

Page 15 - The Wreck of the "Watford"

ISSUE: Issue 16

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1977/6/1

small skiff. One of the stokers, a big strong man referred to as an African but with the very un-African name of John John? ston, jumped down into the boat as it rolled and plunged between the Watford and the cliff. He had a line around his waist, and with all his strength he tried to get control of the bouncing, wallowing skiff. After hours of work and stress in the stoke? hold heat and the shock of the outside air on his half-naked body, he collapsed in the small boat, and his shipmates dragged him back on board the Watford, dead of heart failure. All this time the hurricsme was pounding and pushing the wreck closer and closer a-gainst the cliff until there was scarcely the length of a small boat between ship and shore. The surf was breaking and spouting around the Watford and up the side of the cliff almost to the top. But now men were seen ashore, crawling and kneeling on the cliff edge in the storm. The seamen shot a line ashore, and when it had been secured a heavy rope was run out and a rope sling rigged. On this the sail? ors were brought in one by one, dragged to the top of the cliff and handed into safety by the rescuers. Then the sling was run back again to the ship for the next passen? ger. It was cruelly hard work, the men a- shore could not straighten up against the gale, and were forced to work kneeling or lying flat; and aboard the Watford those working at the rope were bruised and half smothered by the waves coming aboard. As soon as the sailors were brought to land, each with his little bundle of possessions tied to his back, he dropped his pack and fell to helping the rescue crew. Captain Penrid would have remained with his ship until the last, but he was a small man, and not very young. First Officer Knight and Bosun Murray persuaded him to leave, as they were both young powerful men and bet? ter able to handle the heavy rope sling in its trips back and forth between the deck and cliff. One try one the men were taken off until no one remained aboard except Knight and Mur? ray, with the dead body of John Johnston laid in the deckhouse. The people ashore could see these two debating as to which would be the last to leave. Knight was the older of the two, a married man with a family in the city of Aberdeen in Scotland. The watchers saw that Murray was insisting that he go; they saw Knight step into the chair; they saw him slip and fall between ship and cliff. The surf was gushing in so that at one moment the depth of the water Left, Ezra Bailey of Schooner Pond; right, cutting; up the remains of the Wat tor do a.A. IFrp'matt 5lt5. PRESCRIPTIONS-COSMETICS TOILETRIES. ETC. INVERNISS • PHONI 258-2400 • NOVA SCOTIA "Turn left at the Causeway- Route 19 • It's a lovely way to go." Blue Heron Gift Shop BADDECK, N. S. Gifts For All Occasions MARG and LLOYD MacEACHERN Where Better Service Costs No More MacLeod's FINA Baddeck A Tradition of Welcome and Comfort Pine Pood by the Fire Telegraph House & Motel ovierlooking the Bras D*Or Lakes at Baddeck 295-9988 OIBN ALL TEAR GROUND '