

Page 15 - Chiasson from Cheticamp: Working on Coastal Vessels

ISSUE: Issue 65

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1994/1/1

say, not always full cargo. But there was always something. (Did you take any travellers?) We used to bring guite a few from Halifax to Larry's River. Passengers. Which we were not cer? tified to carry passengers. Just, you know--not many--one or two at a time. We had a spare room there that we could ac? commodate two.... Another thing, too, that we used to haul, every trip, we never used to fail: we al? ways used to have between 10 and 12 pun? cheons of molasses. There was an awful lot of molasses used. And at the time there was an awful lot of people making that home beer, homebrew. They were making that seed beer. You've heard of it. There were seeds, and they'd multiply. You could put, say, a cupful into a gallon jar, and put some molasses. And after awhile you'd have about a half a gallon. They'd multiply. In the Depression that's what it was called, seed beer. Everybody in the country was making seed beer. And there was an awful lot of molasses being eaten, because, you know, it was the Depression, eh? The mo? lasses used to come in puncheons. And it was good molasses, not like today. It was really thick. The same as it used to come from Barbados. Now the molasses is coming in tankers; they have tankers that carry molasses. And it's diluted then whenever it's being discharged. It's not this stuff, the real molasses. But as far as the freight those days, like I say, there were no trucks, everything was coming by boat--everything. We were carrying flour. Sugar, molasses, gasoline, name it. Anything at all. Fertilizer, ce? ment. Hauled all that cement for that church in Havre Boucher. Coal--we even loaded coal one time at Little Bras d'Or for Prospect on the outside of Halifax. We went to P. E. I. one time and loaded potatoes at Mon? tague. So, we were into everything. Salt--go to Lunen? burg and we used to load salt for the Robin Jones. So, you'd haul anything that was possible, wherever there was a cargo. have in the fall or early spring--well, mostly in the fall because the fishermen used to make their traps in the winter. One time we had 10 puncheons of molasses on deck. And a puncheon was something that was hard to secure proper when it was rough. So we left Port Hood Island, it was late in the fall, it was in December again. And the boat was rolling badly. And one puncheon took off and hit the winch, and knocked the bottom of the molasses off. And when one left, they all got loose. So the captain had to put the boat head up to the wind to stop the rolling. And we had all these laths on top of the house. And I was on top passing laths to the other fellow, try? ing to block the barrels. And the spray coming overboard, everything froze solid. And we had to go back to Port Hood Island, and discharge that molasses on the island, and to re-load it again on the way back to take it to the mainland! Ah, geez, those days, I'll tell you what. There was no such a thing as hours. You worked--I've seen us work--like, sailing day in Halifax, get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, start to load cargo at 7. Some? times go to another pier. Pier 2, one of those big piers. Maybe take a carload of sugar or maybe a carload of fertilizer. Work all day. In the evening, say around 7 or 8 o'clock--they had a little boat that used to come alongside from Dartmouth, tie up alongside, where you'd put all those drums of gasoline on our deck. Now, we had to store those, eh? Rolled them, and then secured them with

rope. And then leave Halifax about 11 o'clock, midnight, after working all the time. And I had the first wheel. I'd take the wheel from midnight till 4 o'clock in the morn? ing. Before getting any rest! Because in those days all the macke? rel, it was not shipped frozen or fresh like it is today. Everything was salted. Laths for making lobster traps--we used to Keltic Lodge, The Spirit of the Highlands A resort on cliffs overlooking the ocean, commanding a view like no other. Romantic Interlude The champagne is chilled and waiting for you. Fresh flowers, fruit and our own Keltic-made chocolates are already in your room. ('t ready to make your escape! Special hlue Packages Golf Getaway Are you up to the challenge of the famous Highland Links Golf Course? Designed by Stanley Thompson, it's a par 71 walking course. Boti) pacliages include two nights accommodations pliis dinners and brealifasts. For information and reservations, call or write: KELTIC IXDGK ".' tradition of excellence'" Keltic Lodge, Middle Head Peninsula, Ingonish Beach, Nova Scotia, Canada BOC ILO Tel: (902) 285-2880 Fax: (902) 285-2859