

[Page 105 - From Visits with Capt. Michael Tobin Coastal & Gulf Ferry Captain, Ret'd](#)ISSUE : [Issue 73](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1998/6/1

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: M.V. (I/Iotor Vessels) Marine Nautica, Atlantic Freighter, Caribou, Sir Frederick Bond. This page, above: The Joseph and Clara Smaiwood. Right: The Ambrose Shea. and have a talk with them, or bring them down and have a cup of coffee with them, and little story, you know. I enjoyed it. I lost two men, you know, over the years. Well, one of them was on the Burgeo. I think it was the fog down here on the dock. He was coming aboard in the night? time, and he never turned up. There were a couple of big holes in the side of the dock and they had no lights there, where we were tied up. So they got a dory next day and went out, sent the boys out jig? ging, and they got his body. He apparently went into those holes and slipped, and went over the dock, coming aboard. And another fellow--a bad day going into Port-aux-Basques. The sea struck her and shifted the afterdeck cargo. They were just getting oiled up and getting ready for tying up. And he must have gone over. They never got his body. Just outside the head, the sea hit her, and shifted all the cargo. He could have been on the lee side of the cargo, you know, and knocked him overboard. They never got his body.... We didn't carry a doctor, but there was | mostly always one on, you know. One trip j when I was running on the Shea to Argentia, a fellow in the bar took a heart attack. Brophy, his name was. I called Search-and- Rescue. And they said they'd have a Labra? dor helicopter down within a short time--a couple of hours. So right off of St. Pierre I saw her coming. I cleared the seats off of the deck so he could land. And she was one of those big Labradors--there wasn't room for her to land. So the fellow came down on a cable. And he told me to keep the same course and speed. We put the man on a stretcher, and hoisted him up, took him aboard. Then they took his wife. And it was three or four hours after, she came over The Tidal Wave of November 18, 1929 from an article written for The Downhommer by Capt. Tobin I was a seaman on the S.S. Argyle crossing Placentia Bay on what we called the "west run." We left Argentia every Monday after the ar? rival of the train from St. John's. With mail, passengers and freight al? ready loaded, we went along the west side of the bay, on our way to nineteen ports-of-call. It was a moderate day, fine and clear. The contour of the land ahead was visible. We were about halfway across the bay when suddenly the land disappeared and a huge wall of water rose close ahead, blocking out our view. The mate called from the bridge through a voice pipe to the wheelhouse, "What is that? Keep the ship's head for the sea." Which I did. We faced the ship headfirst into the wave. The ship rose up one side of the swell, until she reached the crest, before going down the other side. The propellor came out of the wa? ter. Everything was shaking with vibration. The effect was not unlike a roller coaster dropping from a great height. A few minutes later everything was normal. The huge swell seemed to be about fifty feet in height. We did not have wireless in those days. We had no way of knowing what was happening.... The first ports we arrived at reported only an unusually high tide. It was into the second day, arriving at Port au Bras near Burin, when CONTINUED NEXT PAGE Cultivate your family tre. Your public library has: How-to Books, Directories, Guides CensusA'ital

Statistics Records County and Local Histories Family Histories, Old Newspapers, etc. Computer/Internet Access Library collections include materials in English, French, Gaelic, etc. The Local History and Genealogical Collection is concentrated on Inverness, Richmond and Guysborough counties - the library's service area. Eastern Counties Regional Library 390 Murray Street, P. O. Box 2500 Mulgrave, Nova Scotia

BOE 2G0 Telephone: (902) 747-2597 FAX: (902) 747-2500 email:

info@nsme.library.ns.ca Proud to be part of the Cape Breton community. Our employees support many worthwhile causes and organizations, including:

- Electrical safety demonstrations in the school
- Youth sporting events, like the Coal Bowl basketball tournament
- Junior Achievement programs, including the Economics of Staying in School And, through our partnership with the IWK-Grace, we'll soon be visiting a community near you with the Nova Scotia Power Children's Safety House. HOVA SCOTIA POWER