, Arichat, West Arichat, Mul? grave, Hawkesbury, Point Tupper. I=botmaxji Systems for Custom I Arch I Supports SHOES! • 10% Seniors • Up-to-Date Stock of Stylish Shoes Complete Line of ORTHOPEDIC SHOES for Men, Women, and Children CAPE BRETON BRACE LTD. 66 Cornwallis Street, Sydney, NS • 539-5100 • c CANES .WALKERS CRUTCHES Then after we'd pass the Strait, sometimes we'd go to Havre Boucher. Then we'd go to Port Hood Island. Sometimes we had freight for the mainland--imagine that--Port Hood. And it was rough. We were unable to dock at Port Hood because it's open. There's no harbour in Port Hood. We had to drop the freight on Port Hood Island. And on our way back to Halifax, we'd stop at Port Hood Is? land. And we used to have a lot of freight there from Port Hood Island. They used to ship a lot of dry cod those days. There were quite a few families on the island. So then from Port Hood Island we'd go into Mabou. Up the Mabou River. And from Mabou we'd go up to Margaree. Then Margaree, Grand Etang, and then Cheticamp. And then a lot of times we used to have dynamite for Dingwall, for the mines (the gypsum quarry). And one time, we left Cheticamp, we stopped at Margaree to load lumber with that little boat. And it was late in the fall, beginning of December. And we never finished loading the lumber till about 10 o'clock at night, and it was dark. And Margaree is very shallow water and a bad place to get out. It was not buoyed like it is today. They just had little spar buoys. The captain said, "I don't think we'll go tonight. We'll wait tomorrow morning." Which was very stupid. I can't see it now. Because, with the experience that he had-- and the glass was low from a westerly-- westerly blows right into the harbour. So the next morning it was a westerly gale, so it was impossible to go out. It was blowing right into the channel. After the storm abated, we let go the lines to go out. When we got in the middle of the channel, we hit bottom. We put the red line over the side: there was only 8 feet of water, and we were drawing 12. So there was not much chance for us to go over. We had to back



off, and we tied up. SIMEON'S II Family Restaurant 427 Grand Lake Road, Sydney 562-0251 We Feature: • Full Course Meals • Fresh Seafood • Steaks • Chops • Ethnic Dishes • Homemade Pies Baked Fresh Daily Come in! We would love to serve you! SIMEON'S Restaurant & Tiffany Dining Room FULLY LICENSED Plummer Ave., New Waterford 862-8090 • 862-8093 We feature the same great food as Simeon's II & we have large Banquet Facilities & Lounge