

The Old Ships

HARBOUR GRACE—The Resolven, a vessel of 143 tons was built in Prince Edward Island in 1878. She left Harbour Grace for Snug Harbour, Labrador, and was ballast with herring barrels, salt etc. On August 27 1884, the vessel was picked up by H.M.S. Mallard, 25 miles off Catalina about August 30th. Her story continues as given in an old Harbour Grace Standard.

The Lady Glover arrived at Harbour Grace from Catalina on Sunday with the derelict Resolven in tow. When picked up by H.M.S. Mallard, she had all sails set: a fire was burning in the fore hold. From this fact, it is believed that the vessel was abandoned before the vessel was abandoned, and her port side light done before daylight. Found on board the vessel was the chronometer, a watch belonging to the captain, and a package containing 100 one pound notes. Three small breakers of water were missing as well as a quantity of bread which it is believed were thrown by the crew and passengers of the boat when they were about to leave her.

Whether they escaped clear of the vessel before she struck the iceberg and have been picked up by some other passing craft, or whether they were all drowned on the side of the ship owing to the boat having capsized are matters of speculation and await solution, unfortunately, no trace has been seen of tidings here of either boat, crew or passengers.

The injuries inflicted on the Resolven at the time of the collision were serious ones. Her jibboom and bowsprit were carried away and her stern smashed. It is thought that she fell on her port side after collision with the iceberg and this had the effect of bringing her around after she dropped astern. Her rudder was then unshipped likely by a piece of projecting ice and her rudder case carried away when she fell on the berg, she damaged her fore lower top-sails and fore and main yards and backing astern she came in contact with the berg and great damage was inflicted on the upper works of the starboard quarter, then doubtless her sails caught aback and she was thrown back on the port side and her sides were rubbed and chafed very severely and other injuries inflicted on her hull. The men on board and crew were John James, James Matthews, John Jones, Thomas Richards, George Nathan, Evan Thomas of Wales and Richard Down of England.

The names of the passengers were: Douglas Taylor and Thomas and George Colfors of Carbonear and Edward J. Keefe of Harbour Grace. Mr. Taylor, a native of Carbonear is in the service of John Munn and Co. had been living in Harbour Grace for some time, Edward J. Keefe is a son of the late Michael Keefe.

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ABOUT THE RESOLVEN

GRACE—Last week, we told the story of the brig Resolven. Since then, we have across another commentary on the Resolven in the manner in which this vessel has become a derelict.

The Resolven came to the attention of the H.M.S. Mallard on August 27, 1884. She was brought to the attention of John Munn and Co. and was under charter to Labrador to the Medley's for a soft wood cargo. She was a 143 ton, built in P.E. Island and had six men on board. She was owned by Madoo, Carnarvon and was in Harbour Grace on August 27th, when she was picked up by the H.M.S. Mr. Douglas Taylor, Mr. Douglas Taylor, and Thomas Colborne, Edward J. Keefe, as co-captain, were sent to trim her sails, at which the firm made a considerable trade at that time.

On August 29th, the Resolven was seen by the H.M.S. Mallard. She was picked up as a derelict in the mouth of Trinity Bay. The crew of crew or passengers were not seen. The sails were set, but she was afloat in the gale. No sign of wreckage or crew were to be found. The yard arms were broken and some of the rigging was hanging in shreds. The boat was afloat and the ship's condition showed that she and passengers had been on the ship hurriedly to escape a passing danger.

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The Resolven, Capt. Cole, was after being bought by Munn & Co. at Northport, Nova Scotia, on the 27th July, 1884. She had been sent there with a lumber cargo and after Mr. Grace went ashore, the vessel was a total wreck. Although the Resolven's history is not with it more or less known.

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HARBOUR GRACE—The late Capt. John Horwood was a frequent writer of accounts of the old sailing days and of ships of his time.

Some years ago he told the story of the disastrous spring of 1872 as follows:

The schooner Margaret, built in P.E. Island was bought by Ridley and Sons in May 1869. She sailed from Carbonear on March 1st., 1872, with the wind blowing strong from the north west. She crossed Trinity Bay and put into the ice near Bonavista Bay. A fleet of vessels from Bay Roberts, Harbour Grace, Carbonear and Heart's Content were near, but none could get through the ice. The wind became northerly and all vessels became jammed and drifted southerly with the wind and tide until the vicinity of the Virgin Rocks was reached. These lie S.S.W. east 90 miles off Cape Spear. All around there some twenty icebergs lying aground in the shallow water. The ice drift spoiled the sailing voyage for that spring.

On March 17th, Capt. Andrew Hartley in charge of the brigantine John B. Campbell owned by Donnelley of Harbour Grace, loaded and bound for market, came out of Harbour Grace. She was in the water between the Margaret and the land when the wind died down.

Daylight broke on March 18th., a calm morning with no indications of the approaching storm. The skipper of the Margaret sent two men to the Aurora, Capt. Penney of Carbonear, who was lying a few miles to the eastward of us. The men went early in the morning and stayed too long before starting to return.

About 9 a.m. a light breeze sprang up from the southeast and developed into what has been since known as the Great Storm of Sheila's Day. The snow came on with the wind increasing and by noon it was seen by all who had any experience of storms that it was going to be a never to be forgotten day. The two men lost their way, but in the storm, found a vessel from Bay Roberts and went aboard her. Nothing could be seen for the terrible storm and the skipper was on the deck all day fearing that the two men had been lost. It was useless to fire a gun for nothing could be heard above the roar of the wind and to make matters worse about 3 p.m. the wind chopped to the North West and came on with hurricane force. The Success, owned by Stephen Pearcey from Heart's Content, broke out in a lake of water and lost a man from her main topsail yard that night. Skipper John Antie in a vessel, the Village Belle, from Beigus and Jenkins in the Dundannah were in the Gulf fishery and were never heard of since that day.

The John B. Campbell referred to previously was in the water between the Margaret and Cape Spear. Capt. Andrew Hartley was well known as a great seaman. The vessel was a beautiful Canadian ship of about 200 tons. It is thought that the lower topsail was on her when the wind chopped and her foremast head broke off in the area of the rigging and took the mainmast with it as it went overboard. She came into the inside edge of the ice and became a total wreck. She took fire and with the oil in her it lit up the surface and could be seen for a radius of twenty miles or more.

Other vessels were lost in that storm of 1872 and these will be told off in next week's notes.

OLD TIME CLIPPERS

HARBOUR GRACE—A number of vessels well known at Harbour Grace were among those who were used in the slave trade in bygone days. It was looked on as a legitimate trade then. It has been said that Ridley's vessel the Kelpie had been a slave runner before she was purchased by Ridley for the fish trade. Capt Boag was master of her in 1832 and she was a real clipper.

The "Fruit Girl" belonging to Prowse was one of the best known of the fleet of foreign going vessels. She was built in England in 1866 and was still afloat in 1930. She had ringbolts in her hold to which the slaves were chained and it was claimed that she had run more than one cargo of "black ivory" from Africa to Brazil in her early days.

There is a record of the Henrietta, Smith, master leaving St. John's for Cupids, Conception Bay in 1832. She was caught in a gale off Cape St. Francis and drove right across the Atlantic, arriving safely at Limerick, Ireland where she refitted and got back safely to Cupids on May 2nd. In time to fit out for the fishery.

Some time ago, Mr. William Tucker, now living in the United States, a son of Mr. Luke Stephen Tucker, St. John's and a grandson of Capt. Tucker, one-time master of the Haldee, wrote this correspondent requesting information about the Haldee of which he had in his possession a large painting. Some information was at hand at that time, but recently more was found. The Haldee was about 105 or 110 tons, was painted black and was pronounced to be one of the smartest little vessels afloat. The first to take charge of her was Capt. George Brown, and when he was appointed in charge of the Beacon light at Hr. Grace, he was succeeded by Capt. Tucker. Capt Tucker was later appointed in charge of the Customs boat and he was succeeded on the Haldee by Capt. Walsh of Catalina, in 1930. A writer telling of the Haldee says that she was lost about sixty years before (1870) on a passage from England with all hands. At that time she was commanded by Capt. John Walsh and George Maher of the Point of Beach was mate. Jonny Fogarty of Waterford Ireland was bos'un and Tim Cronan one of the crew.

Dec 17, 1958

Old Clippers and Their Fate

GRACE—Since our last week concerning the old clippers, we have continued to write about some of the old clippers and out of the bygone years. There was one of the clippers that was caught in the storm. However, some of the clippers were captured, we know Lord Nelson had been captured by a British Man-of-War. She was caught in a gale into Poole and was taken to the auction.

At Poole, who were engaged in a business at the time and the fish trade between the islands and Battle Bay, purchased her for use at these places. The Flying Dutchman was a large ship and a song to her was only two days over the Atlantic to Cuba shore. She was taken to the planters and never more.

All Capt. Moore was told about his men, "I would set our ship on fire to strengthen them."

It is thought that the Flying Dutchman was mistaken by a Man-of-War's running fight took place.

These ships were impossible to except in moderation. They were indeed clippers.

At the end of the last century the old clipper ships were vessels commenced to disappear. Many of them were used in carrying supplies to the Labrador coast in the heavy weather and after being broken up their rigging was used for use in the water or sinking off from the hulls.

There were lost while bringing from Europe to this part of the world. Gradually they were broken up and their rigging was used for use in the water or sinking off from the hulls. The men who sailed on the clippers were well known for their good sailing and we hope to tell some of their stories in future columns.

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And The Storm Of 1875

HARBOUR GRACE—One of the old ships that met disaster in that storm of 1872 was the brigantine Huntsman, Capt. Robert Dawe. She put into the ice near Cape St. Lewis and tied up nearly all her canvas. His brother, Capt. Sam Dawe, in the brigantine "Rescue", put into the ice nearby and did likewise. The snow came on as the evening closed in and both vessels drifted in the Straits until the Huntsman struck the Fish rock off Cape St. Charles. This rock lies about two miles off the Cape and is above water but the sea washes over it in bad weather.

Capt. Fred Mercer, one of the survivors, told that when the Huntsman, came in contact with the rock, he ran up the main rigging to look to leeward and about twenty men jumped out over the weather quarter onto the ice and ran from the vessel but with the heave of the sea she struck the rock and was knocked into "spawls."

The mainmast fell across the rock and broke in two pieces. Mercer was not hurt but passed over the rock, got out on the ice and was one of the 18 saved out of a crew of 68 men.

The snow lightened up before daylight and 17 men found their way to the "Rescue". Solomon French of Bay Roberts was thrown from the quarter deck to the rock and thought he was the only survivor. He fell on his knees and gripped the kelp which had grown on the rock and began to pray. While he was praying, a piece of ice came up on the curl of the sea and lodged dead aground on the rock in front of him, forming a breakwater, which sheltered him until the sea went down. That was Sunday night and Capt. Ash of the S.S. Lion took him off the rock on Tuesday.

A piece of ice struck the "Rescue" and broke off her rudder. She drifted in the Straits and on Monday drifted over to the breakers which lie off St. Peter's Island, but she did not strike bottom. The "Rescue" reached St. Anthony and had her rudder repaired and she proceeded home.

Capt. Humphrey, Carbonear, in the "Lord Clyde" had also been drifting over that same shoal and she received a stroke and went down.

The crew jumped out on the ice and while some landed in safety others went aboard the "Rescue" for the voyage home.