

[Page 23 - Life and Death of the "Aspy"](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 14](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1976/8/1

Johnny Smith when he was Mate and Lida Sraith when she was Stewardess. to take care of all the cabins, and if there was anybody sick • lot of seasick? ness. Sora people would be so seasick they'd just wish they'd die. It could be quite rough at times • quite bad storms. But it didn't bother me. I was never frightened. Never* Capt, Capt. John M. Smith: I remember one night having trouble on the Aspy by loading a full load of fresh fish from Neil's Har? bour. It was put aboard by MacLeod Bro? thers • a load in the hold and a full load on deck. We came to Ingonish • made our regular calls • and left about 8 o'clock with a southeast storm on • already blowing and raore to corae. Capt. Dan thought we could make it to North Sydney. But about 10 miles above Smokey we knew we couldn't go further • and we hauled it to St. Ann's Bay to go to Englishtown for shelter. She broke all the stays of her sraokestack and all the windows on one side were broken out. We arrived in Englishtown about 3 o'clock in the raorning. Waves coraing up washed the boxes off the deck • lost about half the deckload of fish,...That's the second Aspy. After the wreck of the first Aspy, the Constance was the relief boat • built during the First War • till the se? cond Aspy was built. I went on close to the first of January, 1935 • went on as deck hand. Capt. Dan MacDonald was captain and Roy Bennett was the purser and Joe Pottie was the mate. I know the whole crew at the time: the two firemen, Charlie Buf- fett from Neil's Harbour and Bob Westbury from Sydney; and the cook was Angus Hines from Ingonish Ferry; the stewardess was Jane MacNeil; and the engineer was Charles MacMullin. The stewardess helped the cook and she had so many staterooms to look after. Ihese staterooms would be filled on our trips frora Sydney north and filled on the way back. Summer, spring right to fall • all your staterooms were taken. Tourists and anybody travelling. And most passengers wouldn't have rooras. Lida Smith: We used to have 75 for dinner sometiraes. That's T?rtiere I raet my husband. I loved it. I wore a white uniform. I had concerned, the Capt. Smith: As far as I' Aspy was not only a little passenger and freight ship carrying everything you can think of to these comraunities • to me she was more or less an institution. You know, to the people of the north country • the Aspy was practically the only means of transportation and it was the only sche? duled raean of getting supplies in and out. And all the merchants would have their supplies in before the Aspy made her last trip. And no more supplies carae in until the Aspy started to run again in the spring. Nothing. Ihe roads were dirt roads and there were no snowplows at that time to keep thera open. The only thing that went down that way in the wintertirae was the mail • and that went by horse and sleigh. A man's father died in North Sydney Hos? pital. We got into Sydney, supposed to be in for Christmas • and when we got in we had to take the remains to Dingwall. We didn't take much freight • just sora ' perishable things. We just called here and there, the iraportant places • then go land the reraains at Dingwall. We brought raany reraains back, frora everywhere. Corae in on the train and probably we'd have to wait an hour or so in North Sydney for soraething like that coraing in. Other times we'd raake a rush trip back, taking someone to North Sydney, to the hospital. You'd get



calls that people were sick and they'd meet you at one of your stops. We were CaDe Breton's Magazine/23