

[Page 45 - Wreck of the Dochas & the Etta Stewart](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 66](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1994/6/1

neer (Halifax, native to Quebec). D. (David) Kennedy, Fireman, of Louisbourg. William McGann, Fireman, Halifax. Those on the barge were: Captain (Caleb) Spencer of Louisbourg. William Price, Mate, of Louisbourg, formerly Captain of Schooner P. Walsh, P. (Peter) McVicar, George Kelly, James Kelly, A. (Angus) McDonald, Norman McCaskill, seamen of Louisbourg. David Baldwin, Cook, of Louisbourg. A whole family is swept out of existence in the death of Engineer Hannah, his wife and children. Mr. Hannah had been married a second time, not more than two months, and the family had taken a trip to Cape Breton... 'The last trip the Dorcas was here he (Mr. Hannah) had the quinsy very bad, and had partially arranged with another engineer to take his place. But the quinsy grew unexpectedly better, and he resumed his position.' The children were spending their vacation at Capt. Ferguson's, Sydney. Mrs. Hannah went there three weeks ago on a visit. The boys have come up several times with their father on the round trip, which took about a fortnight. The only relative that Mr. Hannah had living, that he knew of, is a stepsister in Scotland. The lost family consisted of: William Hannah was 40 years old, Lucy Hannah, 26 years, St. John's, Nfld., Maty Hannah, 13 years, Archibald Hannah, 10 years, Ewan Hannah, 7 years. Mr. W.E. Messervey, who lived next door to the family on Moren St., speaks very highly of father, wife and children, and the neighbours sorrow as they would for near relatives suddenly taken away. By Thursday the disaster was front-page news across the country. The Toronto Globe featured the headline: "Seventeen Were Drowned by the Foundering of Two Vessels in Monday's Gale • The Dorcas and her Tow Were Wrecked on Shut-In Island and Wreckage and dead Bodies are Alone Left to tell the Tale." The New York Times claimed "There is no longer any doubt that fully twenty-five people perished in the wreck of the steamer Dorcas and the barge Etta Stewart." The Montreal Gazette added in its Thursday edition that "the steamer and barge were both unseaworthy. The barge was an old barque with the topmasts taken down." Although standard questions were raised regarding the conditions of the Dorcas Plage St-Pierre Camping Ltee. C. p. 430, Cheticamp Cte. d'Inverness, Nouvelle-Ecosse BOE IHO Tel.: (902)224-2112 - (902)224-2612 • OPEN 24 MAY to END SEPTEMBER • * 85 serviced sites * 35 unserviced sites * Picnic tables * Beach swimming * Washrooms * Chaise houses * Free showers * Playground * Miniature golf * Laundromat * Tennis & volleyball de Cheticamp La Caisse Populaire • DAILY SAVINGS • SAVING ACCOUNTS • CHECKING ACCOUNTS • SMARTCHECKS • MASTERCARD CHETICAMP • 224-2055 PennislamdcMgr. • R.R.S.P.S • MORTGAGES • LOANS • A.B.M. MACHINE and her tow at the inquiry, none of the testimony presented by the company was seriously challenged. The local news was also taking on a combative tone. On Thursday, August 24, 1893 the liberal Morning Chronicle, reporting on the recovery of Mrs. Hannah wrote about her recent marriage and state of advanced pregnancy. The next day the conservative Halifax Herald struck out at the Chronicle's coverage. Under the heading "An Unwarranted Slander," the Herald wrote: In the Chronicle's



desire to be sensational it publishes an | outrageous and unwarranted j" slander upon an innocent woman in its account of the Jo'n T. F. Sharp's grave in St. Anselme's sad loss of the steamer Dor- Cemetery, West Chezzetcook cas. The Chronicle says: 'The body of William Hannah, engineer, who resided at 14 Moren St. had not a mark on it. Mrs. Hannah's tx>dy was nude. She was soon to become a mother" and the Chroni? cle adds that Mrs. Hannah was a "bride of a few weeks." The entire family was lost in the steamer, and no relative is left to bring the Chronicle to task for the implied slander. Mrs. Hannah's t)ody had about it the remains of her nightdress, which she evidently wore when aroused from her stateroom shortly after mid? night when the disaster oc? curred. Mrs. Hannah was married in February last. The Herald's action ap? pears to have achieved the desired effect. Subsequent articles regarding the un? fortunate Hannah family were silent on the matter. By Friday twenty bodies had been recovered. John Sharp, Norman McRury, Norman McAskill and supposedly Miss Sadie Musgrave were still unac? counted for. It was later determined that the miss? ing girl was actually Mary Parkview Motel Dining Room and Cocktail Lounge At the entrance to the Cape Breton Highlands National Park CHETICAMP • 17 clean units • Radios and colour cable TV • Salmon and trout fishing • Charbroiled steaks • Fresh seafood • Hearty homemade bread and pastries • Licensed dining room & lounge OPEN MAY to OCTOBER Box 117, Cheticamp, NS BOE IHO (902) 224-3232 (ICI ON PARLE FRANCAIS) Cooperative Artisanale w'' Acadian Restaurant/ Acadian Museum p. 0. Box 98, Cheticamp, NS BOE IHO (902) 224-2170 Experience Acadian Traditions • Featuring the world famous Cheticamp hand-hooked rugs • Local crafts and souvenirs for all tastes • Taste and enjoy various Acadian foods in our Licensed Dining Room: Chicken Fricot • Meat Pies • Chowder & Fish Dishes • Homemade Dessert • Recommended in Where to Eat in Canada; member Taste of Nova Scotia • Visit our Acadian Museum • Hooking, spinning & weaving demonstrations • Open every day to welcome you, May 1 st - October 15th ...Our Home • Cheticamp!