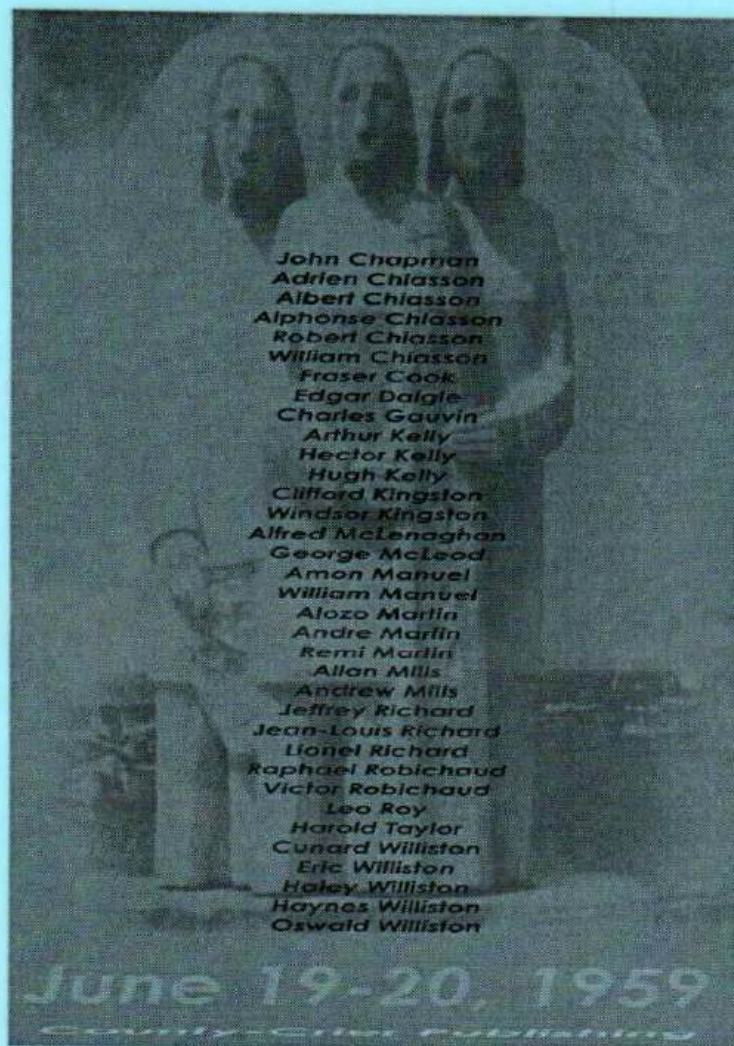


Memories of the Escuminac Disaster

June 1959



Collection of Charline Jenkins Godin

This collection was prepared in 1994 as a gift to my father, Cyril Jenkins and my aunt, Aïda Jenkins. Since then, new articles have been added. Therefore, this is a revised edition in honor of the 50th anniversary of the disaster. Enclosed you will find copies of articles from the following:

The Miramichi Press

The Atlantic Advocate

The North Shore Leader

The Moncton Daily Times

L'Évangéline

Liberty

Friday, June 19, 1959 was by no means a regular day for the fishermen of Baie Ste-Anne and Escuminac, N.B.

It was late afternoon when fishermen set out for what was expected to be a very good fishing day. The salmon catches had been above normal all week due to easterly winds. No one expected that these same winds would create havoc for all fishermen who set out that evening.

Bernard and Cyril Jenkins left the wharf Friday around 5 or 6 p.m. What started out as good fishing soon became disastrous. The winds got increasingly worse from the northeast as of 9 p.m. By midnight, there were northeasterly gales.

Our brave fishermen fought off what mother nature threw their way all night.

Saturday morning, the Jenkins found a capsized boat. It was the Doucets, Jack and his two sons, Alphonse and Eve. They had spent 20 minutes in the chilled waters before being rescued by Bernard and Cyril.

Their rescue was not the end of their ordeal. Their engine then broke down. They were unable to start it again until 9 p.m. that evening.

Bernard and Cyril, along with the Doucet crew, made it back to the safety of the Escuminac wharf around 7:30 a.m. Sunday, June 21. By this time they were the only boat afloat, counting the 2 occupants and 3 survivors.

In the following pages, you will find the stories as reported by the medias in the days following the disaster as well as the years to follow.

MONCTON, N.B. MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 22, 1959

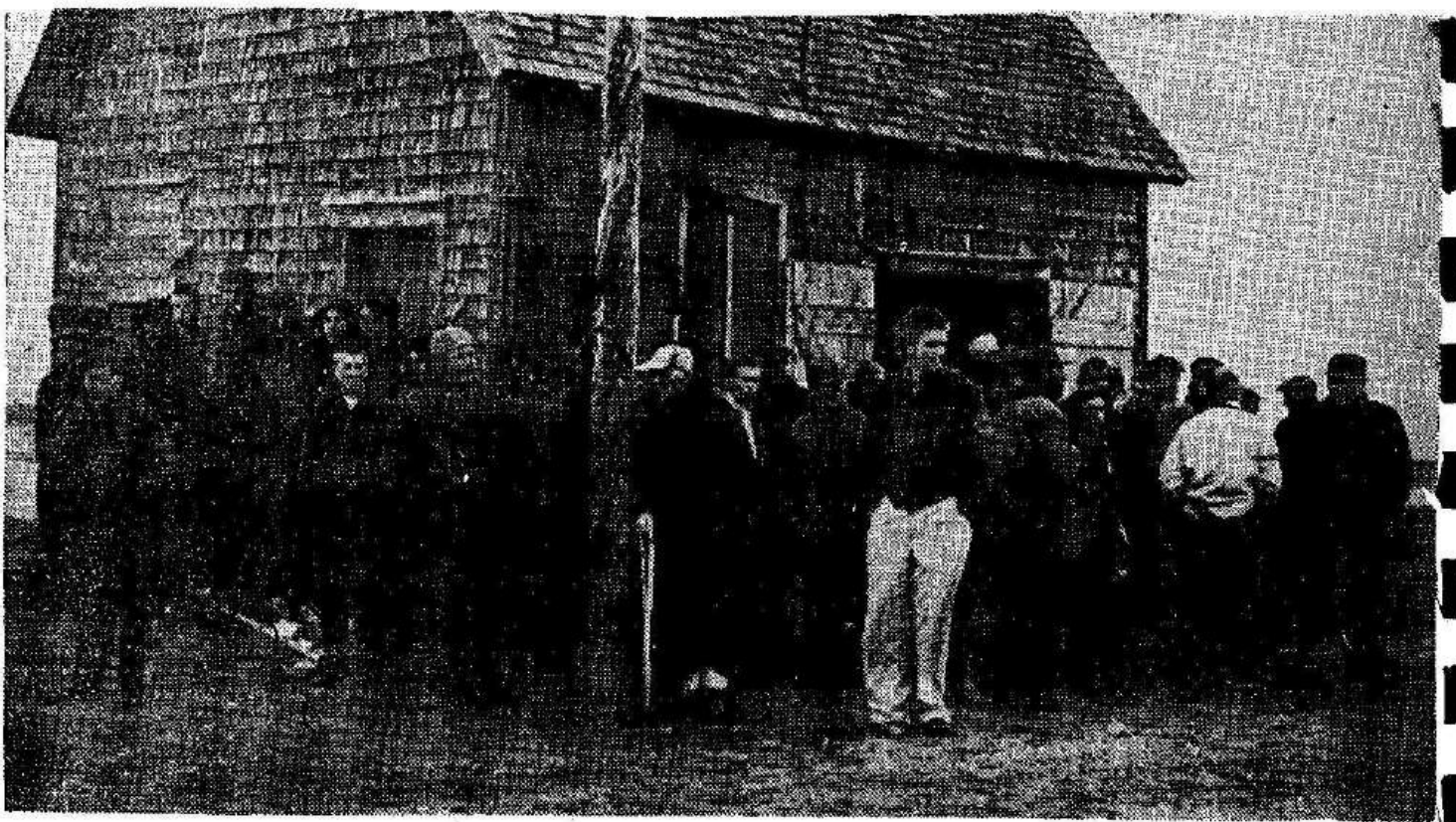
12 KNOWN DEAD

- 22 MISSING IN

WAKE OF

HOWLING

NORTHEASTER



GROUP ANXIOUSLY AWAITS WORD — The hardy, weather-beaten men of Escuminac clustered around a shed Saturday as they awaited word of the fate of 22 of their fishing comrades caught in a savage storm which slashed down the Northumberland Strait coast of New Brunswick without warning Friday night and Saturday morning. (Abbass Studio Photo)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Fisherman Tells Of Long Ordeal, How Rescue Came

Editor's note: Jack Doucet, 43-year-old father of 12 children, was one of five Escuminac, N.B., fishermen to return home Sunday after surviving the worst Northumberland Strait storm in memory. Here he tells the story of the 38-hour ordeal he underwent with his teen-aged sons.

Written for The Canadian Press
By JACK DOUCET

ESCUMINAC, N.B. (CP) — I was 2½ hours (about 25 miles) from Escuminac Point Friday night when the storm came. It came up by degrees. It was blowing awful dirty.

At two o'clock in the night our sail blew off. We didn't bother with it. The boat was making out fine and the salmon nets were good.

We got up at 5:30 Saturday morning and we knew it was too rough to haul in our nets so we went back to bed. When we got up we had some trouble with our nets and finally we couldn't find them.

We had to come in because our nets were gone. We came in to about five fathoms (30 feet) of water but couldn't see the shore on account of fog.

We went to another boat and he said he knew where the light was. We said we'd wait for him and after he got his hets hauled in we started toward shore. Another boat joined us and then another and finally another with its engines not going.

SWEPT UNDER BOAT

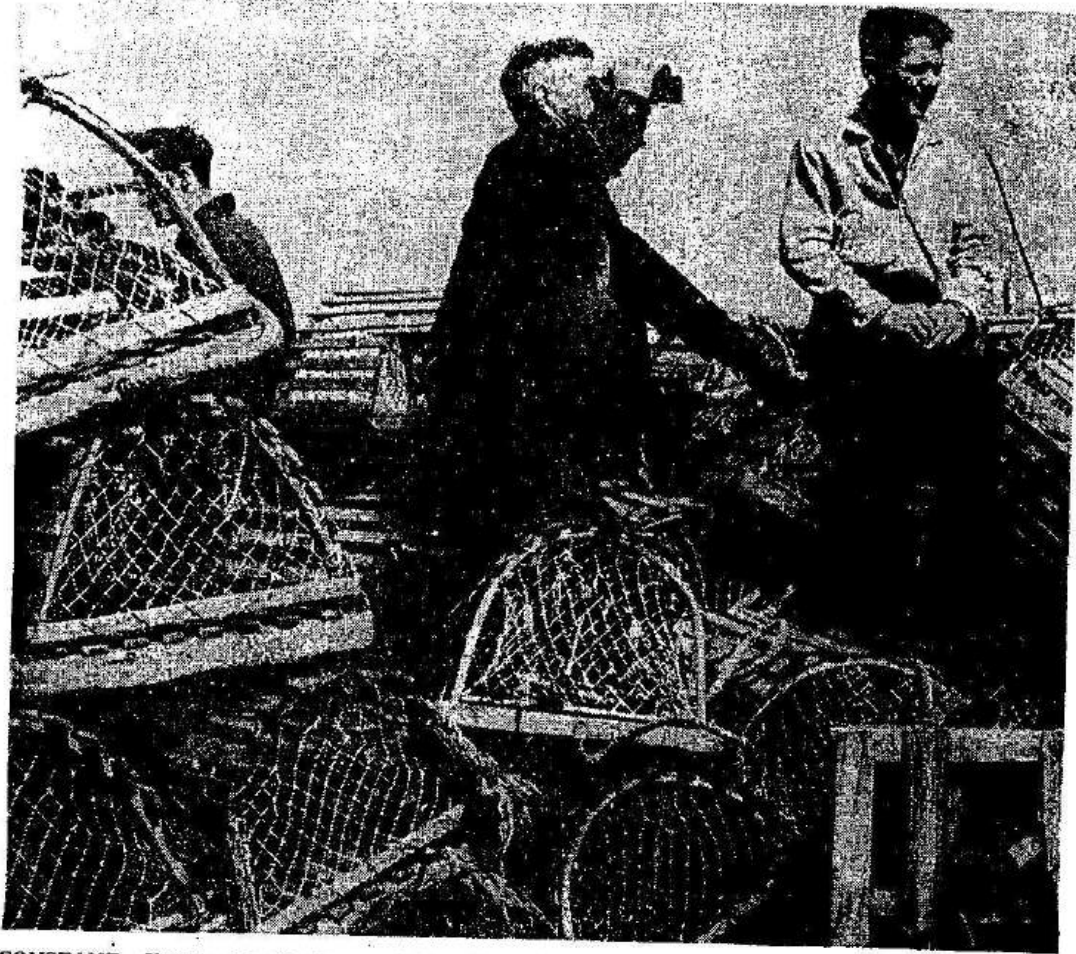
I hooked on to him to bring him in. The breakers came too quick. They lifted the boat right up and it fell right down on the trough and me and my boys and William Manuel were under it. (Manuel was later found dead in the Doucet's washed - ashore boat).

We wound up about 10 yards from the boat. We swam to the boat. The boys climbed up on the wheelhouse and I was on the bow hanging on to the anchor.

We were in the water about 20 minutes. I couldn't swim but somehow I managed to stay up and get to the boat with one of my boys. (Veteran fishermen here estimated Saturday that a minute or more in the icy strait waters were certain death.)

Bernie Jenkins saw us upset. He ran over and picked us up. About two minutes after Bernie picked us up the sea filled his boat and put his engine out of commission.

We fixed the engine Saturday night. Sunday morning we came in under our own power. The other boats we saw out there came in earlier and the men were alive.



CONSTANT VIGIL: Residents of Baie Ste. Anne, Baie du Vin and Escuminac crowded the breakwater at Escuminac yesterday, keeping an eye on Miramichi Bay as search craft carried out an intense search for missing fishermen and their boats. Two of those who remained on the breakwater during the day are shown in the above photo, perched on lobster traps for a better view. More than 30 fishermen are believed to have lost their lives when a fierce storm swept the bay early Saturday morning.

(Gleaner Staff Photo)

Worse than N.S. Mine On Percentage Basis

ESCUMINAC (CP) — Salmon fisherman Walter Bransfield thinks the loss of life in Friday night's Northumberland Strait storm will be "worse than Springhill" considering the percentages.

Seventy-five men died last October in the Nova Scotia coal mining town of 7,000. Twelve men were known dead and 30 still unaccounted for Sunday in Escuminac, and its surrounding communities. They have a combined total population of about 2,000.

Mr. Bransfield, who is 65, has been fishing for salmon since 1915.

He reflected other fishermen's opinion. The fishing last week

had been the best in 10 years. Some fishermen were making as much as \$200 a night on the salmon catch.

Said 46-year-old Albany Martin of Baie Ste. Anne: "If we had gone out Friday night all the men in the family would have been wiped out."

As it was, Albany made the comment after his return from a shoreline search Sunday morning. He carried with him two symbols of death — the side of a wheelhouse and a lobster crate.

He identified them positively as from a boat owned by his 31-year-old brother Andrew.

Albany's 22-year-old son Alonzo was with Andrew in the boat.

June 22, 1959



ANXIOUS PEOPLE: Fishing families from the Bale du Vin-Bale Ste. Anne-Escuminac area line the breakwater at Escuminac awaiting word of survivors or the dead from the disastrous storm which wracked Miramichi Bay Saturday. Shown above are several boats which had not been out salmon fishing during the night and survived the anger of the sea inside the sheltered harbour of the breakwater.

(Gleaner Staff Photo)



AWAITING WORD — Anxious relatives and friends gather at the wharf at Escuminac awaiting some word of missing fishermen caught in a sudden and vicious Northumberland Strait storm early Saturday morning. Some of the boats which returned safely to port, of an estimated 50-60 fleet of salmon-fishing craft, are tied up safely. Death toll in the tragedy may soar to 40 or more, it is feared. (Abbass Studios photo)

List Known Dead And Missing

ESCUMINAC (CP) — Here is an unofficial list of known dead and missing in the Northumberland Strait fishing boat disaster:

DEAD

Edgar Daigle, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Charles Gauvin, 53, Lameque, N.B.
 William Manuel, Manuels Post Office, N.B.
 Remi Martin, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Geoffrey Richard, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 John L. Richard, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Harold Taylor, Bay du Vin, N.B.
 Cunard Williston, Bay du Vin, N.B.

Hugh Kelly, Kouchibouguac, N.B.
 Hector Kelly, Kouchibouguac, N.B.
 Fraser Cook, 60, Howard's Cove, P.E.I.
 Haley Williston, Bay du Vin, N.B.
 Total — 12

MISSING

Presumed Drowned

Albert Chiasson, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Clifford Kingston, Bay du Vin, N.B.

Alonzo Martin, 22, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Andrew Martin, 31, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 John Chapman, Bay du Vin, N.B.
 Adrien Chiasson, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Alphonse Chiasson, 16, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Robert Chiasson, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 William Chiasson, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Windsor Kingston, Bay du Vin Beach, N.B.

Alfred McLenaghan, Bay du Vin, N.B.
 George McLeod, Bay du Vin, N.B.
 Allen Mills, Black River, N.B.
 Andrew Mills, Black River, N.B.
 Oman Morrisey, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Lionel Richard, Baie Ste. Anne, N.B.
 Raphael Robichaud, Manuels Post Office, N.B.
 Victor Robichaud, Manuels Post Office, N.B.
 Leo Roy, St. Margaret, N.B.
 Eric Williston, Bay du Vin Beach, N.B.
 Haynes Williston, Bay du Vin Beach, N.B.
 Ozzie Williston, Bay du Vin, N.B.

Total — 22.

DISASTER STRIKES AT MIRAMICHI BAY AREA

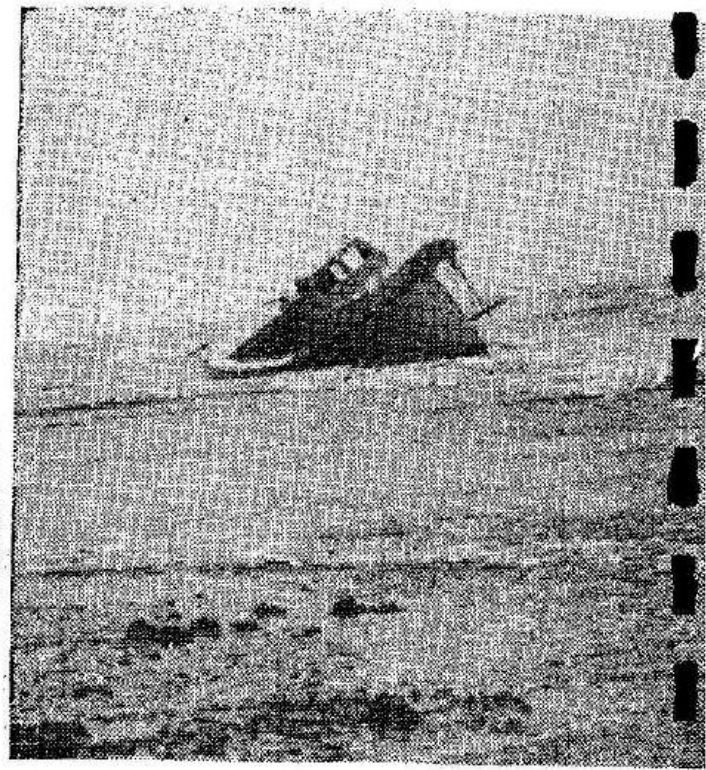
The Miramichi Bay area of New Brunswick bore the brunt of a sudden savage storm Friday night and early Saturday morning which may have taken more than 40 lives. As darkness fell last night 12 bodies had been recovered and 22 other men were known missing and feared drowned.

In addition other boats may also have been caught by the storm's fury, raising the toll still higher. Wreckage of 22 boats was spotted by RCAF planes Sunday, most of them on the west

shore of Northumberland Strait between Escuminac Point and Richibucto.

Saturday's wait for news of those missing is shown graphically in some of these pictures. At top left is one of the craft the storm tossed up on shore. Top right shows an unidentified mother and her children scanning the turbulent strait waters for an overdue husband and father.

The lower picture shows one of many search parties readying for a trip. (Also see pages 3, 5, 10) (Abbass Studios photos)



Four Other Boats Unaccounted For

BY DON HOYT

ESCUMINAC — Twelve men are known dead and 22 missing in a weekend storm that lashed the Gulf of St. Lawrence into turmoil of 50-foot waves.

Anxious relatives clung to a thin thread of hope that the missing fishermen would return alive. But as darkness fell Sunday night, so did their hopes.

F. B. Fowlie, Red Cross relief chairman, said four of the more than 50 salmon boats caught in the howling northeaster early Saturday were still missing. They were believed to carry at least eight men—making the toll of dead and missing more than 40.

RCMP at nearby Richibucto said Sunday night the bodies of two men were found washed up on the shore.

A spokesman for RCAF Search and Rescue headquarters in Halifax said planes searching the area Sunday had spotted 22 derelicts along a 30-mile stretch of coastline between Point Escuminac and Richibucto.

Some of the hulks had been washed ashore, others lay sunken in shallow inshore water, and some drifted upside down offshore. There was no sign of life. The weather was good Sunday, visibility unlimited and sea calm.

The fisheries department vessel Lamna, the RCMP cutter Wood and scores of small fishing boats aided in the search. Officials planned to begin dragging the waters of the search area today.

One of the RCAF planes was en route back to the Greenwood, N.S. base after Royal Tour escort duty in the Sept-Iles, Que. area when it was diverted to the scene. It was not known whether the planes would resume the search today.

New Brunswick Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien visited here and nearby Bay du Vin and Bale Ste. Anne Sunday.

"Men who go down to the sea are a hardy race," he said. "But not in recent history has such a serious blow to life been experienced.

Great Disaster

"So great is the disaster in loss of life and equipment, one could not grasp its true significance except by coming in contact with survivors and bereaved families."

None of the little craft was equipped with radio or radar. The storm intensified rapidly with gales to 75-miles-an-hour. The boats were tossed and smashed about like toys.

The Red Cross who set up a relief centre here Saturday took down their tents Sunday night.

Doors on homes of victims at Bale Ste. Anne were draped in purple crepe Sunday night. The rosary was being said in every house.

Funeral Rites

One funeral service for the five known dead from the little village will be held at the Bale Ste. Anne Roman Catholic Church with requiem mass Tuesday.

In Bay du Vin funerals for the two men whose bodies were found will be held Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the Protestant church.

An excellent run of salmon and the absence of a clear warning of the storm combined to produce the terrible toll.

Fishermen here said Sunday night they were not prepared for the gale that swept down on the fleet Friday night and early Saturday.

Jack Doucet, one of five men who arrived here Sunday after being picked up from the chill waters by another boat, blamed the weather office, saying "they gave us easterly winds 15 for Friday night and light winds for Saturday."

Yvon Durelle, British Empire light-heavyweight boxing champion who owns four boats at Bale Ste. Anne, said:

"I came here Friday to go out myself but the weather was too bad. It was blowing hard. The marine weather forecast for Friday night said winds of 30 or 35 miles an hour. They are nothing around here." None of Durelle's boats was out.

Issue Gale Warnings

Rube Hornstein, chief of the Halifax Weather Office, said gale warnings were issued Friday night. But by then the fleet was out.

"These storms can develop very rapidly indeed off the coast. We get it a lot in the winter. It's not as common this time of the year."

Marine forecasts at 4 p.m. Friday predicted light winds, shifting to northeast 25. Six hours later the forecast was changed to northeast gales 35 shifting at dawn to northwest 35 and diminishing Saturday afternoon to southeast 25.

At 4 a.m. Summerside, P.E.I., reported to the weather office that winds were 45 M.P.H. with gusts up to 65.

Some fishermen admitted they realized a storm was brewing before they set out. But they didn't realize it would be as severe as it was. Weather conditions for several days before had not been good. But they decided to take their chances, lured by the rich run of salmon.

Material Losses

Besides the loss of life it was likely to take days to assess the damage to boats and fishing gear, expected to run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Haggard fishermen straggled into various ports all day Saturday with tales of courage and terror. Some survivors had lashed themselves to masts. Some had seen relatives swept overboard by mountainous waves.

Here and in neighboring Bale Ste. Anne they began digging graves in the cemeteries for the funerals that were to come. At church services Sunday some faces showed the strain of waiting. Crowds attended to pray for the dead and missing.

Wives and children clustered around the wharves waiting for word of loved ones.

Lured by the heaviest salmon run in 10 years, about 50 boats put out Friday night into Northumberland Strait, where they were smashed and scattered by the howling northeaster.

Never Before

"There never was no loss of life on boats in storms since I started fishing for salmon in 1915," said Walter Bransfield, 65-year-old retired fisherman, whose house became a flood-hit rescue centre Saturday and Sunday.

"It was blowing awful dirty," said 43-year-old Jack Doucet. Bernie Jenkins, who took Doucet and his two sons aboard his boat after the Doucet craft capsized, said, "It was the worst storm I have ever seen. Waves rose up like mountains all around us."

Saturday giant waves 50 to 60 feet high still lashed the horse-shoe shaped breakwater here that forms a quiet haven for fishing boats from such adjacent communities as Bale Ste. Anne, Bay du Vin, Hardwicke and Escuminac.

The fishing was good. "That's how so many boats got caught," said Mr. Bransfield. "It was a

pretty rosy picture. If it had been poor fishing a lot of boats wouldn't have gone out."

Some got back all right after taking shelter or riding out the storm. Others were still unreported Sunday night. Bits and pieces of wreckage had been washed ashore or towed in by searching fishermen, many of whom had missed drowning by a fluke of nature.

Stories Of Courage

Stories of raw courage were told around boiling pots of coffee in the rescue co-ordination centre. They talked of Fraser Cook of Howard's Cove, P.E.I., who lashed his son to the mast of his boat and then was swept overboard himself. The son was later rescued and admitted to hospital. His father was still missing.

They wondered too at the seemingly superhuman displays by men like Jack Doucet, who stayed alive for 20 minutes in the chill water and supported his teen-age son although he can't swim. Both were rescued.

They mourned for men like Albert Chiasson, father of 14 children, the youngest six months old. He had a brother missing too.

There was little optimism. But the men — and there were few women in evidence — clung to every hope.

Before Sunday masses at the two Roman Catholic churches in this predominantly French-speaking area, fishermen donned rubber coveralls and jumped into their boats with lunch cans to search for missing men.

They were joined in the search by an RCAF crash boat and helicopter, government planes, fisheries patrol boats and RCMP-led foot patrols who combed the coastline inch by inch.

"I seen some fishing nets up on the shore down near the point," said one old-timer, referring to Point Escuminac, four miles from here.

Search Everywhere

"They want to go through every net," he added. "There could be a body wrapped up in it and that's the only way to find it."

Two bodies recovered Sunday morning were found at the point. They were brought here by ambulance and identified by relatives.

Crowds of curious poured into Escuminac Sunday along with scores of relatives from all parts of eastern Canada.

Along the route were parked two hearses, one bearing a rough wooden box, the other a coffin.

In nearby Bale Ste. Anne there were mounds of dirt in the cemetery where graves had been dug for the dead. Inside the Catholic church men had shed their rough fishermen's clothes and donned their Sunday best for a brief hour of prayer before returning to the search. But there was less hope as the hours passed. "Whatever come in now will be dead," said Yvon Durelle, the Bale Ste. Anne boxer-fisherman.

Searchers, alarmed by the storm, began scouring the shoreline at dawn Saturday for wreckage and bodies.

Survivors Join Hunt

Fishermen who survived the storm took their boats out Sunday to search for their missing comrades. RCAF search planes were hampered by the difficulty of distinguishing the searching boats from the lost ones.

The freakish storm veered into the district Friday night with winds gusting to 75 miles an hour. The gale piled the sea into 50-foot waves. A weather forecast issued in Halifax at 10 p.m. ADT Friday had predicted winds of 35 miles an hour for the district.

The weather had been bad all week and fishermen knew another storm was on the way. They didn't expect it to be so severe. Besides, the salmon were running and staying ashore meant passing up a chance for a big payday.

During the last two weeks salmon catches offshore had been the best in 10 years. Boats were taking an average of 30 salmon apiece daily. The salmon were selling for about \$5 each.

Officials had difficulty determining exactly how many boats were out when the storm broke.... Most of the fleet operates out of this village of 600, 90 miles north of Moncton, N.B., but many others go to the fishing grounds from other ports along the coast.

Along with the loss of life, damage to fishing gear was expected to be heavy. The boats are worth about \$2,200 each, a salmon net costs about \$1,500. Most fishermen who were caught by the storm lost their nets.

More than 12,000 lobster traps had been set in this area Thursday. They are valued at \$5 apiece and damage was expected to be extensive.

Most of the boats are between 35 and 50 feet long and are usually manned by two or three men. Many are family affairs—operated by brothers or a father-son team. The vessels are open except for a small cabin or wheelhouse, and some use a sail in addition to the engine.

Disrupted communications delayed damage reports from some areas. At Point du Chene, a summer resort area near Moncton, the storm smashed cottages and pleasure boats. Piles of lobster traps on wharves were wrecked.

In Shediac, N.B., town manager J. A. Arseneault said he had "never seen anything like it in June." In the 24-hour period ended early Saturday 1½ inches of rain fell.

In Prince Edward Island across the strait, lobster fisherman described the storm as the worst in 30 years. Heavy losses to lobster traps, boats and nets were reported.

Four boats were tossed ashore and wrecked at Sea Cow Pond, 18 miles from Alberton, P.E.I. Fisherman in the Alberton-Tignish area wrote off all traps anchored in less than five fathoms (30 feet) of water.

Coupled with the gale, the highest tide since 1940 was reported here Friday night. There was a full moon.

In 1940 record high tides inundated the nearby town of Newcastle on the Miramichi River. Water ran down the streets and hundreds were forced to evacuate.

* * * * *

Never Swam But Had To This Time

June 22, 1959

By HARRIS SULLIVAN

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special) — "I never swam before but this was one time I had to, so I did," said 43-year-old Jack Doucet Sunday, as he told of his perilous survival and rescue from the storm-torn waters of Miramichi Bay.

"Me and my two sons owe our lives to the Jenkins," the Manuel Post Office fisherman declared. He was referring to Bernard and Cyril Jenkins, who pulled the Doucets from a scowling sea after their boat capsized at the height of Friday night's disastrous storm.

A fourth member of the Doucet crew, William Manuel, 70, was not so fortunate. His body was found in the cabin of the Doucet's battered boat by searchers in the Miramichi Bay area Sunday.

At his home yesterday, Bernard Jenkins was pointing to the Doucets as being responsible for him being safe at home after being given up for lost when he had not returned by Saturday night. "If we hadn't saved them, we'd never have made it ourselves." Fifty-two year old Bernard, his 21-year-old nephew Cyril, together with Mr. Doucet and his sons, Alphonse, 17, and Eve, 14, were the last survivors of the Escuminac fishing fleet disaster.

Their's was a miraculous escape. John Doucet tells it this way:

"We left about four o'clock Friday afternoon. It was windy then but it got worse. When she really started to blow about nine o'clock we were getting worried.

"We had our nets out and were drifting, but the nets gave way and we were in trouble. It was terrible. One breaker sent us high in the air and sent us back into the water, face down.

"We were underneath the boat in the water. Another wave turned the boat back up again, but she was flooded and a good 10 to 15 yards away from me and the boys.

"I never saw Manuel at all. The boys were all with me and we began making for the boat. I never swam before but I did then. I hung onto a piece of board and finally got hold of a piece of rope tied to the boat and I pulled myself to the bow.

"It was awful, awful. Waves kept pouring over me and I kept going under. Every time I came up I prayed. As a matter of fact I prayed all the time.

"Eve and Alphonse made it to the boat and they hung on near the cabin. They wanted me to join them but I was afraid to let go of the bow, because I knew I'd be a goner if I got loose in that sea again. We all prayed, here was nothing else to do.

Hung On 25 Minutes

"We must have hung onto that half-sunk boat for 25 minutes. Then we saw Jenkins boat not far from us and he saw us. He threw us a rope which Eve caught. Bernard and Cyril pulled him to their boat through the water. When they threw the rope the second time it missed us and I got scared but Alphonse caught it on the next try and gave it to me. He was steady, Alphonse, very steady. He made sure Eve and I were on the boat first before he came himself.

"They were all a cool bunch, just about the coolest you could run cross", Bernard Jenkins commented later, referring to the Doucets. "It's a good thing they were because we were in trouble, bad trouble.

"We didn't have the Doucets out of the water any more than 10 minutes when a breaker sent my boat snapping up into the air a good 25 or 30 feet. It was a wave that never broke so bad before and never will again. The boat didn't turn over although she was half-full of water.

"Bail We Did"

"The top of her was only six inches from the water and the waves were pounding over her. We could do nothing but bail, and bail we did, and I used a hand pump which helped quite a bit.

"We must have bailed for one

and one-half hours. I figured it was hopeless; I really thought we were all goners. We never gave up and got almost all the water out so that she was floating free again.

"That's why I say that if we hadn't saved the Doucets, I don't think we'd have made it. We couldn't have bailed her out.

"The engine was wet and wouldn't start but thank God we were half-way machines. We took off the wet wires and plugs and built a fire in the cabin to dry them out and got the motor going again. We put out to deep water, put out our nets and went to bed.

"We cooked a few salmon which were in the nets and they tasted good.

"It was 6 p.m. Saturday by this time," said Mr. Jenkins. "The storm had pretty well died down and we knew we would make it."

Aroused Hopes

News of the Jenkins' boat arrival at about seven a.m. Sunday sent waves of hope flashing through this saddened village for the Jenkins and Doucets had been given up for lost.

One of the storm survivors, Raymond Thibeau of Escuminac, was positive the Doucets had perished.

"I saw them turn over but I was helpless to do anything," Thibeau told listeners. The motor of his boat had conked out. He added, "I cried and cried when I saw that boat tip. I couldn't stop crying."

Both Mr. Doucet and the Jenkins said they would fish again when they got the boats repaired.

"We're fishermen and we've got to expect these things."

June 22, 1959

COLD GALE AND RAIN CAUSE OF N.B. TRAGEDY

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special)—A cold northeasterly gale accompanied by heavy rain caused the Escuminac fishing fleet tragedy.

There hadn't been anything like the storm in 30 years, some fishermen said. Basements in Newcastle, about 40 miles away, were flooded by the high tides. Cottages at Oak Point, about 17 miles from Newcastle and on the left-hand side of the Miramichi River, had water nearly to the doors.

The small two and three-man druggers looked like peanut shells against waves that averaged 20 and 25 feet high, and in some cases were 50 feet high.

Fathers lashed sons to the mast—typical of this was Brian Lloyd, 13, Escuminac, who says he will sail again. He stayed around the emergency Red Cross disaster relief headquarters for a while watching operations, waiting for reports of fellow fishermen.

"This is the worst we've ever got," a resident said of the disaster, explaining that in the past an odd boat had been lost, a man killed, or equipment destroyed but never a whole fleet in such dire peril.

Nearly all of the boats which came back so far were without fishing equipment—their nets washed overboard. Lobster traps littered the shore near the Escuminac breakwater. Some fishermen lost everything—boats and equipment, even members of their families.

"The kind of storm we get in the fall not in June at the height of the fishing season." That is the way Miramichi Bay people described the gale.

It was a freak. A surprise twist of the elements.

The fishermen knew a storm was coming. But they hadn't expected it to be so bad.

They gambled many a time—this time many lost.

STORM TOLL MAY REACH

34

DEAD AND MISSING IN STORM

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special)
—Here is an official list, provided by the Red Cross Disaster Service here, of the known dead and missing after Saturday's tragic storm.

The known dead from the Escuminac area were: Cunard Williston, Baie du Vin; Harold Taylor, Baie du Vin; Edgar Daigle, Remi Martin, John Louis Richard, and Jeffrey Richard, all of Baie Ste. Anne; William George Manuel, Manuel Post Office; Fraser Cook, Howard's Cove, P.E.I.; and Halsey Williston, Baie du Vin.

The bodies of all but Mr. Cook have been recovered.

Bodies recovered from the fishing fleet from Richibucto are:

Charles Gauvin, 53, Lameque; Hector Kelly, and Hugh Kelly, Kouchibouguac.

Listed as missing from Escuminac are: Andrew and Alonzo Martin, Baie Ste. Anne; Lionel Richard, Baie Ste. Anne; Allan and Andrew Mills, Black River Bridge; Ozzie Williston, Baie du Vin; Leo Roy, St. Margaret's; Haynes Williston, Eric Williston and Windsor Kingston, Baie du Vin Beach; Albert and Alphonse Chaisson and Amun Morrissy, all of Baie Ste. Anne; William, Adrian and Robert Chaisson, Baie Ste. Anne; Raphael and Victor Robitchaud, Manuel Post Office; Clifford Kingston and Albert McLenaghan, Baie du Vin; George McLeod and John Chapman, Baie du Vin.



TRAGEDY STRIKES FISHERMEN: Search boats Sunday scoured the seas off the southern shore of Miramichi Bay in hope of finding survivors of a tremendous storm which blew up Saturday morning and swamped many fishing boats during the early hours. Prominent in search and rescue operations was Canadian and British Empire light-heavyweight champion **Yvon Durelle** of Baie Ste. Anne who is shown at left conferring with **Corporal H. A. Trann** of the Chatham detachment, RCMP.



Reunited at right, are
Brian Lloyd and his mother, **Mrs. Roy Lloyd**, following

Brian's harrowing experience of a night and day in the storm with his father. The Lloyds' boat was one of those which safely beat back to harbour. Early this morning dragging operations began in Miramichi Bay for bodies of missing men. Death toll figures are expected to be in excess of 30 fishermen — men and boys. Silent people

lined the breakwater and beaches during the weekend, scanning the horizon for sight of sail or mast which might mean a loved one returning; or the dark pattern of a hulk awash in the sea, which would mean fathers, sons and loved ones who would never again come home.

(Gleaner Staff Photos)

Escuminac Area Hardest Hit As Gales Lash, Destroy Many Fishing Vessels

June 22, 1959

Disaster Arm Badges Used By Red Cross

ESCUMINAC (CP) —
"For 12 years we've had these Red Cross disaster arm badges and never used them. We always thought it could never happen here."

These were the thoughts Sunday of F. B. Fowle, an insurance agent from Newcastle, 38 miles away.

As co-chairman of the Northumberland County Disaster Relief Committee he was pencilling a sign saying Red Cross Registered.
(Continued on Page 2 Col. 2)

Disaster

(Continued From Page 1)

tration and Information Centre. He had gone without sleep more than 24 hours.

With three other Red Cross members Mr. Fowle set up a rescue co-ordination centre as the long, weary search began for fishermen missing from north-east New Brunswick communities in a violent Northumberland Strait storm.

With the help of St. John's Ambulance personnel and members of the RCAF, navy and militia, the Red Cross volunteers with their red and white arm bands kept rescuers fed and rested.

Fishing Boxer's First Love:

DURELLE PITCHES IN TO HELP COMRADES

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special)
—Stark tragedy has brought proof of the true love in the life of Yvon Durelle, Canadian and British Empire light-heavyweight champion.

The Baie Ste. Anne boxer worked unselfishly Saturday and Sunday here, searching the waters and islands of Miramichi Bay for traces of wrecked fishing boats lost in the worst tragedy ever to hit the area.

Durelle proved to one and all that fishing is his love and his life when he threw three of his five fishing boats into the search yesterday for the six

craft from this area still missing following an upheaval of the seas early Saturday morning.

Durelle, who broke training Friday afternoon for his upcoming title bout with world light heavyweight champion Archie Moore to come home for a weekend of fishing with his fleet, left Baie Ste. Anne today to return to training camp at Moncton.

The "fighting fisherman" said he had set out with his boats Friday but saw how the weather was shaping up and beat it back to port in the evening. When he saw sea conditions Saturday and learned of the disaster he aided in salvage work and assisted the Red Cross disaster relief service in transporting bodies to the temporary morgue — a tent

(Continued on Page 2 Col. 3)

Durelle

(Continued From Page 1)
set up by the RCAF Search and Rescue team out of Chatham, RCAF Station.

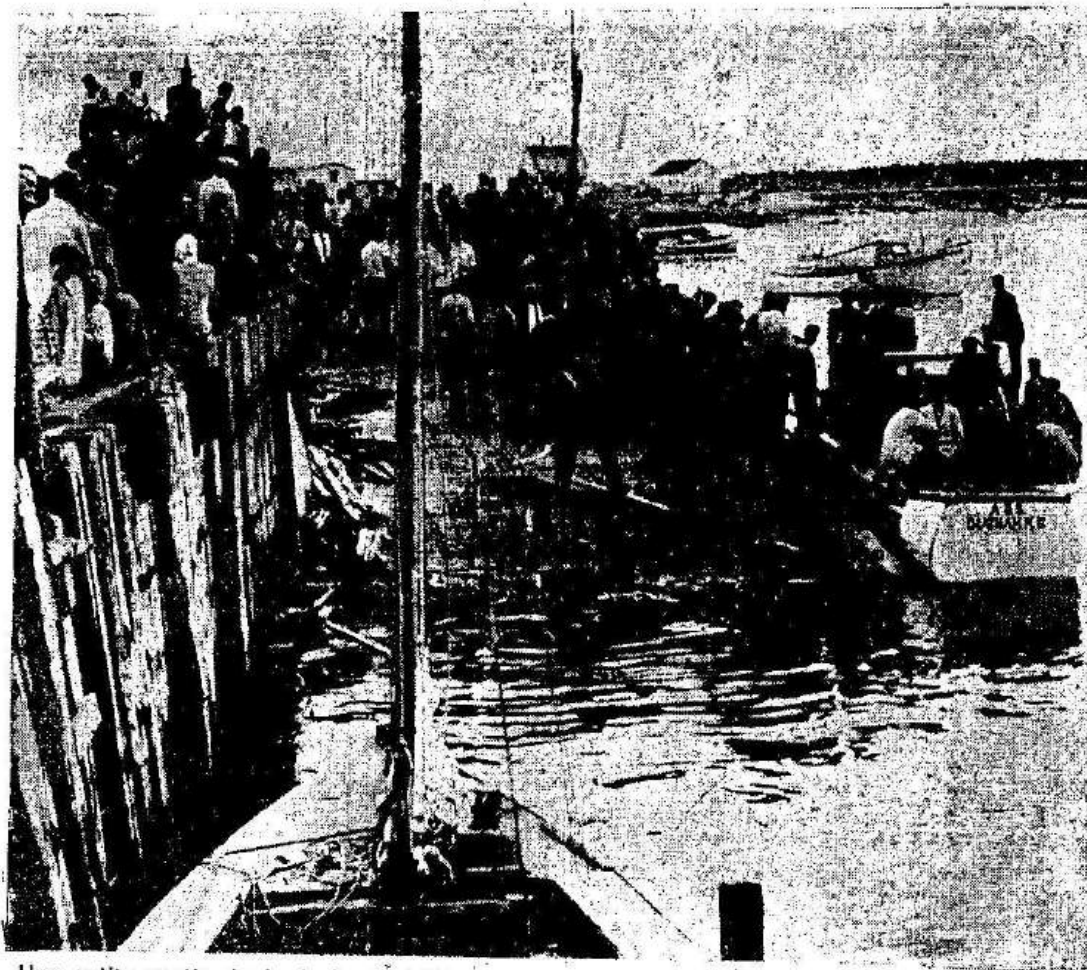
Durelle said, while gazing at the horizon: "It's too bad this had to happen. The loss is not worthwhile. It is bad in that it affects the children of these large families." He said the tragedy was a personal one for he was well-acquainted with nearly all the men lost at sea.

On Sunday morning at day break the champ and three of his boats were off into the watery reaches of Miramichi Bay to explore islands in hope that some of the missing men may have reached them, and to tow back wrecked fishing craft to the Escuminac breakwater.

Durelle worked tirelessly through the day, assisting in any way possible and offering encouragement to sober-faced men, women and children lining the docks looking for some sign that the missing fishermen would return.

La foule à Baie-Ste-Anne

June 22, 1959



Une petite partie de la foule de 8,000 personnes qui était à Escuminac-Baie-Sainte-Anne hier après-midi. Ici, on surveille les pêcheurs

qui fouillent dans les épaves à la recherche de leurs compagnons qui manquent encore à l'appel.

“Si nous pouvions au moins les trouver...”

ESCUMINAC, N.-B. (CP) — “Si nous étions sortis vendredi soir, tous les membres de la famille auraient été noyés”, de déclarer le court Albanie Martin, 46 ans, de Baie-Ste-Anne, N.-B., alors qu’il regardait, avec un peu d’angoisse, la tente d’urgence de la Croix-Rouge aménagé près du port.

Il revenait de faire une tournée le long des côtes de ce village éprouvé du nord de la province, rapportant deux symboles de la mort, le côté d’une cabine de bateau et une cage à homard.

Il les a identifiés positivement comme faisant partie d’un bateau appartenant à son frère André, 31 ans, porté disparu au cours de la pire tempête depuis 35 ans, sur le détroit de Northumberland.

Le fils d’Albanie, Alonzo, 22 ans, accompagnait André.

“Si nous pouvions au moins les trouver, même s’ils sont morts, c’est à peu près tout ce que nous pouvons espérer”, a-t-il déclaré.

“Oui, de dire son beau-frère, Roméo Martin. “Si nous pouvions au moins les trouver”.

Albanie et Roméo se préparaient alors à organiser d’autres recherches pour retrouver les corps des victimes de la tempête.

Albanie a déclaré que c’était la pire tempête depuis 35 ans. Lui-même avait déjà été surpris par une tempête sur l’île Tabusintac, à environ 20 milles au nord d’ici dans la baie Miramichi. Avant d’atterrir il avait été à la dérive pendant deux jours.

Que pense-t-il de l’avenir? “Nous devons faire la pêche ou mourir de faim. C’est le seul métier que nous connaissons. La plus part de nous-autres ont pêché toute leur vie.”

Albanie avait prêté 450 cages à homard et des filets à un autre pêcheur, vendredi soir. Sa perte est estimée à environ \$2,000. Lui et Roméo avaient décidé de rester dans le port cette nuit là.

"Une tempête que l'on ne peut décrire"

ESCUMINAC, N.-B. (CP) —

"Nous sommes sortis en mer plus tôt que d'habitude, vendredi, a déclaré le pêcheur de saumon, Dornie Jenkins, 52 ans, qui avec son neveu Cyril, 21 ans, sont entrés au port dimanche après avoir passé 40 heures dans la tempête. "Le saumon voyageait mieux qu'en aucune autre occasion cette semaine là et nous voulions en profiter."

"Nous n'avons même pas pris le temps de souper, juste avalé quelques bouchées et avec quelques sandwiches, nous avons parti vers quatre heures."

Tout alla bien jusqu'à vers 11 heures du soir, lorsque le vent s'éleva. Ça aurait été une bonne chose d'avoir de la pluie, car ça aurait calmé la mer.

C'est la pire tempête que j'ai vue. Je ne puis pas vous la décrire. Les vagues montaient comme des montagnes tout autour de nous autres.

Vous ne pouvez pas vous faire l'idée comme c'était effrayant.

Nous nous sommes demandé ce que faisaient les autres mais il n'y avait pas grand chose que nous pouvions faire. Lorsque la tempête a empiré, nous avons baissé la voile et nous nous sommes réfugiés dans la cabine. Nous étions à 12 milles au large.

Il était à peu près 11 heures samedi matin lorsque nous avons aperçu un bateau renversé et trois personnes s'y tenant cramponnées. C'était Jack Doucet et ses deux fils. On les a ramassés les uns après les autres à l'aide d'un câble. La première fois que nous avons tiré le câble, un des fils l'a passé à son frère qui à son tour l'a passé à son père. On a eu un peu de misère avant de réussir à lancer le câble une troisième fois.

Nous n'avions plus d'huile pour le poêle de la cabine et nous avons déchiré les pneus de sauvetage pour nous réchauffer sur tout les trois rescapés.

Nous avons vidé nos boîtes à lunch à la mer pour se servir des boîtes pour vider l'eau du bateau. La nourriture était gâtée et nous avons du nous en passer. On avait plus d'eau à boire. Peu de temps après avoir rescapé les Doucet, notre bateau est venu près de chavirer. Une vague a soulevé le bateau et le moteur a été projeté sur le plancher du bateau. J'ai eu peur de trouver un trou dans le fond.

"Il devait être six heures du soir, lorsqu'on a réussi à faire marcher le moteur. Nous aurions pu entrer samedi soir. Je voyais les lumières d'Escuminac, mais nous ne voulions pas risquer et sommes restés dans l'eau profonde jusqu'au lever du jour. On est arrivé dimanche matin.

"Certainement je retournerai à la pêche... c'est mon métier..."

ESCUMINAC, N.-B. (CP) — Les pêcheurs attristés faisaient le compte de leurs pertes de vie et de propriétés, hier, à la suite de la pire tempête à s'abattre sur les côtes de l'est du N.-B. depuis 30 ans.

Seulement quelques-uns des quelque 50 bateaux qui sont sortis vendredi soir sont revenus au port, sans porter de marque de la tempête.

Des vents atteignant une force de 75 milles à l'heure ont soulevé des vagues d'une hauteur de 50 pieds. Ceux qui sont revenus déclarèrent que leur équipement de pêche avait été partiellement ou totalement emporté.

Endurcis par les années de travail laborieux de la pêche, les pêcheurs réalisent que lorsque le saumon se promène, il est temps de pêcher.

L'industrie de la pêche est le gagne-pain de ce petit hameau et de ses localités voisines. Les jeunes vont sur la mer très tôt pour aider leur père ou leurs grands frères.

Leurs demeures sont confortables mais modestes. Les familles vivent, travaillent et jouent et apprennent à aimer la mer. Plusieurs demeures possèdent un appareil de télévision, surtout de

puis que le boxeur Yvon Durelle, de village voisin, Baie-Ste-Anne est devenu célèbre. Durelle, qui est champion mi-lourd du Canada et de l'Empire Britannique a déclaré "j'aime mieux faire la pêche que faire de la boxe". Il opère une flotte de trois bateaux mais aucun n'était sorti vendredi soir.

Un jeune adolescent, Brian Lloyd, d'Escuminac a déclaré à sa mère en larmes qu'il irait de nouveau pêcher. Lui et son père, Roy arrivèrent au port plusieurs heures en retard. M. Lloyd a silencieusement commencé à débarquer sa prise de la nuit. Brian, 13 ans, était attaché au mât du bateau de son père pendant le plus fort de la tempête.

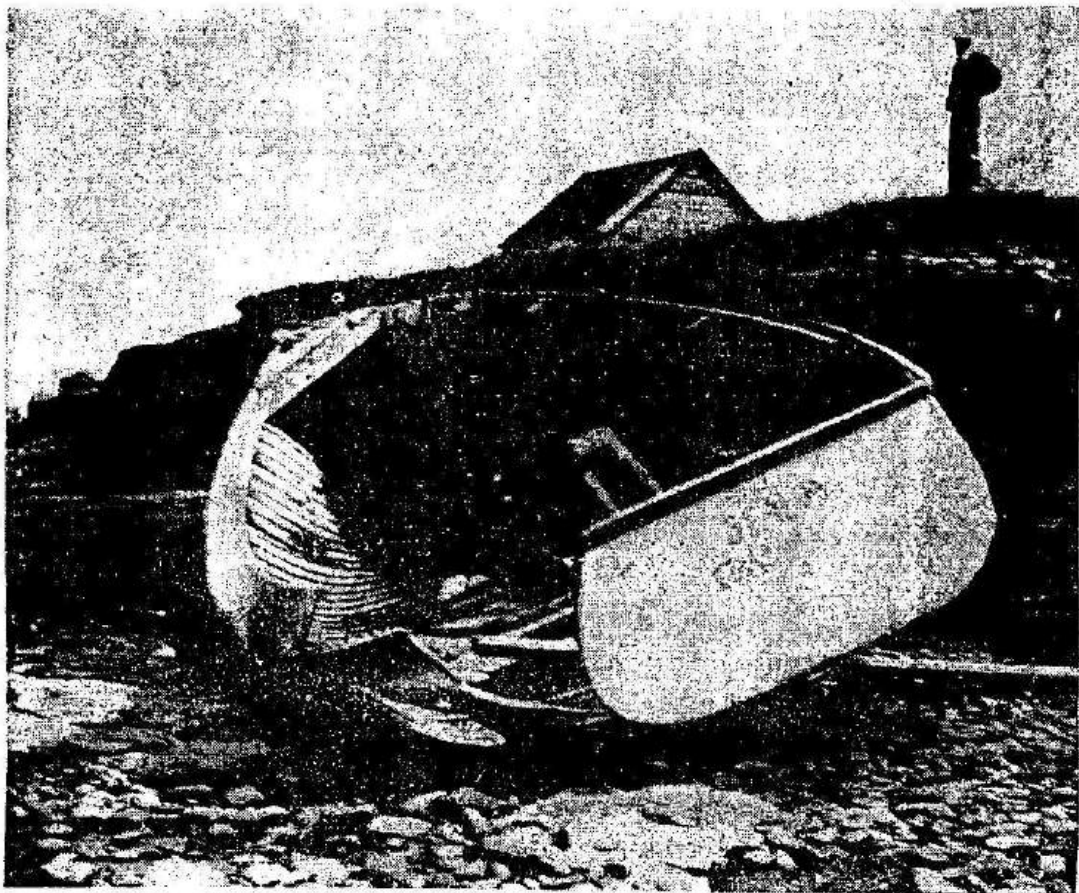
Les femmes, aux visages attristés, commencèrent à se rassembler le long du brise-lame dès samedi matin. C'est une coutume pour elles de se rendre au quai après une tempête sur l'eau. Les jeunes femmes sont consolées par les plus âgées qui ont déjà vécu des jours d'angoisse semblables.

Plusieurs se rendirent à l'église Stella-Maris, hier matin offrir leur messe pour les disparus. Ces gens continueront d'aller sur l'eau parce que plusieurs n'ont pas d'autre métier. Un survivant de dire: "Certainement, je retournerai pêcher. Je n'ai que 37 ans mais il est trop tard pour apprendre un autre métier".



Le lieutenant-gouverneur Leonard O'Brien a visité Baie-Sainte-Anne hier après-midi. On le voit ici s'entretenant avec le pêcheur Charles Bonenfant, qui avait d'abord été porté disparu. M. Bonenfant a sauté dans un bateau qui passait, et son propre bateau est venu se

jeter sur le rivage. Alors qu'on le croyait disparu, il est arrivé au port, sain et sauf, et s'est immédiatement mis à l'oeuvre à la recherche de ceux qui manquaient encore à l'appel. Au centre, le lt-col. Currie.



Deux personnes ont perdu la vie sur ce bateau. Le bateau fut rejeté sur le rivage à 400 verges environ du quai d'Escuminac. Le cadavre d'Edgar Daigle fut trouvé sous la pile de débris

que l'on voit vers le derrière du bateau. Celui de Rémi Martin était amarré sur le côté gauche à l'extérieur du bateau.

June 22, 1959



Charles Bonenfant, que l'on avait porté disparu, après avoir trouvé son bateau et ses filets, et qui est arrivé dans un autre bateau, a travaillé fort toute la journée d'hier à la

recherche de ses compagnons disparus. On le voit ici fouillant l'épave d'un bateau rempli de débris et de filets, pour voir s'il ne contient pas de cadavres.

Cinq membres d'une même famille morts ou disparus

June 22, 1959

Par ERIC GOGUEN

Un contraste saisissant entre tragédie et joie s'est déroulé dans la paroisse de Baie Ste-Anne par suite du désastre qui a frappé les Maritimes en fin de semaine. Trois membres d'une famille ont tous échappé sains et saufs. Cinq membres d'une autre famille sont morts ou portés disparus.

Pour M. Jacques Doucet et ses deux fils, Alphonse et Evé ce fut un quasi miracle qu'ils aient revu la terre ferme. Tous trois ont passé 25 minutes à l'eau avant d'être sauvés.

Cinq membres de la famille de Camille Chiasson, dont deux fils William et Albert, et trois petits-fils, Adrien, Robert et Alphonse ont soit été trouvés noyés ou manquent à l'appel. Adrien et Robert sont deux fils de William et Alphonse, fils d'Albert.

En plus des deux fils qui sont portés disparus, il y a dix enfants dans la famille de William Chiasson et au domicile d'Albert quatre.

De tous les faits héroïques à ressortir de ce désastre, le plus émouvant fut certes celui du jeune Alphonse Doucet, âgé de 17 ans, qui a réussi à sauver son père et son plus jeune frère Evé.

Hier après-midi, un représentant de l'EVANGELINE a eu l'occasion d'interviewer M. Doucet et ses deux fils, réunis encore une fois avec leur famille.

Alphonse Doucet

Les faits suivants font partie du drame qui s'est déroulé pendant les 38 heures qu'ils ont passé en mer au cours de la tempête.

Les événements qui ont préposé le drame ont été racontés par M. Jacques Doucet.

Le vendredi après-midi, vers 4 heures, nous nous sommes rendus à nos seines, mais avons décidé que la mer était trop houleuse pour retirer nos filets.

Après quelques heures la tempête se fit tellement forte que mon bateau se détacha des seines. Je ne soupçonnais pas encore que la mer se montait tellement jusqu'à ce qu'en voulant naviguer le bateau vers la rive, je m'aperçus que je ne faisais aucun progrès.

Je me décidai de rester près de mes seines mais une grosse vague, je dirais bien de 50 pieds en hauteur a soulevé mon bateau, et l'a renversé."

Emprisonné

On fait remarquer ici que M. Doucet était emprisonné dessous son bateau avec ses deux fils et William Manuel. Les trois derniers étaient dans la cabine. On a retrouvé le corps de Manuel dans le bateau qui a été rejeté sur le rivage douze heures avant l'arrivée des Doucet.

Faisant suite à l'entrevue, M. Doucet a relaté que la vague sui-

vante les a saisis et "par quelque sorte de miracle" le bateau s'est relevé.

M. Doucet et ses deux fils ont réussi à s'échapper et ont saisi des boîtes de poisson pour se tenir à la surface de l'eau.

Un autre bateau, celui de Bernard et Cyril Jenkins, était situé à quelques cents verges du bateau renversé. Bernard et Cyril ont voulu repêcher les Doucet mais les vagues se faisaient trop fortes. Ils ont alors jeté des cables en direction du bateau chaviré.

Une vingtaine de minutes plus tard Alphonse réussissait à en saisir un.

"J'avais encore un peu de souffle de reste mais je voyais que mon père et mon frère fatiguaient. J'ai donné le cable à mon père puis ensuite à mon frère et les ai aidés à monter à bord du bateau."

Nouveau malheur

A bord du bateau de Jenkins un autre malheur les a frappés lorsqu'une énorme vague vint le remplir, arrêtant le moteur.

Fatiguement mortel de fatigue, Bernard Jenkins, Jacques Doucet, qui avait perdu l'usage de ses jambes à force d'être exposé au froid, et le jeune Evé ont cru que la fin était venue.

Cyril et Alphonse ont repris courage et avec l'aide des trois autres ont réussi à vider le bateau.

Ils ont réparé le moteur samedi soir. Dimanche matin ils entraient au port et M. Doucet rejoignait ses 10 autres enfants pour célébrer la fête des pères.

Autre famille éprouvée

Une autre famille qui a été sérieusement affectée est celle de Geoffrey Richard, de Baie Ste-Anne. Ce matin, on a découvert les cadavres de Geoffrey et son fils, Jean-Louis. Un autre fils qui faisait la pêche dans le même bateau, Lionel, n'a pas encore été trouvé.

June 22, 1959



On voit ci-dessus M. Jacques Doucet et son fils Alphonse, à gauche qui a réussi à le sauver avec son autre fils Evé, à sa droite.

"I Have Tears But No Hope"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ MONCTON TO HELP?

A suggestion that a disaster fund be set up for the families of fishermen who died in Saturday morning's storm along Northumberland Strait met with hearty approval in finance committee yesterday.

Ald. J. P. LeBlanc recommended the city do something for the stricken families and also perhaps a disaster fund could be established.

The committee decided to ask the city solicitor if the city can legally give money or assistance.

The matter of a disaster fund is also to be studied and report given at next week's finance committee meeting.

Twenty - year - old Marie Chiasson said here Monday "I have tears but no hope" for her father and two brothers, missing and presumed dead after Saturday's storm in Northumberland Strait.

Marie, a pretty dark-haired waitress, was en route by train from Halifax to be with her mother, Mrs. William Chiasson, who is in hospital in Chatham, N. B., suffering from shock. Marie's 47-year-old father, William, and brothers, Adriens, 19, and Alphonse, 16, haven't been seen since their small boat left Baie Ste. Anne Friday.

Marie said in an interview that her father had been fishing just two months.

"I wish he'd never started. I don't know why he did. He had a good job and was making good money."

William Cassidy left his job with a Moncton Lumber Company to return to his native Baie Ste. Anne.

"Don't Know Why"

"I don't know why he did it," Miss Chiasson said. "He got the idea to go fishing from his brother, Albert."

Albert Chiasson is also missing and presumed dead.

"It's been so long since they went out. They found their boat but they didn't find anybody in it. I've got some tears left, but no hope," Marie said.

Miss Chiasson heard her father was missing in a telephone call early Sunday from a neighbor.

"I couldn't believe it. I made them repeat it about five times. I still can't believe it. Not my family."

She said it was a "weird thing" that 16-year-old Alphonse was with the others.

"Goes To School"

"He must have just been up for the weekend, she said. "He goes to school in Moncton and he wants to be a doctor."

She said her mother, who

hasn't been well, was taken to hospital twice Saturday. "I'm going right to see her."

Miss Chiasson said she had been working in Halifax for several months. She "hadn't worried too much" when her father took up fishing.

"I was never afraid for him. That's why it was such a shock."

Watches Helplessly As Father Drowned

Editors Note: Edward Cook, 28-year-old fisherman from Howard's Cove, about 20 miles from Alberton, P.E.I., has been fishing since he was 14. He saved himself from the raging nor'easter that struck the Northumberland Strait fishing fleet early Saturday by lashing himself to the mast. He watched helplessly as his father Fraser was washed overboard and drowned. The Cook boat was a 33-footer, built last year. Here is his story.

Written For The Canadian Press
By EDWARD COOK

ESCUMINAC, N.B. (CP) — We were about an hour and 20 minutes (10 to 12 miles) northeast of Escuminac. We were fishing out of there. It was blowing a little when we went out about five o'clock.

It was just a light breeze. The wind kept increasing and the sea increased too. Our sail blew out of the ropes. (The sail was torn from the rigging).

★ ★ ★ ★

We just lost control of it. Around midnight it was bad and it kept increasing. We didn't try to haul our nets until Saturday morning.

I never saw any sea like this before. We hadn't expected a nor'easterly gale. After day-break we waited awhile for a lull. We figured there would be a break in the weather.

We were backing shoal water (shallow water) and we had to cut our nets loose.

We started to bail when the sea filled the boat — then another sea stopped the engine — then another one broke over the boat.

She turned over.

After she came back on her feet I tied myself to the mast.

I sung out two or three times for him (his father) to tie himself to the mast. But he kept working at the engine.

A big sea came over and washed the old man overboard. I never saw him again.

Roy Lloyd's boat was on its way in and I was still fastened to the mast when they picked me up.

He threw me a life jacket and a life line. I couldn't get it the first time — I think it was the third time that I caught it.

When I got the line, I untied myself — I had to go over the side. I was in the water for a good few minutes before they pulled me aboard.

Il voit son père emporté par une vague

CHATHAM, N.-B. (CP) — Un pêcheur âgé de 27 ans, de l'île du Prince-Edouard a raconté samedi soir comment il avait vu son père emporté par les lames au cours de la tempête qui a surpris leur petite embarcation de pêche, vendredi soir, sur le détroit de Northumberland.

Edward Cook, de Howard's Cove s'est attaché au mât du bateau lorsque la tempête s'est élevée. Les sauveteurs l'ont trouvé lorsque le bateau s'en est venu à la dérive sur la côte, à 40 milles d'ici. Il a été admis à l'hôpital ici et on a rapporté hier soir que son état était bon.

"Nous étions à environ 10 à 12 milles des côtes d'Escuminac. Il faisait une légère brise lorsque nous sommes partis. Le vent continuait d'augmenter ainsi que la mer. Notre voile se brisa et nous avons perdu la maîtrise du bateau. Nous n'avons pas tenté de lever nos filets avant samedi matin.

"Je n'ai jamais vu une mer pareille de toute ma vie. On n'avait pas prévu le vent du nord-est. Après le lever du jour, nous avons attendu pour un accalmie.

Nous étions rendus dans les eaux peu profondes et nous avons du couper nos filets.

Fishermen Blame Weather Office; Blew Up Quickly, Says Director

June 22, 1959

Gale Warnings Issued Friday Evening At 10

ESCUMINAC (CP) — Fishermen said here Sunday they were unprepared for the northeast gale that swept down on a 50-boat salmon fleet in Northumberland Strait Friday night and early Saturday. They blamed the weather office.

"They gave us easterly winds 15 for Friday night and light winds for Saturday," said Jack Doucet, one of five men who arrived here safe Sunday. His boat was damaged by the storm and he was brought ashore on another vessel after his capsized.

The Halifax weather office said Saturday afternoon that Summerside, P.E.I., reported 45-mile-an-hour gales gusting to 65 at 4 a.m.

Yvon Durelle, owner of four Baie Ste. Anne boats and British Empire light-heavy-weight boxing champion, also criticized the weather forecasts.

"I came here Friday to go out myself" he said, "but the weather was too bad. It was blowing hard. The marine weather forecast for Friday night said winds of 30 or 35 miles an hour. They are nothing around here."

None of Durelle's boats were out.

Rube Hornstein, chief of the Halifax Weather Office, said gale warnings were issued Friday night.

"We're in a rather bad place," he said. "These storms can develop very rapidly indeed off the coast. We get it a lot in the winter—it's not as common this time of year."

Marine forecasts issued at 4 p.m. ADT Friday predicted light winds for Northumberland Strait and Gulf of St. Lawrence, shifting to northeast 25.

Six hours later at 10 p.m. the forecast was changed to northeast gales 35 shifting at dawn to northwest 35 and diminishing Saturday afternoon to southwest winds 25.

At 6 a.m. Saturday north gales 45 were forecast and the weather office predicted they would diminish in the evening to southwest gales 35.

Worse In District Than Springhill?

ESCUMINAC (CP)—Salmon fisherman Walter Bransfield thinks the loss of life in Friday night's Northumberland Strait storm will be "worse than Springhill" considering the percentages.

Seventy-five men died last October in the Nova Scotia coal mining town of 7,000. Twelve men were known dead and 30 still unaccounted for Sunday in Escuminac, and its surrounding communities. They have a combined total population of about 2,000.

Mr. Bransfield, who is 65, has been fishing for salmon since 1915.

He reflected other fishermen's opinions. The fishing last week had been the best in 10 years. Some fishermen were making as much as \$200 a night on the salmon catch.

Said 46-year-old Albany Martin of Baie Ste. Anne: "If we had gone out Friday night all the men in the family would have been wiped out."

As it was, Albany made the comment after his return from a shoreline search Sunday morning. He carried with him two symbols of death — the side of a wheelhouse and a lobster crate.

He identified them positively as from a boat owned by his 31-year-old brother Andrew. Albany's 22-year-old son, Alonzo was with Andrew in the boat.

Lieutenant-Governor Visits Storm Areas

SOUTH NELSON — Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien visited Baie du Vin, Baie Ste. Anne and Escuminac Sunday afternoon to extend his sympathy to the bereaved communities for himself and the people of New Brunswick.

Commenting afterwards he said, "So great is the disaster in loss of life and equipment, one could not grasp its true significance except by coming in personal contact with survivors and bereaved families. Men who go down to the sea are a hardy race, but not in recent history has such a serious blow to life been experienced."

In extending sympathy, the lieutenant-governor said he did so for the province, believing that the same sentiment would prevail across Canada when the true significance of the disaster became known.

He talked with one boat operator, Edgar Goodchild, who had been at sea during the storm in his 39-foot boat. He had set his nets and was drifting when the storm struck in full fury about midnight. This man, he added, was able to save his nets and his life. To recount the sad story of loss of life in its entirety cannot be done briefly, so awful it is, His Honor said.

They'll Go Back To Sea Again

Breakwater Is Escuminac's Life

By GEORGE McNEVIN
Canadian Press Staff Writer

ESCUMINAC, N.B. (CP) — A 2,000-foot breakwater makes this little town of 800 the centre of the fishing industry along a 40-mile stretch of the rugged north-eastern New Brunswick coast.

The three-sided breakwater extends into Miramichi Bay to form an enclosure where up to 100 fishing boats shelter during the season. An 80-foot gap in the outer side provides an entrance and exit.

The salmon season opens June 1 and runs to July 3 when there is a two-week pause to allow the salmon time to go up the Miramichi River to spawn. The season then resumes until Aug. 15.

The fleet was trying to cash in on the best salmon run in 10 years when it was hit by the devastating northeast gale Friday night.

Favored Spot

Most favored spot for salmon is around the entrance to Miramichi Bay. When the boats reach the ground they let out their \$1,500 nets, paying them out until they are about a mile behind.

Setting the net is usually completed by nightfall and the crew sleeps while the boat and net drift with the tide. They sleep in the cuddy — a small cabin with which most boats are equipped.

At dawn the net is drawn in and the catch taken aboard. The boats head for the wharf to sell the catch and make ready for the next trip. The technique is called drift fishing.

Fishermen said it was odd that the greatest loss was among the bigger boats. They thought at first the bigger craft had ridden out the storm, not fully aware of its intensity. When smaller boats began coming in Saturday morning, they expected the larger ones to show up later. But as the hours wore on their hopes for further arrivals faded.

Fishing Hours

The fishermen usually go out between 4:30 and 7 p.m., expecting to return the next morning. They fish at about 13 fathoms (78 feet). The average length of the boats is about 35 feet. They cost about \$2,500 and the hand-knitted nets are worth at least \$1,500.

Although the men also fish for mackerel, cod and smelt, when the salmon season is closed, their main interest is salmon.

Earlier last week boats were arriving with an average of 30 salmon aboard. They were selling for 45 to 55 cents a pound

and some fishermen were making \$200 a night.

There were many father-and-son groups in the fishing boats. The industry is the lifeblood of this hamlet and youngsters go to sea early in life to work with their fathers and older brothers.

Hardened by years of carving a meagre living from the sea, the fishermen realize that when the salmon are running it is time to fish.

Those who survived the sudden storm will for the most part return to the salmon grounds again. Even Brian Lloyd, 13, who was lashed to the mast by his father, told his weeping mother as they unloaded their catch that he plans to fish again.

It has been the custom for womenfolk to go to the breakwater after a storm. Many of the older women had lived through the anxiety of waiting many times. They comforted the younger women who gathered early Saturday.

Early Sunday many went to Stella Maris Roman Catholic Church here to offer prayers for the missing and thanks for the return of loved ones.

Fred Arsenault, 49, of St. Nicholas, P.E.I., who was drifting for mackerel when the storm struck, said a "new boat and good equipment" saved him and Armand Richard of Biscayne Point, P.E.I., but the craft was leaking when she limped into port at Summerside Saturday.

"Nets may have been a reason why some of the other boats were lost," he said.

A sudden storm may snap the rope, causing the boat to swing sideways into the seas and capsize. He said the same situation might develop if winds or seas tore out the riding sail on the boat's stern or smashed the mast.

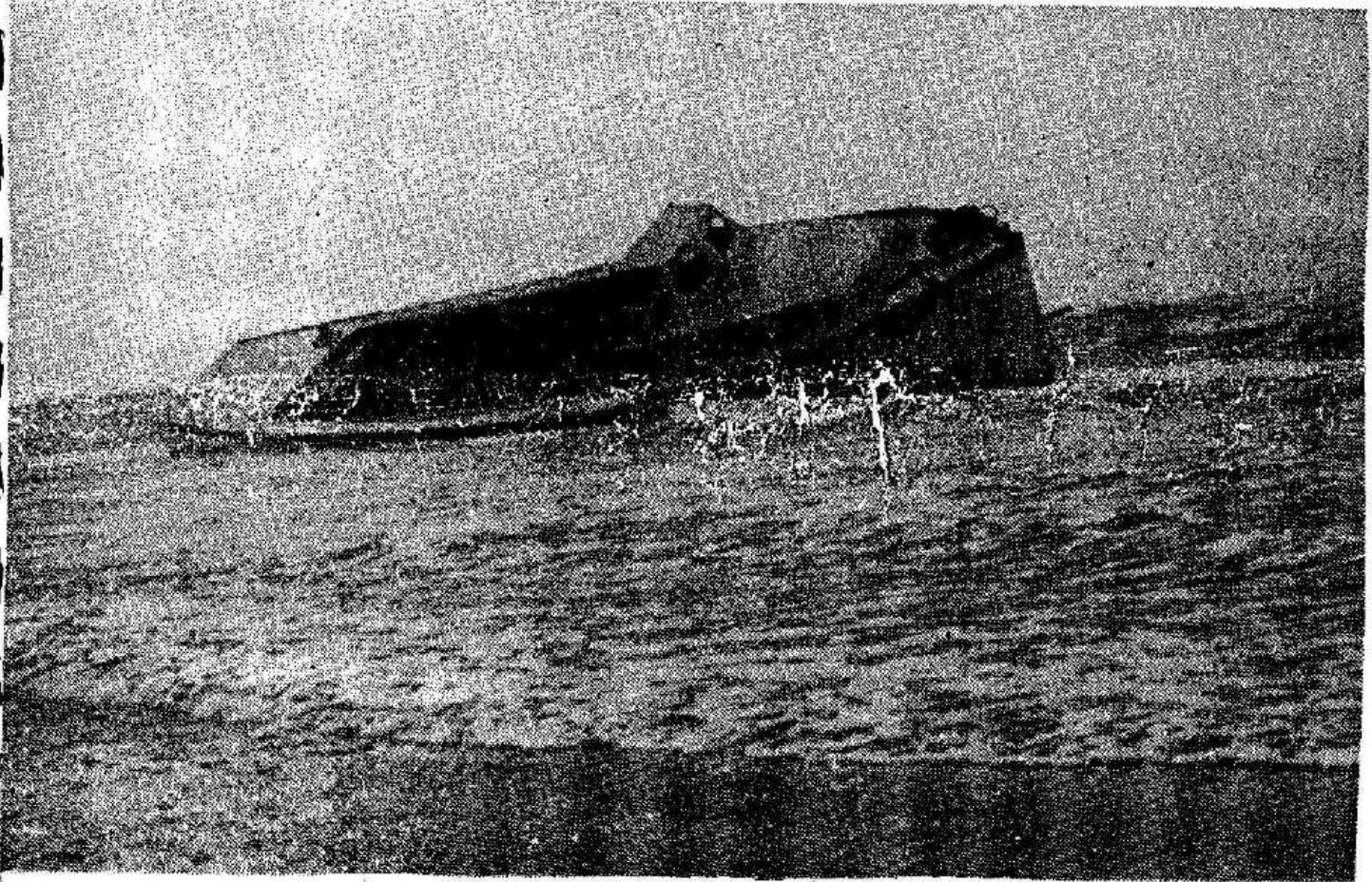


Mrs. Tom Lewis of Escuminac joyously hugs her husband, returned as if from the dead. "All I could think of was Father's Day," she said, while he was missing in the terrifying storm. When Capt. Tom put his boat safely ashore with three others, Mrs. Lewis and their two daughters, aged seven and 13, were over-

come. But despite her own worries during the dreadful hours of waiting, Mrs. Lewis stayed in the small store she and her husband operate. They have a telephone and she stayed so she could pass along word to other families awaiting news.



Weather-hardened faces taut and grim, men and boys await a chance to help at Escuminac Sunday, looking to the sea in hopes that friends and relatives still miraculously may land safely on the storm-battered coast. At left, the Francine B., one of the many boats cast ashore by the high winds and heavy seas, tosses in the surf that pounds the beach. It left Escuminac Friday evening with four men aboard. The storm tossed it back empty four hours later. One body was found.



List 22 Missing; Eight May Be On Four Other Boats

By DON HOYT
Canadian Press Staff Writer

ESCUMINAC, N.B. (CP) — Twelve men are known dead and 22 are missing in a weekend storm that lashed the Gulf of St. Lawrence into a turmoil of 50-foot waves.

Anxious relatives clung to a thin thread of hope that the missing fishermen would return alive. But as darkness fell Sunday night, so did their hopes.

F. B. Fowlie of Newcastle, Red Cross relief chairman, said four of the more than 50 salmon boats caught in the howling northeaster early Saturday were still missing. They were believed to carry at least eight men—bringing the toll of dead and missing to 42.

RCMP at nearby Richibucto said Sunday night the bodies of two men were found washed up on the shore.

Spot 22 Derelicts

A spokesman for RCAF Search and Rescue headquarters in Halifax said planes searching the area Sunday had spotted 22 derelicts along a 30-mile stretch of coastline between Point Escuminac and Richibucto.

Some of the hulks had been washed ashore, others lay sunken in shallow inshore water, and some drifted upside down offshore. There was no sign of life. The weather was good Sunday, visibility unlimited and sea calm.

The fisheries department vessel Lamna, the RCMP cutter Wood and scores of small fishing boats aided in the search. Officials planned to begin dragging the waters of the search area today.

One of the RCAF planes was en route back to the Greenwood, N.S. base after Royal Tour escort duty in the Sept-Îles, Que. area when it was diverted to the scene. It was not known whether the planes would resume the search today.

New Brunswick Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien visited here and nearby Bay du Vin and Baie Ste. Anne Sunday.

None of the little craft was equipped with radio or radar. The storm intensified rapidly with gales to 75-miles-an-hour. The boats were tossed and smashed about like toys.

The Red Cross, who set up a relief centre here Saturday took down their tents Sunday night.

Doors on homes of victims at Baie Ste. Anne were draped in purple crepe Sunday night. The rosary was being said in almost every house.

Funeral Rites

One funeral service for the five known dead from the little village will be held at the Baie Ste. Anne Roman Catholic Church with requiem mass Tuesday.

In Bay du Vin funerals for the two men whose bodies were found will be held Tuesday at 2 p.m. in the Protestant church.

An excellent run of salmon and the absence of a clear warning of the storm combined to produce the terrible toll.

Fishermen here said Sunday night they were not prepared for the gale that swept down on the fleet Friday night and early Saturday.

Jack Doucet, one of five men who arrived here Sunday after being picked up from the chill waters by another boat, blamed the weather office, saying "they gave us easterly winds 15 for Friday night and light winds for Saturday."

Rube Hornstein, chief of the Halifax Weather Office, said gale warnings were issued Friday night. But by then the fleet was out.

"These storms can develop very rapidly indeed off the coast. We get it a lot in the winter. It's

not as common this time of the year." (See also Page 3.)

Some fishermen admitted they realized a storm was brewing before they set out. But they didn't realize it would be as severe as it was. Weather conditions for several days before had not been good. But they decided to take their chances, lured by the rich run of salmon.

Material Losses

Besides the loss of life it was likely to take days to assess the damage to boats and fishing gear, expected to run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Haggard fishermen straggled into various ports all day Saturday with tales of courage and terror. Some survivors had lashed themselves to masts. Some had seen relatives swept overboard by mountainous waves.

Here and in neighboring Baie Ste. Anne they began digging graves in the cemeteries for the funerals that were to come. At church services Sunday some faces showed the strain of waiting. Crowds attended to pray for the dead and missing.

Lured by the heaviest salmon run in 10 years, about 50 boats put out Friday night into Northumberland Strait where they were smashed and scattered by the howling northeaster.

Never Before

"There, never was no loss of life on boats in storms since I started fishing for salmon in 1915," said Walter Bransfield, 65-year-old retired fisherman, whose house became a flood-hit rescue centre Saturday and Sunday.

"It was blowing awful dirty," said 43-year-old Jack Doucet. Bernie Jenkins, who took Doucet and his two sons aboard his boat after the Doucet craft capsized, said, "It was the worst storm I have ever seen. Waves rose up like mountains all around us."

Saturday giant waves 50 to 60 feet high still lashed the horse-shoe shaped breakwater here that forms a quiet haven for fishing boats from such adjacent communities as Baie Ste. Anne, Bay du Vin, Hardwicke and from Escuminac itself.

The fishing was good. "That's how so many boats got caught," said Mr. Bransfield. "It was a pretty rosy picture. If it had been poor fishing a lot of boats wouldn't have gone out."

Some got back all right after taking shelter or riding out the storm. Others were still unreported Sunday night. Bits and pieces of wreckage had been washed ashore or towed in by searching fishermen, many of whom had missed drowning by a fluke of nature.

Stories of raw courage were told around boiling pots of coffee in the rescue co-ordination centre. They talked of Fraser Cook of Howard's Cove, P.E.I., who lashed his son to the mast of his

boat and then was swept overboard himself. The son was later rescued and admitted to hospital. His father was still missing.

They wondered, too, at the seemingly superhuman displays by men like Jack Doucet, who stayed alive for 20 minutes in the chill water and supported his teenage son although he can't swim. Both were rescued.

They mourned for men like Albert Chiasson (father of 14 children, the youngest six months old. He had a brother missing too).

There was little optimism. But the men — and there were few women in evidence — clung to every hope.

Before Sunday masses at the two Roman Catholic churches in this predominantly French-speaking area, fishermen donned rubber coveralls and jumped into their boats with lunch cans to search for missing men.

They were joined in the search by an RCAF crash boat and helicopter, government planes, fisheries patrol boats and RCMP-led foot patrols which combed the coastline inch by inch.

"I seen some fishing nets up on the shore down near the point," said one old-timer referring to Point Escuminac, four miles from here.

"They want to go through every net," he added. "There could be a body wrapped up in

it and that's the only way to find it."

Two bodies recovered Sunday morning were found at the point. They were brought here by ambulance and identified by relatives.

Crowds of curious poured into Escuminac Sunday along with scores of relatives from all parts of eastern Canada.

Along the route were parked two hearses, one bearing a rough wooden box, the other a coffin.

In nearby Baie Ste. Anne there were mounds of dirt in the cemetery where graves had been dug for the dead. Inside the Catholic church men had shed their rough fishermen's clothes and donned their Sunday best for a brief hour of prayer before returning to the search. But there was less hope as the hours passed. "Whatever come in now will be dead," said Yvon Durelle, the Baie Ste. Anne boxer-fisherman.

Searchers, alarmed by the storm, began scouring the shoreline at dawn Saturday for wreckage and bodies.

Fishermen who survived the storm took their boats out Sunday to search for their missing comrades. RCAF search planes were hampered by the difficulty of distinguishing the searching boats from the lost ones.

The freakish storm veered into the district Friday night with

winds gusting to 75 miles an hour. The gale piled the sea into 50-foot waves. A weather forecast issued in Halifax at 10 p.m. ADT Friday had predicted winds of 35 miles an hour for the district.

The weather had been bad all week and fishermen knew another storm was on the way. They didn't expect it to be so severe. Besides, the salmon were running and staying ashore meant passing up a chance for a big payday.

During the last two weeks salmon catches offshore had been the best in 10 years. Boats were taking an average of 30 salmon apiece daily. The salmon were selling for about \$5 each.

Officials had difficulty determining exactly how many boats were out when the storm broke. Most of the fleet operates out of this village of 600, 80 miles north of Moncton, N.B., but many others go to the fishing grounds from other ports along the coast.

Along with the loss of life, damage to fishing gear was expected to be heavy. The boats are worth about \$2,200 each, a salmon net costs about \$1,500. Most fishermen who were caught by the storm lost their nets.

Traps Lost Too

More than 12,000 lobster traps had been set in this area Thursday. They are valued at \$5 apiece and damage was expected to be extensive.

Most of the boats are between 35 and 50 feet long and are usually manned by two or three men. Many are family affairs—operated by brothers or a father-son team. The vessels are open except for a small cabin or wheelhouse, and some use a sail in addition to the engine.

Disrupted communications delayed damage reports from some areas. At Point du Chene, a summer resort area near Moncton, the storm smashed cottages and pleasure boats. Piles of lobster traps on wharves were wrecked.

In Shediac, N.B., town manager J. A. Arsenault said he had "never seen anything like it in June." In the 24-hour period ended early Saturday 1½ inches of rain fell.

Coupled with the gale, the highest tide since 1940 was reported here Friday night. There was a full moon.

The Miramichi Bay Fishing Fleet Disaster

- Pictures Tell Tragic Story Of Loss

June 22, 1959



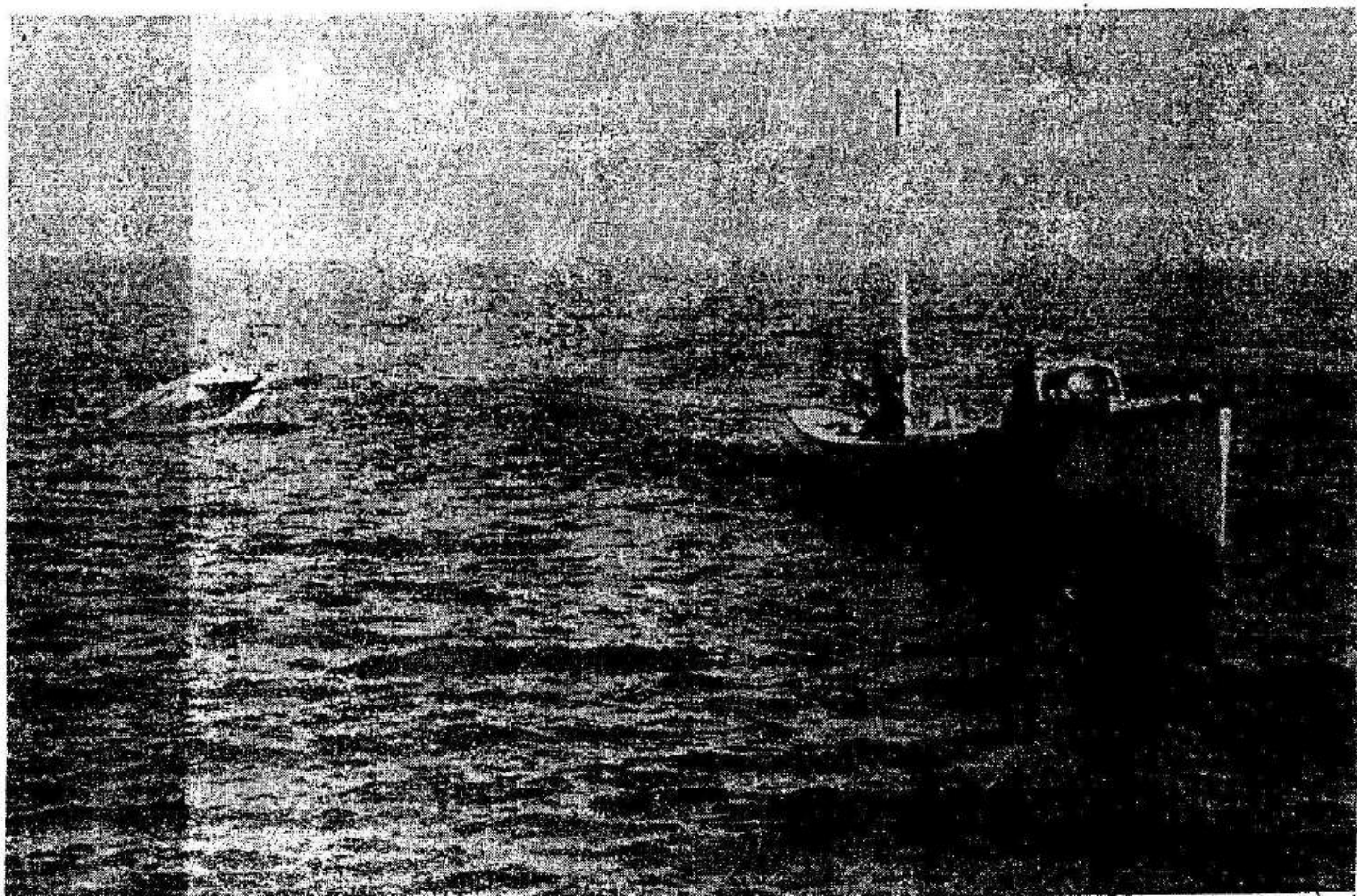
F. B. Fowlie, Disaster Relief Director, confers with Durelle.



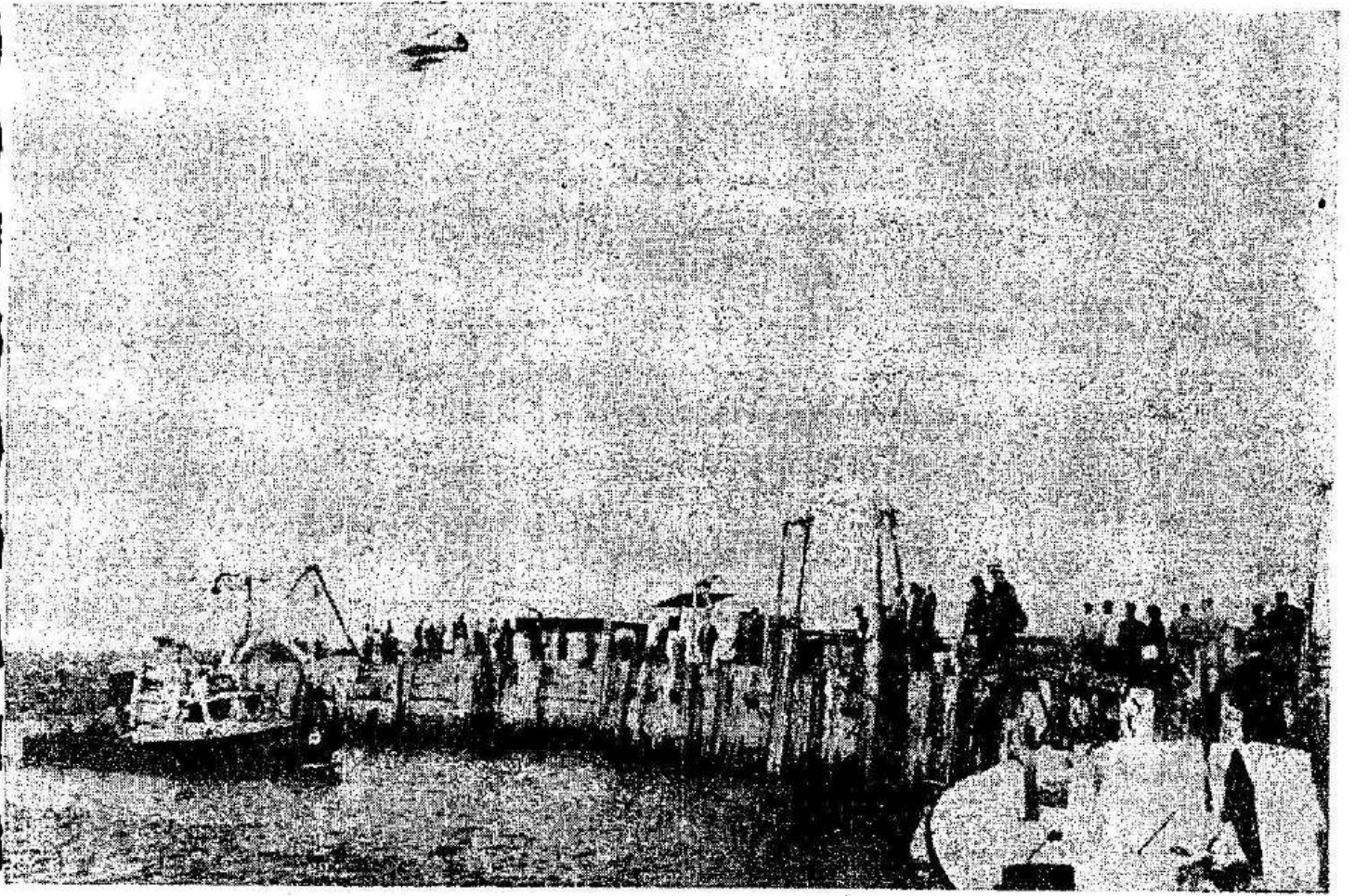
Slicker hooked on gunwale is grim reminder.



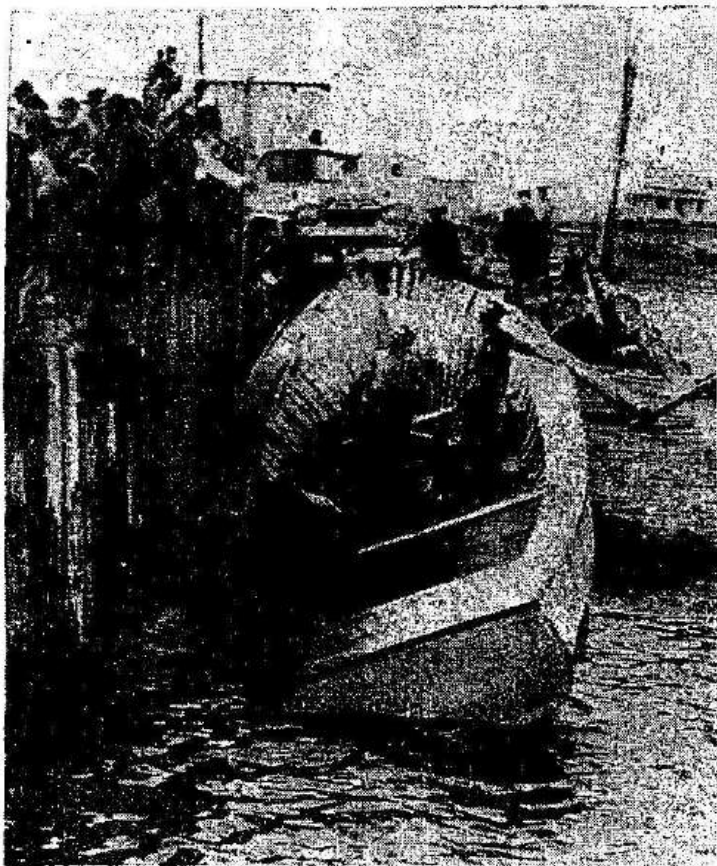
The peaceful waters behind the breakwater teem with activity.



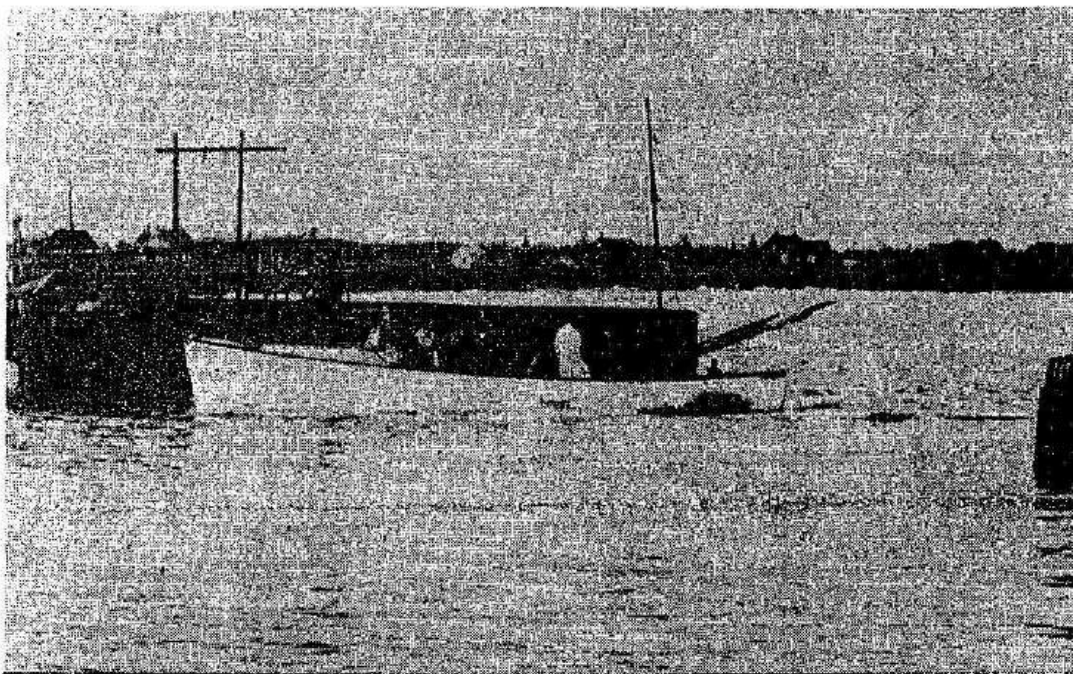
Yvon Durelle tows home the remains of a lost friend's boat Sunday morning.



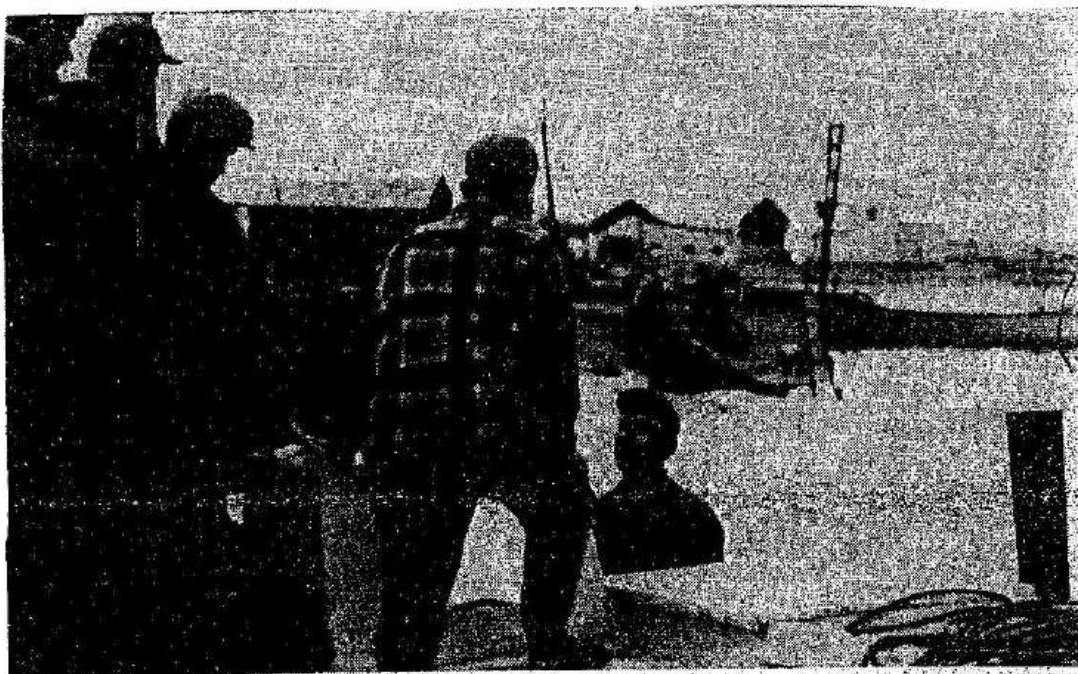
The Forest Service aircraft wheels over the RCAF crash boat in the breakwater.



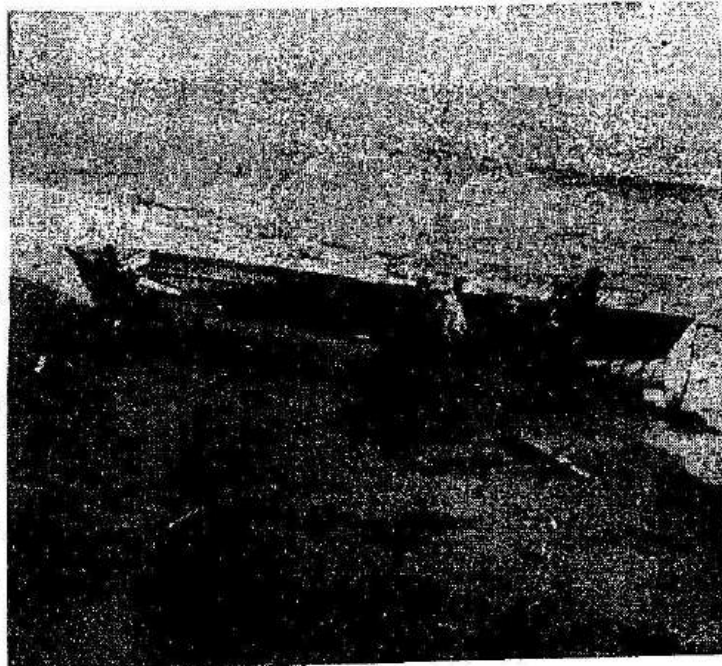
Village men bail a torn, salvaged boat.



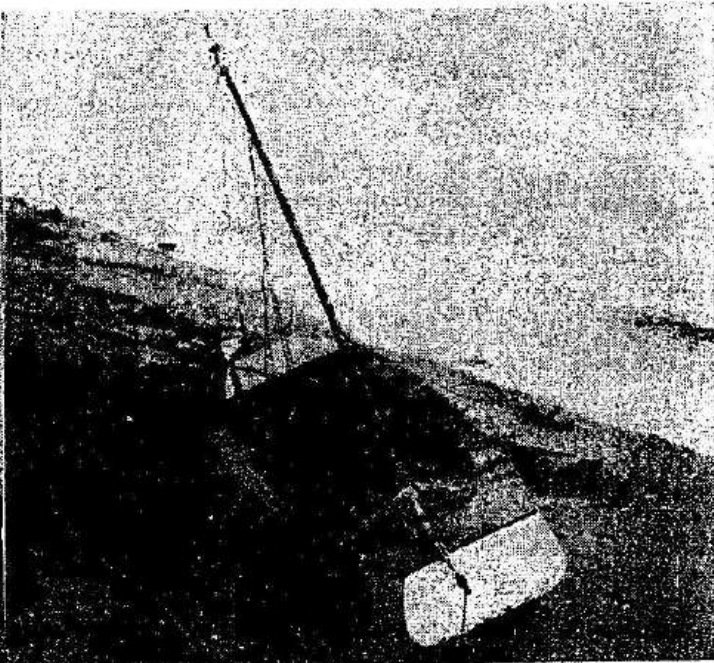
Bernard Jenkins comes home with survivors from a wrecked boat.



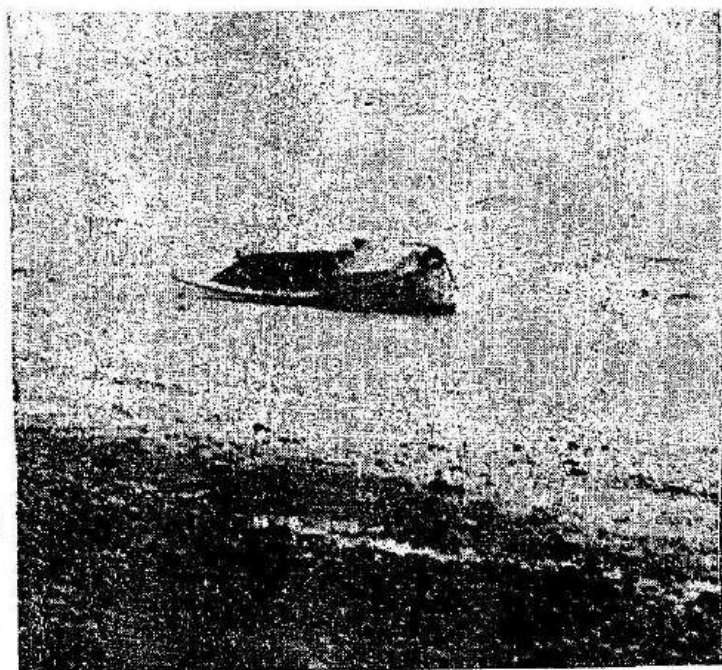
Bernard Jenkins, right, is welcomed home by fellow fishermen.



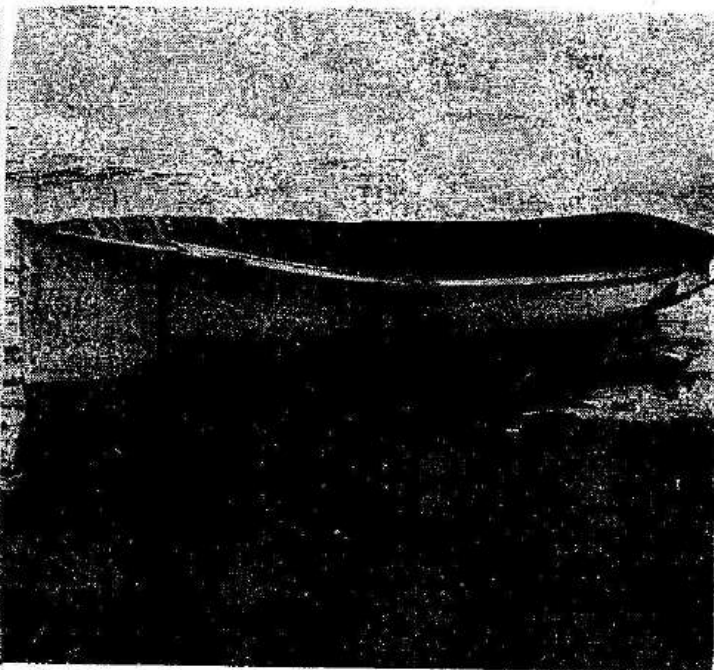
Fishermen identify a stripped boat.



A battered and broken boat; no survivors.



An empty boat drifts home to Escuminac.



Motorless and cuddiless hulk signifies death.

8 Bodies Recovered, 22 Known Missing Along East Coast

By JIM MORRISON
Gleaner Staff Writer

ESCUMINAC — It was not a happy Father's Day here Sunday . . . too many fathers, and sons, were missing at sea after the worst storm ever to hit the Miramichi Bay area. The tragedy wrought a terrible toll on the small fishing villages of Baie Ste. Anne, Baie du Vin and Escuminac, a toll that may reach as high as 34 dead.

The toll for the province will be even higher as boats of fishing fleets from Shippegan and Richibucto also got caught in the storm. Bodies of three fishermen from the Richibucto fleet have been recovered.

(See Page 3 for details of the Shippegan and Richibucto disaster.)

50-60 CRAFT

Between 50 and 60 of the fishing craft had gone out from here Friday night. Before morning a fierce storm swept up Miramichi Bay, wrecking boats, ruining nets . . . taking lives. It is not known how many boats returned safely, how many were lost.

At last report eight bodies had been given up by the murky waters of Miramichi Bay. One other fisherman was known to

have drowned. Twenty-two were known to be missing and believed dead.

CHURCHES FILLED

Churches in the small fishing communities were filled yesterday, as they are each Sunday. But the prayers had special meaning; prayers for those known to have perished:

(For other stories and pictures see Pages 2, 3, 8 and 9. Editorial on Page 4).

prayers for those who have not yet returned; prayers of hope; and many prayers of thanks.

The tragedy that has struck the Miramichi Bay area this past weekend is a lurking (Continued on Page 2 Col. 4)

8 Bodies

(Continued From Page 1)
thing. It has touched every man, woman and child. Many lost husbands, sons, and other relatives. Many lost only good friends. . . but the loss was every bit as keen.

REALIZATION

It wasn't until Saturday morning that residents of Escuminac realized that the boats and their crews were in danger. Despair hung heavy as huge waves crashed against the high breakwater, throwing spray high into the air. This was weather fit for neither man nor boat.

Help was needed and help came . . . fast. The RCMP from Newcastle, Chatham and Bathurst arrived on the scene. They were soon followed by the Red Cross, RCAF Search and Rescue, St. John Ambulance Brigade, and later the Newcastle Fire Department.

CENTRE ESTABLISHED

An information centre was established by the Red Cross under the supervision of F. B. Fowlie of Newcastle, chairman of the Red Cross disaster committee for Northumberland County.

The Search and Rescue unit of the RCAF at Chatham Station quickly erected tents, and search parties were readied. No boats could be sent out Saturday because of the storm. But as the day progressed search parties walked miles of coastline looking for wreckage and bodies; finding both.

Survivors — boats and crews — started to come into Escuminac. Stories of rescue and of wrecked boats soon circulated throughout the communities.

Anxiety rose as it became apparent that many lives would be lost, many boats wrecked. Anxiety turned to despair by Saturday evening, at which time only five bodies had been recovered. More than 25 men were still missing, many of them young, and one only 12 years old.

LONG VIGIL

A vigil was kept on miles of shoreline and by midnight a report came in that three more boats, or the remains of same, had been washed up on the beach between Escuminac and Escuminac Point.

Two more bodies were recovered early Sunday morning, and one late Sunday night.

But it was on Sunday morning that Mrs. Bernard Jenkins, who had given up all hope for her husband, and nephew, Cyril, broke into tears of happiness. Mr. Jenkins, a stalwart seaman, had managed to weather the storm; had taken his craft out of the stormy waters of the bay into the gulf. He also had rescued three fellow fishermen: Jack Doucet and his two sons, Alphonse and Everett.

HOPE WANES

This brought new hope to others but as the day wore on no more boats came in under their own power. No more rescues were reported.

Now the search was on in earnest, as the water calmed and the sun broke through the overcast. Fishermen wasted no time in getting their boats out of the breakwater and into the bay.

Yvon Durelle of Baie Ste. Anne, Canadian and British Empire light-heavyweight boxing champion, was in the forefront of search operations. He was out in one of his boats by 5 a.m. Sunday and before the day was out had three of his fleet of five helping in the search.

GRIM PARADE

Now a slow but grim parade took place in Miramichi Bay. Durelle's boat came back after five hours, towing the remains of a fishing vessel, filled with water. Later another of his boats was to bring in a second piece of wreckage.

The boats were so badly wrecked that they tore apart when a towline was attached and pressure applied. Other wrecks were spotted.

The RCAF, grounded Saturday by bad weather, now put its search craft into the air, including a helicopter. More and more reports of wrecked vessels were given until late Sunday night all had been accounted for. But the search for bodies was less successful.

ECONOMIC

The tragedy to the communities of Baie Ste. Anne, Baie du Verte and Escuminac is not just a personal one, but also economic.

No official estimate of the financial loss has been made but it will be staggering. Many boats were a complete loss, as well as valuable nets and other fishing gear.

Several fishermen lost everything they had.

"One grizzled, veteran fisherman summed up the feelings of all of the fishing communities:

"This storm, this tragedy has done the same thing to us as the Springhill disaster did to the miners. . . it is terrible."

Relatives, Friends Scan Bleak Horizon For Storm Survivors

By ART CARPENTER
Gleaner Staff Writer

ESCUMINAC — Silent and grim, men and women scanned the horizons at the little fishing village of Escuminac on Miramichi Bay during the weekend as families and relatives of missing fishermen braved the gale-force winds and flying spray to line the seashore.

Between 50 and 60 of the sturdy fishing craft from the Baie du Vin-Baie Ste. Anne-Escuminac area took to the open waters of the bay and Northumberland Strait Friday, not suspecting the evils fate had in store. Early Saturday morning the wind whipped mighty waves of 50 and 60 feet down the bay, sealing the fate of the hard-working fishermen.

A total of 23 men and boys are believed missing. Seven bodies have been recovered and one man is known to be dead in the worst tragedy ever to strike the area.

On Saturday afternoon, as huge waves smashed at the

breakwater of Escuminac and the wind sent the high tide plunging over the beach lines, quiet people descended to the shore, looking to the north for sails and to the beaches for debris, which might mean a father or son or loved one would return no more.

I talked with many of the fishermen who had not ventured forth for the excellent salmon fishing and learned one important thing — to these people the sea is a livelihood and a way of life, not a constant threat.

The tanned, horny-handed men are deeply philosophical
(Continued on Page 2, Col. 5)

Relatives

(Continued from Page 1)

and love the sea with an undying passion. They know inside that any day at any time they may die any number of ways while on the tossing waters, but do not seem to admit to themselves that this could be so.

A sombre-faced man in his mid-fifties quietly informed me, late Saturday night, that his youngest son, a boy in his mid-teens, was on the water with his uncle and probably would never return. He said: "I never expect to see those two alive again, but, God granting, if they walk across the breakwater and shake my hand, only then will I believe that they live."

BEACH LITTERED

Following this, he invited me to accompany him down the darkened beach littered with broken parts and planks of fishing boats which would not return to the harbour. As he passed each bit of wreckage he commented on it, told whose boat it was torn from and voiced his opinion of the amount of hope for the occupants.

Tiny knots of men, silently smoking and gazing seaward, occupied various sectors of the beach waiting for a newly-spotted piece of wreckage to reach shore on the high tide, or watching the battered hulk of a fishing boat slowly wash toward land. During Saturday night silence reigned in Escuminac as the wind howled steadily from the north and mighty white-crested breakers boomed on the shore. Silent watch was kept from windows by wives and families awaiting husbands.

SURVIVORS

Some survived the fateful storm but there were many who did not. According to survivors they remained afloat — swamped many times by huge seas which broke overhead — only by holding to their nets and "Pointin' 'er head t' sea" or by dropping the nets and making a full throttle run for the shore.

In pointing head to the sea the small sail on the craft is used to hold the prow of the boat into the wind while the engines labor to push for the open water of Northumberland Strait. The shore run and climatic beaching at the end is carried out by simply dropping the nets and opening the throttle wide to ride the seas to the shore and crash into the beach.

RUNS FOR SHORE

One fisherman who beached his craft — the only to do so and survive — told me he had no other course than to make the run for shore and pray that he did not capsize before beaching. He lost his nets and his boat but saved his life to come home to his family and fish once more.

Perhaps the finest example of the Northumberland fisherman's outlook on his trade is Bernard Jenkins who, with his teen-age nephew, Cyril, was caught in the winds at daybreak on Saturday. He tightened his nets and headed for the open sea at a pace calculated to just keep headway. The 48-foot craft had no more than begun to make headway when he spied a capsized boat in which were a father and two sons. He hove to in the crashing waves and took the trio aboard, only to be swamped himself.

STEADY BAILING

The now five occupants of the boat ripped the boards from the floor and bailed steadily all day Saturday and during Saturday night to keep afloat. Masses of people thronged the breakwater early Sunday morning as Jenkins brought his boat and four passengers safely ashore. He and his nephew had breakfast and immediately headed to sea to retrieve their nets and assist in the mass search for survivors, wrecks or bodies.

'You Have No Idea In God's Almighty World How Terrifying It Was'

EDITORS NOTE: Salmon fishermen Bernie Jenkins, 52, and his nephew Cyril, 21, sailed into harbor here Sunday after spending 40 hours at sea as the result of a violent storm in Northumberland Strait.

By **BERNIE JENKINS**

ESCUMINAC, N.B. (CP) -- We put out to sea earlier than usual Friday. The salmon were running good; better than they had all week and we were to take advantage of it.

We just took lunches with us and started out about four o'clock.

Things seemed to go all right until about 11 o'clock that night when it started to squall. It would have been a good thing if there had been rain because that quiets the sea.

It was the worst storm I've ever seen. Waves rose up like mountains all around us.

You have no idea in God's almighty world how terrifying it was.

When it became too bad we reefed our sail and huddled in the cuddy (a cabin on the small boat). We were about 10 miles out.

We figured it was about 11 o'clock Saturday morning when we saw another boat overturned with three people hanging onto it.

They were Jack Doucet and his two boys. We took them off one

at a time with a rope. The first time we threw them the line, one of the boys handed it to his brother. The next time the same youngster caught it and gave it to his father.

The seas were still high and we had to circle for awhile before we could toss the rope a third time.

I think he thought we were going to leave him then and was pretty scared. We managed to get in position again though and finally got him aboard.

We'd run out of fuel for the stove in the cuddy and ripped off the tires we use for guards on the side of the boat. We cut them up and began using them for fuel to keep warm.

We'd dumped our lunches into the beds earlier to use the pails for bailing. The food was spoiled by the salt water and we had to do without. We ran out of water too.

It wasn't long after we got the Doucets on when our boat nearly capsized. She reeled and the engine was hurled to the floor.

It must have been six o'clock that evening before we got the engine fixed up. We could have come in Saturday night. We could see the lights of Escuminac, but we were afraid to risk it and stayed right in deep water until daylight.

We started in as soon as day broke and arrived about seven this morning.

Premier Voices Grief, Offers Financial Aid

FREDERICTON — A message of sympathy and an expression of deep concern for all those touched by the disaster to the fishing fleets on Northumberland Strait has been issued by Premier Hugh John Flemming on behalf of the the province. Text of the premier's message follows:

I send this message with an expression of deepest sympathy and concern for the wives and for the mothers and families of the men known to be lost. Their tragedy is the tragedy of the entire province and the sympathy which is felt for them by their immediate neighbors is also felt. I can assure them, by every man, woman and child in New Brunswick. May God comfort and strengthen each and every one so afflicted at this sad time.

Rescue and assistance are being given now and more are being organized as the hours of this sad weekend unfold. The search and rescue arm of the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are doing everything possible in directing the work of rescue and assistance. They are aided in this by officials of the federal and provincial governments.

The provincial fisheries division has its officials in the area and the government of the province is co-operating in every possible way despite difficulties in getting messages through on local telephone lines.

We have authorized all boats in the dragger fleet along the coast to aid in the rescue work and we stand ready to reimburse those so assisting for financial outlay while engaged in the search.

The government of the province is closely following the situation in order to ascertain how best its officials and resources can be employed in relief and rescue efforts.

I close this message as I began it with expressions of heartfelt sympathy for those bereaved and for those still in the throes of anxiety and fear for their loved ones.

June 21, 1959

Learn Courage At Early Age On Miramichi

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special)
—Sons of the staunch Miramichi Bay fishermen learn courage at an early age.

Brian Lloyd, 13-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lloyd of Escuminac is such a youth. His courage was tested to the limit during the tragic morning and afternoon hours of Saturday when many boats were wrecked and lives lost during a storm on New Brunswick's east coast. He didn't fall the test.

ONE OF CREW

Brian was one of a crew of four, including his father, who set out at about 4.30 p.m. Friday to fish for mackerel. Other members of the crew were Chlorin Jimmie and Les Lewis of Black River.

"We were clear of the mouth of Miramichi Bay, out into the gulf, when the weather started getting awful bad," Brian said.

"We all climbed into the cuddy for shelter and rode out the storm.

"We pulled in our nets about 10.45 a.m. It sure was slow work, with the waves so high and the wind blowing. It took us a long time.

TIED TO MAST

"It was about 3.15 p.m., we were approaching the breakwater at Escuminac when we saw a boat just above the
(Continued on Page 2 Col. 3)

Learn Courage

(Continued From Page 1)

wharf. There was a man tied to the mast.

"We went up to the boat, but had a hard time to get him to untie himself. It was Mr. Cook (Edward Cook of Howard's Cove, P.E.I.).

"We finally got him into our boat. His was full of water. Then we got to the breakwater and took Mr. Cook to our home. They took him to hospital a little later.

Mrs. Lloyd, who had spent a harrowing day Saturday hoping and praying for the safe return of her husband and son, is not too keen on Brian going out again.

"That was your last trip out fishing," she told him shortly after he had arrived home, safe and well.

GOING OUT AGAIN

"The heck it is," Brian retorted. "I'll be going out again soon."

Brian, who has been seasick before on occasion, was, of course, seasick again during the big storm.

"But I didn't mind it too much this time," Brian said. "Dad got seasick too."

The Lloyds all went to church yesterday morning and offered thanks. They also offered prayers for the safety of the many other fathers and sons still missing.

"It was the worst storm ever to hit this area," Mr. Lloyd said. Other veteran fishermen agreed.

But Brian Lloyd, just 13 years old, has proved that a son of a Miramichi Bay fisherman has the courage to ride out the roughest storm.

Father Still Missing:

SURVIVOR DESCRIBES HIS ORDEAL IN GALE

by Edward Cook as told to Jim Morrison

EDITOR'S NOTE: Edward Cook, 29, of Howard's Cove, P.E.I., came back from the worst storm to hit the Miramichi Bay area in the memory of residents. Mr. Cook now is a patient in Hotel Dieu, Chatham. He told his story of the tragic morning of Saturday, June 20, from his hospital bed yesterday afternoon. His father, Fraser Cook, 60, is still listed as missing.

We started out Friday night to set our drift nets for salmon. The weather had been bad all week but nothing to worry about.

It took us about one and a half hours to reach the point where we wanted to put out the nets, about 10 miles from Escuminac, towards the mouth of Miramichi Bay.

The weather got increasingly worse as the night wore on but it wasn't until the early hours of the morning that it got real bad. It seemed to reach its peak about dawn. It was the worst I have ever seen.

There was just Dad (Fraser Cook) and I aboard. The boat turned right over once but we were able to get back in. I lashed myself to the mast and hol-

tered at Dad to do the same. He was clinging to the cuddy (small forward cabin). Just as I hollered a huge wave came over the boat, sweeping the cuddy and Dad overboard.

There was nothing I could do. I was helpless.

The next few hours were a nightmare, of which I can remember very little.

The seas were huge, some say the waves were 40 to 50 feet high. I don't know. I just can't remember.

The boat was filled with water and I was lashed to the mast. I didn't expect to come out of it alive.

RESCUED

Then a boat came along and I was helped into it by Roy Lloyd. He had to help me get free from the mast. My sense of feeling was just about gone by then. My boat was about two miles from Escuminac when I was rescued, so they tell me.

Roy took me into the breakwater and I was taken to his home. I stayed there about an hour and then they brought me into hospital.

I'm feeling pretty good now but still weak. This was a terrible experience.

Gone, - Fisherman

Brother, Son Missing After Brutal Storm Strikes Strait

By GEORGE McNEVIN

ESCUMINAC (CP) — "If we had gone out Friday night all the men in the family would have been wiped out," said small Albany Martin, 46-year-old Bale Stc. Anne fisherman looking around the Red Cross tent wearily.

He had returned from an early morning search of the shoreline near this disaster-stricken northeastern New Brunswick community with two symbols of death—the side of a wheelhouse and a lobster crate.

He identified them positively as parts of a boat owned by his brother Andrew, 31, reported missing after the worst storm in 35 years, which claimed at least eight lives and caused hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage.

Albany's son Alonzo, 22, was with Andrew in the boat.

"If we can only find them, even if they are dead, that is about all we can hope for", he said.

"Yes", agreed his brother-in-law, Romeo Martin, standing nearby. "If we can only find them".

Albany and Romeo were preparing to enter a search for their relatives and others lost in the storm. An estimated 24 men were still unaccounted for.

Worst Storm

Albany said it was the worst storm he had seen in 35 years. He himself had once been storm-wrecked on Tabusintac Island about 20 miles straight north of here in Miramichi Bay. Before running aground he spent two days adrift.

What does he think of fishing for a living?

"We have to do it or starve. It's all we know. Most of us have fished all our lives".

Albany had loaned 450 lobster pots and some nets to another fisherman Friday night. His loss is estimated at about \$2,000. He and Romeo decided to stay in port that night.

The salmon fishermen usually go out between 4:30 and 7 p.m. and string their nets. They return between 6:30 and 10 in the morning.

They fish at about 13 fathoms in Northumberland Strait and Miramichi Bay. Escuminac is the gathering point for small fishing boats, averaging 35 feet in length, for about 20 miles along the coast.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

LIST 35 DEAD OR MISSING

June 23, 1959

Final Toll Might Be Higher, Fleet Lamed

By DON HOYT

ESCUMINAC (CP) — Thirty-five fishermen were listed officially as dead or missing Monday night in the Northumberland Strait fishing fleet disaster.

As the search for bodies continued and reports trickled in from isolated coves and hamlets the possibility remained that the final toll might be even higher.

RCMP said 11 bodies have been found. Two other men are listed as known dead on the basis of reports from survivors who saw them washed overboard from their tiny salmon fishing boats in a broiling sea early Saturday.

Twenty-two men are listed as missing and presumed drowned. The most devastating gale to hit the New Brunswick coast in years also wiped out about one-third of the Miramichi area salmon fleet, a heavy blow to the district's economy.

Most of the 66 licensed boats in the Escuminac area were at sea when the gale struck. Twenty-two of them disappeared in the storm.

Four finally made port, battered and leaking. Police said the other 18 are derelicts. Some lie wrecked on the shore. Others are sunk in shallow water.

"I don't think there's any hope for any of these people now," said M. A. MacDonald, fisheries protection officer for the New Brunswick Counties of Northumberland, Westmorland and Gloucester.

"I don't know what will happen now to these people that lost men. They're very, very poor and as far as I know there's no money to put them back in business."

One more body was washed ashore Monday.

It was found at Richibucto, 30 miles south of here, and identified as Victor Robichaud, 43, Manuels Post Office.

Scour Shoreline

Since early Saturday policemen on foot have scoured the rocky shore for wreckage. Boats of the Escuminac fleet, many of them manned by men who weathered the death-dealing blow, towed in the derelicts.

Three fisheries patrol boats from New Brunswick ports put to sea again Monday looking for bodies. They were assisted by an RCMP patrol boat and a number of druggers from Caraquet. They pulled nets between the boats in hopes of catching bodies.

Funeral services will be held today at nearby Baie Ste. Anne and Bay du Vin. At Baie Ste. Anne four fishermen will be buried after a requiem mass at the Roman Catholic church. Two Bay du Vin men will be buried from the Protestant church.

The blow to the shaky economy, unstable over the years because of a capricious fishery, may never be repaired. Only a few fishermen are believed to have taken advantage of federal government insurance administered by the fisheries department.

"It's been rare that a boat has been lost—maybe two or three a year," said Mr. MacDonald. "So insurance hasn't been too popular."

For one per cent of the appraised value of their boats, the fishermen could get back 60 per cent of its worth from insurance if it were lost.

Expensive Craft

The boats, ranging in length from 32 to 48 feet, cost \$2,000 to \$2,500 each. Salmon nets cost at least \$1,500 apiece. Besides boats and net losses Escuminac fishermen lost an estimated \$12,000 lobster pots in the storm. They were worth \$5 apiece.

About 45 boats are believed to have been in the strait when the blow caught them.

"I never saw any sea like this before," said Walter Cook, found lashed to the mast in a drifting boat Saturday by another vessel poking cautiously towards sanctuary behind the breakwater here.

His father had been washed overboard.

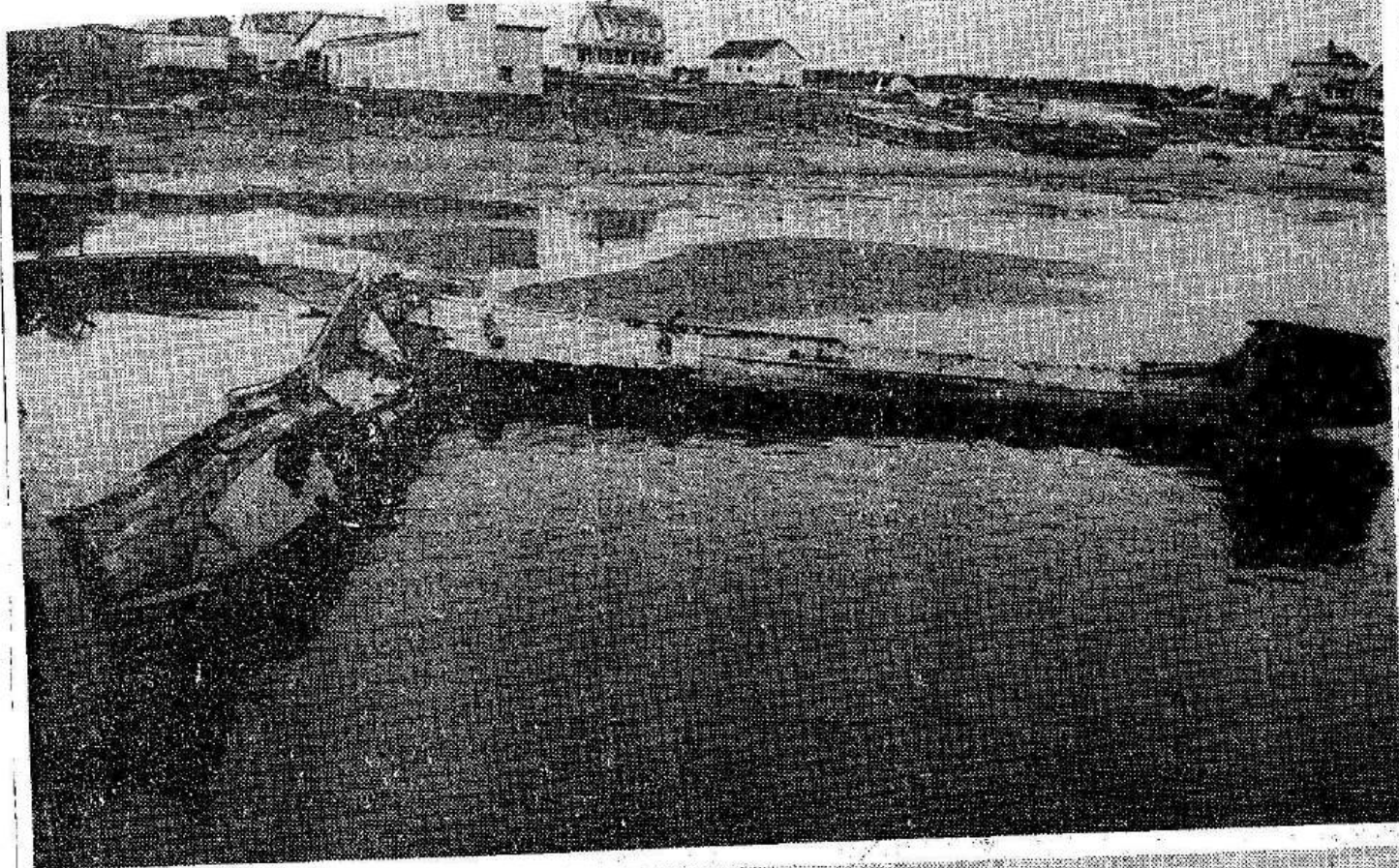
Many blamed the weather of-fice for not preparing them for the storm.

"They gave us easterly winds 15 for Friday night and light winds for Saturday," said Jack Doucet, who was pulled with two sons from the freezing waters by another fishing crew.

Winds gusted as high as 70 miles an hour, said returning fishermen and sea's pounded boats and men to pieces. The small salmon drifters do not carry radio or radar.

One old fisherman said his son's body showed he hadn't drowned.

"His lungs were dry," said the oldster. "He was broken and killed by the sea against his boat."



RESULT OF STORM — Above is all that's left of Walter Williston's fishing boat. Williston, of Bay Du Vin, was rescued from his battered craft during the height of the weekend storm which lashed Northumberland Strait and eastern and northern New Brunswick. His boat was towed into the Escuminac harbor. New Brunswick Premier Hugh John Flemming yesterday visited Escuminac and other centres affected by the ferocious storm, which practically wiped out the Escuminac fishing fleet. Premier Flemming is shown speaking to Donat Turbide of Manuel Post Office, one fisherman who luckily did not make the Friday night fishing trip. J. Robert Martin, Northumberland M.A. centre, accompanied the premier. (Abbass Studio Photos)

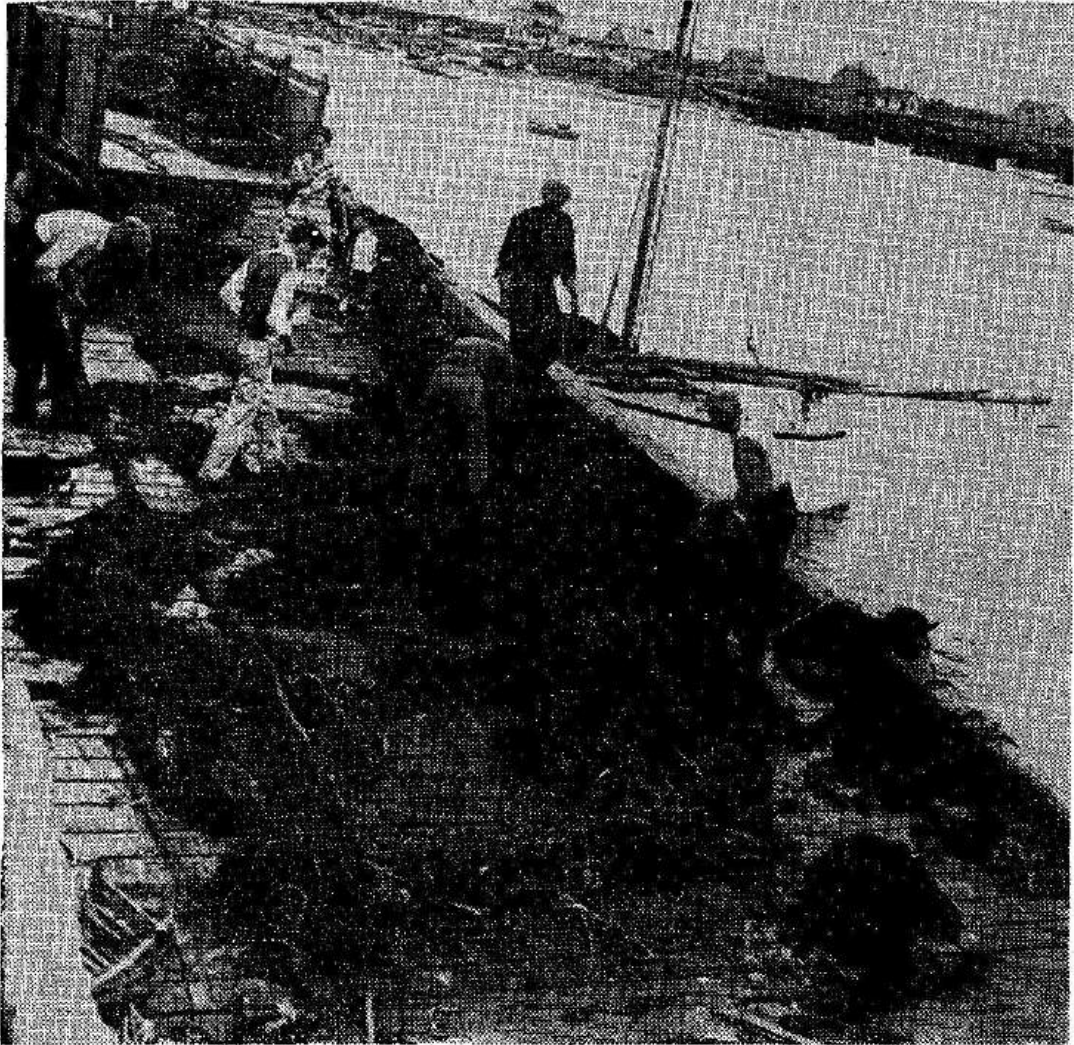


June 23, 1959



SOME OF THE LUCKY ONES — Pictured berthed at the Escuminac breakwater are a group of New Brunswick fishing boats which survived Friday night's gale in Northumberland Strait and made port safely. The battered little craft were among 50 salmon fishing boats caught off the Northumberland, Kent and Westmorland county coasts by the sudden gale which swamped a number of boats. The resultant death toll stands at at least 13 with 22 other fishermen unaccounted for. (Abbass Studio Photo).

June 23, 1959



LOOK OVER NETS — A small group of Escuminac fishermen probe through nets to determine the extent of damage they received in the savage force storm that hit northern and eastern New Brunswick over the weekend. Despite the tragedy, in which lives were lost, fishermen in the area are making ready to brave the seas again and continue fishing. (Photo by Abbass Studios)

Most Fishermen Planning To Return To Seas

June 23, 1959

"NOTHING ELSE TO DO" IS GENERAL SENTIMENT

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special) — A gloomy, quiet atmosphere hugged this tiny northern New Brunswick fishing village Monday as its residents reeled under the full impact of the weekend storm disaster that hit this area.

Fishermen here who survived the crashing blow that whipped up 50 foot waves in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Northumberland Strait and those who did not brave the flash weekend storm, were stunned by the fate of many of their friends and neighbors who lost their lives in the churning waters. But they were not discouraged.

The majority of the small number of men who wandered down to the Escuminac wharf Monday were ready to resume fishing. No one was heard to say he would halt his occupation.

For some though, it means a back-to-the-wall fight to get back on their feet—Walter Williston for example.

The 35-year-old Bay du Vin man was saved from the storm. But over on the shore lay a battered hulk of wood, split in half. It was all that remained of the 40-foot boat that Williston and Harold Taylor, his mate, left the harbor in for the fishing grounds Friday night.

"I want to keep fishing. There is nothing else I can do. But I've got to have a new boat", said Mr. Williston.

His boat was slashed by 50 foot waves during the height of the lashing storm. It rolled completely over at one stage, Mr. Williston revealed.

"I don't know yet how we stayed on the boat. She rolled right over and then back on her feet again and Harold and I stayed right on her", he said.

Was Only 20

He winced as he mentioned the name of his fishing partner. Taylor, only 20, later died after being rescued by Theodore Williston's boat in the wild waters.

"He laid quietly on the boat. He was hurt bad. He died quietly and I never noticed when. He was a good man", Walter Williston said sadly about young Taylor.

His brother Charlie was sorting out his torn fishing nets nearby. "What else are the men going to do but fish? Somebody should help them along though", he said.

The 38-year-old Charlie Williston didn't include himself with the rest of the men. He was one of the lucky ones, escaping the storm and recovering the nets he lost temporarily on Sunday.

The tall thin Bay du Vin resident, who has been fishing for 24 years, pointed to the small boat docked at the wharf which except for a broken cabin window, was in good shape.

"There she is; she pulled me through sheer hell and I'm going to give her a paint job every year until I put her up on the beach for good".

He broke out in sobs as he talked. "It's a terrible thing. Here I am talking about painting my boat and there are all those men who will never get in a boat again. It's terrible, terrible".

"I'll Go Back"

A little further down the wharf Elmer MacIntyre of Escuminac probed through his fishing nets. He too survived the storm, safely reaching Escuminac Saturday morning. "Sure I'm going back out. But not for a while. My nets are damaged bad. It will probably be two or three weeks before I'll be able to go again".

MacIntyre estimated his loss at \$1,200.

Bernard Jenkins was still talking about his miraculous survival in the turbulent waters after his boat was flooded during the storm Saturday morning. "We've got to expect these things as fishermen," he said, referring to the tragedy. "I'll be going out again. His boat received only slight damage and he expects to recover his nets.

Jack Doucet, Manuel Post Office, who together with his two teen-aged sons, was pulled out of the waters by Jenkins after his boat capsized, was taken to Chatham yesterday for a check-up after his ordeal. But he is still willing to resume fishing as

(Continued on page 5, col. 4)

Nothing Else To Do Is Feeling

(Continued from page 3)

soon as his boat is repaired.

Twenty-eight-year-old Edward Cook said he thought he'd be fishing again. "There is nothing much else I can do." He left for his Prince Edward Island home yesterday after being released from Hotel Dieu in Chatham where he was placed for observation.

Lashed To Mast

Cook lashed himself to the mast of his father's boat when the craft was smashed by heavy seas. His father, Fraser, was washed overboard. Edward was saved by Roy Lloyd who came upon the Cook craft as he was bucking the storm tossed waters.

Lloyd's 48-foot boat was not damaged and he plans on resuming his fishing occupation. His 13-year-old son Brian was still ready to join his father after a harrowing experience during the storm.

The youngest was lashed to the mast of the boat by his father as a safety precaution and was extremely sick during the storm. Brian wasn't around for an interview Sunday. He was back on his father's boat aiding in the search for bodies.

Armand Daigle of Hardwicke was glad Monday that he stopped fishing three years ago. "It's things like this that make me glad I'm not fishing anymore. It was no life for me," he stated.

The hardy fishermen of this area just don't feel those sentiments, not even after the horrible tragedy.

Push Fund

There were reports Monday of a relief fund being organized in Fredericton for the benefit of the Northumberland Strait disaster area. This newspaper is encouraging a provincial or federal government fund.

Until an official national or provincial fund is established, The Times will accept contributions for the relief of the fishermen's family and will acknowledge them in this paper.

OUR FISHERMEN'S TRAGEDY

June 23, 1959

Federal and Provincial Governments Should Aid Stricken Families

(An Editorial)

This province and the rest of Canada have been stunned by the tragedy which struck the fishing communities on New Brunswick's east coast. Many of the homes in the villages of Escuminac, Bay du Vin, Baie Ste. Anne and others feel the loss of loved ones—fathers, sons, cousins, friends.

The people of this province and elsewhere—always noted for their generosity—are wondering what they can do to help. They are looking for guidance and leadership. Many of the victims of the sea tragedy left large families who will find life a tremendous hardship unless help is offered. As this is a misfortune of national scope, help should be forthcoming from all the country.

It is to be hoped that our federal and provincial governments will lead the way. They should take the initiative rather than wait for other agencies to start things rolling to meet the emergency.

Such a wholesale tragedy as this immediately brings to mind the Springhill mine disasters of 1956 and 1958. On both those occasions all of Canada, including this province, sprang to the aid of the Nova Scotia mining town. In 1956 the flood of donations was so great that it was possible to establish individual annuities for the widows and children of the thirty-nine miners who lost their lives.

Then last October, when the second Springhill disaster occurred, the response from all across Canada was even more overwhelming. While rescue workers still were struggling to save more victims, Premier Stanfield of Nova Scotia announced the organization of a national fund campaign. His government led the way with \$50,000 and the premier said that more would be added if necessary. Shortly afterward Premier Flemming of New Brunswick stated that he had recommended to his cabinet a contribution of \$25,000. Then the Federal Government donated \$100,000 with more to follow if needed. The fund exceeded the million dollar mark in a month, and by spring of this year it had risen to nearly two million dollars.

We hope that the need for assistance to the families of the New Brunswick fishermen will bring forth an equally generous and immediate response. Comparatively speaking, the tragedy of the fishermen is even greater than that which befell Springhill last year when 75 lives were lost, because the 35 fishermen deaths in New Brunswick were exacted from a coastal district the population of which is only about two thousand.

Let the federal and provincial governments set an example of leadership in this matter and the people of New Brunswick will soon follow with that generosity which is second nature to them. Already Lord Beaverbrook, whose interest and devotion to Canada and his adopted province in particular is well known, has announced that he will contribute \$5,000. Many others will follow when a government fund is established.

On a retrouvé 11 corps — Deux sont morts d'après des témoins et 22 sont disparus Messe pontificale de requiem ce matin à Baie Ste-Anne par S. E. Mgr N. Robichaud

June 23, 1959

ESCUMINAC, N.B. (PC) — Trente-cinq pêcheurs morts ou portés disparus. Tel était hier soir le bilan officiel du désastre du détroit de Northumberland d'après les renseignements parvenant des hameaux du district. Il est possible que le nombre des victimes soit plus élevé, les recherches n'étant pas terminées.

Onze cadavres ont été retrouvés, mais le nombre des morts certaines est de 13, des survivants ayant déclaré qu'ils avaient pu périr dans la mer en démençant deux hommes dont les cadavres n'ont pas encore été repêchés.

Vingt-deux hommes sont portés officiellement disparus. On croit qu'ils ont tous péri. Toutes les victimes sont des pêcheurs.

La tragédie a été causée par la pire tempête de mémoire d'homme, en fin de semaine, dans le détroit de Northumberland.

Elle a détruit environ le tiers de la flotte de pêche au saumon de la région de Miramichi, au nord-est du Nouveau-Brunswick. C'est un très dur coup pour toute l'économie de cette partie de la province. Escuminac est située sur la baie de Miramichi.

Une cinquantaine des 66 embarcations de la région étaient dans le golf Saint-Laurent, non loin de là, au moment où la tempête a frappé. Vingt-deux sont disparues: dix-huit sont des épaves et quatre ont réussi tant bien que mal à atteindre le port.

Réduits à la misère?

Parlant des familles éprouvées par la mort, M. M. A. MacDonald, fonctionnaire préposé à la protection de la pêche commerciale dans trois comtés du Nouveau-Brunswick, Northumberland, Restigouche et Gloucester, déclare:

"Je ne sais pas ce que sera leur sort. Ce sont des familles très très pauvres. La plupart des pêcheurs qui ont péri n'étaient pas protégés par l'assurance. Je ne sais pas ou on pourrait trouver de l'argent."

M. MacDonald explique qu'avant cette tempête les pêcheurs perdaient très rarement leurs embarcations.

Un autre corps a été rejeté sur le rivage hier. Il a été trouvé à Richibouctou, à 30 milles au sud d'ici, et identifié comme étant celui de Victor Robichaud, 43 ans.

Depuis l'aube, samedi, des policiers à pied ont arpenté les rives du golfe, recherchant débris et cadavres. Les bateaux de la flottille d'Escuminac, beaucoup montés par des hommes qui ont survécu à la tempête, ramenaient les épaves.

Trois bateaux de patrouille de pêcheries de ports du Nouveau-Brunswick ont repris la mer hier, recherchant des corps. Ils étaient aidés par un bateau de patrouille de la Gendarmerie canadienne et plusieurs chalutiers de la région de Caraquet. Ils tiraient des filets suspendus entre les bateaux dans l'espoir d'y accrocher des corps.

Ce matin, à Baie Ste-Anne, Son Excellence Mgr Norbert Robichaud, archevêque de Moncton, célébrera une messe pontificale de Requiem pour les victimes de la tragédie, dans l'église paroissiale.

A Baie-du-Vin, un service sera chanté pour les victimes de religion protestante.

La tragédie porte à la région un coup dont elle pourrait ne plus jamais se relever. On croit que quelques pêcheurs seulement avaient de l'assurance du gouvernement fédéral sur leurs barques de pêche.

"Il est rare qu'on ait à déplorer la perte d'un bateau, peut-être deux ou trois par année, de dire M. MacDonald, ce qui explique pourquoi l'assurance n'est pas trop populaire.

Pour un pour-cent de la valeur de leurs bateaux, les pêcheurs pourraient retirer 60 pour-cent de sa valeur en assurance, en cas de perte. Les barques, longues de 32 à 48 pieds, coûtent de \$2,000 à \$2,500 chacune. Les filets à saumon coûtent au moins \$1,500 chacun. En plus des bateaux et filets, les pêcheurs ont également perdu des agrès de pêche au homard pour environ \$12,000 dans la tempête. Les cages valent \$5 chacune.

On croit qu'il y avait 45 bateaux en mer lorsque la tempête s'est abattue sur eux. "Je n'ai jamais vu une mer aussi démontée, a dit Walter Cook, trouvé attaché au mat d'un bateau à la dérive, samedi, par une autre barque cherchant à regagner la

rive. Son père avait été emporté par les vagues.

Plusieurs blâment le bureau de la météo de ne les avoir pas avertis d'une tempête. "Ils nous ont annoncé des vents d'est de 15 milles à l'heure pour la nuit et des vents légers pour samedi," a dit Jack Doucet qui a été retiré des eaux glacées avec ses deux fils, par un autre bateau.

Le vent a atteint jusqu'à 70 milles à l'heure et la mer en furie a pilonné bateaux et pêcheurs, réduisant les premiers en pièces et emportant les autres dans des tourbillons d'écume. Les petits bateaux de pêche au saumon n'ont ni radio ni radar.

Un vieux pêcheur a dit que le corps de son fils prouve qu'il ne s'est pas noyé. "Ses poumons étaient secs," a dit le vétérinaire. "Il a été tué par la mer lorsqu'elle l'a lancé contre son bateau."

La météo avait émis un communiqué à 4 heures, vendredi après-midi, prédisant des vents légers. Six heures plus tard, on dit des vents du nord-est de 35 modifiait les pronostics pour prémilles à l'heure tournant vers le nord-ouest à l'aube puis diminuant graduellement. A 4 heures du matin, Summerside faisait rapport au bureau de la météo de vents de 45 milles à l'heure avec bourrasques atteignant 64 milles.

Rube Hornstein, directeur du bureau de la météo de Halifax, a dit qu'on avait émis des avertissements d'ouragan vendredi soir. Mais la flottille de pêche était alors en mer. "Ces tempêtes peuvent survenir très rapidement la long des côtes, en hiver, mais on ne les rencontre généralement pas à ce moment-ci de l'année, a-t-il dit.

Jack Doucet raconte comment il a survécu à la tempête

June 23, 1959

ESCUMINAC, N.-B. (CP) — Voici ce que déclarait M. Jack Doucet, 43 ans, et père de 12 enfants, après avoir été sorti des eaux glacées par un autre bateau. Ici, il raconte les 38 heures qu'il a passé en mer au cours de la tempête:

"J'étais à environ 20 milles des côtes d'Escuminac, lorsque la tempête s'est élevée, vendredi soir. La tempête est arrivée par degrés. Il ventait terriblement fort.

A deux heures du matin, la voile s'est brisée. On ne s'en est pas occupé parce que le bateau était navigable et les filets à saumon tenaient bons.

Nous nous sommes levés à 5 h. 30 le matin et nous avons décidé que la mer était trop houleuse pour retirer nos filets, alors nous sommes retournés nous coucher. Lorsque nous nous sommes levés à nouveau, nos filets étaient partis.

Il nous fallait rentrer car nous n'avions plus de filets. Nous avons navigué dans l'eau d'environ 30 pieds de profondeur. On ne pouvait pas voir les côtes, à cause de la brume.

Nous avons rencontré un autre bateau qui savait où était la lumière de la côte. Après qu'il eut levé ses filets, on l'a suivi vers la côte. Deux autres bateaux se sont joints à nous et enfin, un cinquième, dont le moteur ne marchait pas. Je l'ai attaché à

mon bateau mais la lame est venue trop vite et le bateau a été soulevé et il est tombé sur la partie basse entre deux vagues. Moi et mes deux fils, et William Manuel étaient dessous. (On a retrouvé le corps de Manuel dans le bateau de Doucet qui a atteint la côte, dans la journée.)

Nous sommes tombés à environ 10 verges du bateau. Nous avons nagé jusqu'au bateau. Mes deux garçons sont montés dans le bateau et je me tenais après l'ancre. On est resté à l'eau pendant 20 minutes. Je ne pouvais pas nager mais j'ai réussi à monter dans le bateau avec l'aide de mon garçon. (Des pêcheurs d'expérience ont déclaré qu'une personne ne pouvait pas vivre plus de quelques minutes dans l'eau glacée). J'ai avalé beaucoup d'eau.

Bernie Jenkins, nous a alors aperçus. Il nous a ramassés. Environ deux minutes après, les vagues remplirent le bateau et le moteur arrêta.

Nous avons réparé le moteur samedi soir. Dimanche matin, nous sommes entrés au port. Les bateaux que nous avions aperçus étaient déjà entrés."

Yvon Durelle demande de l'aide pour ses compagnons éprouvés

"Si le gouvernement peut dépenser une couple de million de dollars pour la visite de la reine, il peut en dépenser un peu pour aider les familles de pêcheurs de la région d'Escuminac, au Nouveau-Brunswick." C'est ce qu'a déclaré le champion poids mi-lourd canadien de la boxe, Yvon Durelle, hier soir.

"Les prises ont été faibles toute l'année" a dit Durelle dans une entrevue et personnellement j'ai fait jusqu'ici \$8,000 de moins que l'an passé. La plupart des pêcheurs de la région éprouvée ont eu une mauvaise année jusqu'ici et il faudra maintenant cinq ans avant de se rétablir de ces pertes."

Durelle, de retour à Moncton pour continuer son entraînement en vue d'un combat contre Archie Moore, à Montréal, le mois pro-

chain, a passé la fin de semaine chez lui à Baie Ste-Anne. Ce petit village est au coeur même de la région éprouvée par la perte de plus de 30 pêcheurs au cours d'une violente tempête, en fin de semaine.

Durelle lui-même était parti pour aller à la pêche au saumon, vendredi soir, mais il avait rebroussé chemin et rappelé ses trois autres bateaux à cause du mauvais temps.

Il a également eu quelques mots de critique à l'endroit du service de météo. "Ils nous annoncent le temps qu'il fera quand nous l'avons" a-t-il dit.

Aucun de ceux qui ont été éprouvés par la tempête n'avaient de l'assurance, a-t-il dit. Plusieurs même étaient dans les dettes.

"Les deux prochaines semaines

verront les meilleurs jours pour la pêche au saumon. Entre le premier et le 15 juillet, les pêcheurs commerciaux doivent suspendre la pêche pour permettre au saumon de remonter les rivières et donner une chance au pêcheur sportif. Nous en perdrons donc.

Il y avait quelques saumons la semaine passée et tous étaient désireux de faire quelques dollars pendant qu'ils en avaient la chance.

L'attrait d'une bonne prise aurait pu inciter quelques uns des vieux pêcheurs à rester en mer même en sachant qu'une forte tempête s'élevait. "Le gouvernement devrait certainement faire quelque chose pour ces gens. Ils sont pauvres et il n'y a pas de compagnie pour lancer une caisse de secours."

La reine exprime ses sympathies aux familles et aux pêcheurs éprouvés — Elle demande qu'on la tienne au courant des événements — Des demandes de secours faites au parlement

OTTAWA (CP) — La reine Elizabeth et le prince Philippe ont exprimé hier par l'intermédiaire du gouverneur général M. Massey, leurs condoléances à ceux qui ont perdu les personnes chères ou des navires dans la tempête de samedi, dans le détroit de Northumberland.

Dans un message à F. B. Fowlie, président du poste de secours de la Croix Rouge à Escuminac, N.-B., M. Massey déclare:

"Sa majesté la Reine et le duc d'Edimbourg m'ont demandé de vous exprimer leur détresse en apprenant la nouvelle des pertes de vie et de biens dans le détroit de Northumberland, tôt samedi, et de faire part de leur sympathie à tous ceux qui ont souffert et aux parents de ceux qui ont perdu la vie dans ce désastre.

Le télégramme était signé: "Vincent Massey".

A Chicoutimi, on apprenait que la reine a demandé qu'on la tienne au courant des développements dans la tragédie de la Miramichi.

Au cours du voyage à bord du Britannia dans cette région du nord du Québec, elle s'est tenue à l'écoute de la radio pour tout apprendre de la tragédie et de ses conséquences. Elle a également demandé au gouverneur général de la tenir au courant.

Au parlement, le ministre des Affaires des Anciens combattants M. Brooks a déclaré qu'on fera tout ce qui est possible pour aider les pêcheurs du Nouveau-Brunswick à se rééquiper après la violente tempête de fin de semaine.

M. Brooks a adressé la parole aux Communes alors que tous les partis exprimaient leur sympathie avec la population éprouvée par ce désastre.

G. Roy McWilliam, député libéral du comté de Northumberland-Miramichi où vivaient la plus grande partie des personnes éprouvées, a demandé au premier ministre Diefenbaker une aide spéciale pour les pêcheurs qui ont survécu après avoir perdu leurs agrès et leur équipement. Il a suggéré qu'on pourrait faire quelque chose par l'intermédiaire de la Caisse canadienne de secours en cas de désastre.

M. Diefenbaker, notant que d'après les derniers rapports, on comptait 13 pertes de vie, a été le premier à exprimer ses sympathies, parlant de la tempête comme cette terrible tragédie de la mer."

Il a déclaré que les recherches en vue de recouvrer les 21 personnes portées disparues se continueront sous la direction du service de recherches et de secours de l'ARC jusqu'à ce qu'on doive abandonner tout espoir de leur survie.

M. William a dit que la tragédie a frappé au cœur même de la baie de Miramichi. Il a rendu hommage aux actes d'héroïsme accomplis par les survivants en mer.

H. W. Herridge, (CCF-Kootenay-Ouest) s'est associé aux expressions de condoléance et a appuyé la demande de M. McWilliam d'une aide spéciale pour aider les survivants à se rééquiper.

Plus tard, M. H. J. Robichaud (L-Gloucester) a demandé si le service météorologique du fédéral avait donné un avertissement de la tempête de vendredi. Le député du N.-B. a aussi demandé au ministre des Transports M. Hees de commenter la pratique de faire des pronostics de la météo à 5 heures de l'après-midi chaque jour pour les pêcheurs, ce qui est un peu tard pour bénéficier aux pêcheurs dans les eaux près des côtes.

M. Hees a dit qu'il lui répondrait plus tard.

Premier Moved By Bravery

FREDERICTON (Special) — Premier Hugh John Flemming made the following statement Tuesday on the northeastern New Brunswick fishing disaster:

"I returned here Monday evening from Escuminac, Baie Ste. Anne and Baie du Vin areas, where I spent Monday accompanied by the Hon. Roger Pichette, minister of industry and development, and Robert Martin, MLA of Chatham, visiting many shocked and grief-stricken homes, where fathers and sons have been lost.

"Everywhere, I was moved by the bravery and fortitude of bereaved wives and children. I again assure all families of my personal sympathy in their bereavement and my desire to do everything possible to alleviate the distress caused by the disaster. This feeling is held by the government and by all citizens of our province.

"The stories of individual acts of heroism and self-sacrifice were most impressive, as well as the concern indicated by friends and neighbors.

Pays Tribute

"I want to pay tribute to the air search and rescue of the RCAF, the RCMP, the disaster relief agency of the Canadian Red Cross, and all devoted officials of federal, provincial and municipal government who have been and are still, working in the area.

"I have contacted the minister of health and social services, Hon. Dr. J. F. McInerney, and have been assured that public health nurses and social service workers from the area are already available to the communities to offer comfort and consolation to those afflicted.

"Brigadier J. E. Anderson of welfare services, was on the scene Monday and arrangements are being made to expedite the social service benefits which will be available.

"It is my intention to recommend to the government a contribution for the disaster fund of \$25,000 to be used in general welfare of those afflicted and restoration of means of livelihood to the greatest possible extent.

"I note, with gladness, contributions made to the disaster fund by Lord Beaverbrook, Lady Dunn on behalf of the Sir James Dunn Foundation, K. C. Irving and others.

"To all I extend my thanks. I strongly urge that every one make as large a contribution as possible to the disaster fund for the relief and assistance of all the suffering and bereaved."

June 24, 1959

Senators Sympathize

OTTAWA (CP) — The Senate Tuesday night sent an expression of sympathy to those bereaved by violent storms that struck fishing vessels in Northumberland Strait last weekend.

Senate Speaker Mark Drouin, replying to appeals for assistance by Liberal Senators C. V. Emerson and G. P. Burchill, both from New Brunswick, asked them "to express to their constituents our deepest, strongest and most heartfelt sympathy."

He recalled that Prime Minister Diefenbaker expressed willingness in the Commons to help fishermen replace their boats and gear and to help mothers and children left without husbands and fathers.

Senator Emerson appealed for the government "to do everything possible to help those families thus stricken."

"I commend to our government any help that is within their power to give. Financial assistance could relieve to a degree the added burden of worry and uncertainty at such a time."

Senator Burchill told of visiting the scene of the storm where "one has to view the damage and see how those boats were overturned, broken and destroyed to appreciate the force of the storm which struck."

He said it is gratifying to know that representations are being made to the government for aid to those who suffered loss.

NO ILL-FATED SHIPS CARRIED MARINE RADIOS

HALIFAX (CP) — Rube Hornstein, chief of the Halifax weather office, said Tuesday night that an 8:45 p.m. weather warning to east coast vessels Friday night was issued to transport department marine radio stations.

Ships in the Northumberland Strait area with marine receivers would have been able to pick up the gale warnings from Canso, North Sydney, Grindstone in the Magdalen Islands or CFH at Newport Corners, N.S., Mr. Hornstein said.

None of the northeastern New Brunswick salmon fishing boats caught by the storm carried any kind of radio, said Norman Schofield, Escuminac area fisheries office Tuesday night. There is no marine receiver in the community.

Mr. Schofield suggested that such warnings should be issued to local radio stations and "should notify the fishermen to go out and warn those at sea of the danger." He said that if this had been done Friday night fishermen who had stayed in port "would have gone."

The first warning received by private radio stations was contained in a forecast issued at 10 p.m. ADT. It said in part that "marine interests are warned that gales are forecast for all areas except Bay of Fundy, Southwestern Shore, Browns Lehave and River, and small craft are warned that winds in excess of 20 miles an hour are forecast for all coastal areas."

Transport Minister Hees told the Commons Tuesday that the 5 p.m. weather forecast from Halifax did not anticipate the severity of the storm which hit Northumberland Strait. He said a warning was issued at 8:45 p.m. from Halifax and from Gander 15 minutes later. The fishermen had left port by that time.

Thirty-five fishermen died as a result of the storm.

Storm Not Anticipated

OTTAWA (CP) — Transport Minister Hees Tuesday informed the Commons that the 5 p.m. Atlantic coast weather forecast last Friday did not anticipate the severity of the storm which struck Northumberland Strait. Some 35 salmon fishermen were lost in the gale.

Mr. Hees added, in his reply to H. J. Robichaud (L—Gloucester), that a warning was issued from Halifax at 8:45 p.m. Friday and from Gander, Nfld., 15 minutes later but by this time the fishermen had left port.

The minister said a full report is being prepared so that such storms can be better anticipated in future.

Hundreds Attend Victims' Funerals

June 24, 1959

By GEORGE McNEVIN

ESCUMINAC (CP) — Hundreds of mourners overflowed two churches at nearby Baie Ste. Anne and Bay du Vin Tuesday to pay their last respects to six victims of New Brunswick's weekend fishing fleet disaster.

Meanwhile the search by beach-combing ground parties and boats dragging nets continued for 24 bodies still not recovered. Thirty-five men died in the vicious Friday night storm that scuttled a fleet of 45 to 60 salmon boats. Eleven bodies were recovered.

When the howling gale subsided 22 boats were missing. All eventually were accounted for from among the number of wrecked derelicts that still dot the coastline.

Muffled sobs and uncontrolled weeping punctuated the two funeral services. About 1,200 jammed into the 900-seat Baie Ste. Anne Roman Catholic church for the funeral mass of Edgar Daigle, William George Manuel and Remi Martin, all of Baie Ste. Anne. Hundreds more spilled out onto the road. The crowd was estimated as high as 5,000.

The three caskets draped in black and gold were carried into the small cemetery across from the church. At a nearby yard, Edgar Daigle's three small children played unconcerned.

Most Rev. Norbert Robichaud, archbishop of Moncton, urged the mourners to pray for the bereaved. He encouraged them to "hold strong" in the face of tragedy.

800 Fill Church

The 250-seat St. John's Anglican church at Bay du Vin held funeral services for disaster victim Harold Taylor, Haley Williston and Cunard Williston. A crowd estimated by RCMP at 800 filled the church and outside lawn. Rt. Rev. A. H. O'Neil, bishop of Fredericton, delivered the eulogy. Ten of the still missing victims are members of St. John's Parish.

Mrs. A. H. Jones, wife of the church rector, said the people have "stood up well under this terrible disaster. It is just unbelievable."

Funeral services will be held today at Baie Ste. Anne for Geoffrey Richard and his son J. Louis, while Victor Robichaud will be buried the following day.

Despite the concentrated searches, no other bodies have so far been found.

Grope For Bodies

Ground parties groped along the rugged coastline in case some bodies washed ashore. Boats dragged Miramichi Bay with nets slung between them in the chance of scooping up other bodies.

A 15-man force from the New Brunswick Forestry Service began searching the shores of Miramichi Bay islands Tuesday. They will be taken from island to island by a fisheries patrol boat and continue the search for bodies indefinitely.

Sympathy was being expressed by a startled country over the howling nor'easter which brought New Brunswick its worst fishing disaster.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker called it a terrible tragedy of the sea and offered help. Queen Elizabeth, on tour of Canada, wanted to be kept in constant touch with developments. Speculation was she would visit the disaster area as her husband Prince Philip did in 1958 at Springhill where 75 men died in a mine cave-in.

The New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund reached \$15,100, chiefly on \$5,000 donations from British peer Lord Beaverbrook, New Brunswick Industrialist K. C. Irving and the Lady Dunn Foundation.

Archbishop Robichaud said a collection will be taken up in all parishes in the archdiocese July 5. Nova Scotia and Newfoundland governments both offered to help in any way.

ESCUMINAC CENTRE OF INDUSTRY

By GEORGE McNEVIN

ESCUMINAC, N.B. (CP) — A 2,000-foot breakwater makes this little town of 800 the centre of the fishing industry along a 40-mile stretch of the rugged north-eastern New Brunswick coast.

The three-sided breakwater extends into Miramichi Bay to form an enclosure where up to 100 fishing boats shelter during the season. An 80-foot gap in the outer side provides an entrance and exit.

The salmon season opens June 1 and runs to July 3 when there is a two-week pause to allow the salmon time to go up the Miramichi River to spawn. The season then resumes until Aug. 15.

The fleet was trying to cash in on the best salmon run in 10 years when it was hit by the devastating northeast gale Friday night.

Favored Spot

Most favored spot for salmon is around the entrance to Miramichi Bay. When the boats reach the ground they let out their \$1,500 nets, paying them out until they are about a mile behind.

Setting the net is usually completed by nightfall and the crew sleeps while the boat and net drift with the tide. They sleep in the cuddy — a small cabin with which most boats are equipped.

At dawn the net is drawn in and the catch taken aboard. The boats head for the wharf to sell the catch and make ready for the next trip. The technique is called drift fishing.

Fishermen said it was odd that the greatest loss was among the bigger boats. They thought at first the bigger craft had ridden out the storm, not fully aware of its intensity. When smaller boats began coming in Saturday morning, they expected the larger ones to show up later. But as the hours wore on their hopes for further arrivals faded.

Fishing Hours

The fishermen usually go out between 4:30 and 7 p.m., expecting to return the next morning. They fish at about 13 fathoms (178 feet). The average length of the boats is about 35 feet. They cost about \$2,500 and the hand-woven nets are worth at least \$1,500.

Although the men also fish for main interest is salmon.

the salmon season is closed, their mackerel, cod and smelts when

Earlier last week boats were arriving with an average of 30 salmon aboard. They were selling for 45 to 55 cents a pound and some fishermen were making \$200 a night.

There were many father-and-son groups in the fishing boats. The industry is the lifeblood of this hamlet and youngsters go to sea early in life to work with their fathers and older brothers.

Hardened by years of carving a meagre living from the sea, the fishermen realize that when the salmon are running it is time to fish.

June 24, 1959



LARGE CROWD PAYS FINAL TRIBUTE TO FISHERMEN — Friends and relatives gathered in the Bay du Vin's St. John the Evangelist Anglican church yard Tuesday to pay tribute to three of the community's fishermen who perished in last weekend's Northumberland Strait storm. Buried were Harold Taylor, Cunnard Williston and Harley Williston. Rt. Rev. A. H. O'Neill, bishop of Fredericton, was among the officiating clergy. (Abass Studio Photo)

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Du désastre maritime de la fin de semaine à Baie Ste-Anne — Une foule émue assiste aux cérémonies — On continue de rechercher les corps des disparus — Des secours promis

June 24, 1959

Par Eric Goguen

BAIE-STE-ANNE (Spéc.) — Les funérailles d'un jeune père de famille, d'un adolescent de 18 ans et d'un ancien pêcheur de la paroisse de Baie Ste-Anne, ont eu lieu hier matin dans l'église de Baie Ste-Anne. Une foule de plus de 1,400 personnes ont assisté à la grand-messe de réquiem célébrée par Son Excellence Mgr Norbert Robichaud.

Durant le service, auquel ont participé les parents d'un grand nombre de victimes de cette plus grande tragédie à jamais frapper cette région, Mgr Robichaud a demandé aux gens éprouvés de "reprendre courage" et faire face à ce grand malheur.

Les gens, parents et amis des victimes, étaient d'un calme étrange à ces funérailles. Pas de scène, pas de crises, mais de temps en temps on entendait des sanglots à demi-étouffés, et les larmes chaudes et amères baignaient les yeux d'un grand nombre alors qu'au bord de la fosse, dans le petit cimetière de Baie Sainte-Anne, face à l'église paroissiale, le R. P. Paul Arseneault récitait les dernières prières sur les corps qui, dans leur cercueil, descendaient lentement avec le petit crissement sec des cables, jusque dans leur dernière demeure.

Et ce fut la première pelletée de terre, et les gens, un à un échangeant à voix basse des commentaires émus, se sont retirés, alors qu'ici et là, des groupes de femmes se soutenant mutuellement s'avancèrent au bord de la fosse, pour jeter un dernier coup d'oeil comme si elles devaient, encore une fois, apercevoir le visage aimé d'un père, d'un frère.

Et aujourd'hui, et demain, la même scène se renouvellera, poignante, déchirante. Cette scène d'adieu définitif, tandis que d'autres attendent, sans espoir, ceux qui sont disparus, emportés par la mer cruelle.

"Le sacrifice de cette messe sera non seulement offert pour le repos de l'âme de ces trois victimes mais pour tous les autres qui ont perdu la vie," a déclaré Mgr Robichaud.

Parmi la foule, on apercevait plusieurs camarades de pêche des victimes Edgar Daigle, Rémi Martin et William Manuel venus faire un dernier adieu à leurs anciens coéquipiers.

Les cinq enfants d'Edgar Daigle étaient restés à la maison, trop jeunes encore pour réaliser tout le drame qui se déroulait autour d'eux.

Mgr Robichaud a répété sa déclaration de la veille, soit qu'une collecte spéciale sera faite le 5 juillet pour venir en aide des familles des morts et disparus. "Ainsi nous voulons secourir ces familles non seulement d'une manière spirituelle mais aussi d'une manière matérielle."

Une grand-messe de réquiem sera chantée dans toutes les églises et chapelles du diocèse pour le repos éternel de tous ceux qui ont perdu la vie.

Hier après-midi, à Baie-du-Vin, village voisin, les obsèques de Cunard Williston, Haley Williston et Harold Taylor, ont eu lieu à l'église anglicane de l'endroit.

Entre-temps, les recherches se poursuivent en mer où les pêcheurs de saumon ont disparu.

On continue à rechercher 24 cadavres.

La tragédie, qui s'est produite vendredi soir, a coûté la vie à 35 pêcheurs et détruit une cinquantaine de navires de pêche au saumon. On a retrouvé jusqu'ici 11 cadavres. Un vent d'une violence énorme a fait rage dans le détroit de Northumberland et une partie du golfe Saint-Laurent.

Les cadavres d'Edgar Daigle et de Rémi Martin furent les premiers à être rejetés sur le rivage et celui de William Manuel le troisième.

Aujourd'hui, à Baie-Ste-Anne, ont lieu les funérailles de Geofrey Richard et de son fils Louis. Demain s'y dérouleront celles de Victor Robichaud.

Les fonds de secours institués pour venir en aide aux familles éprouvées ont recueilli à date plus de \$20,000.

Tous les 18 porteurs des trois cercueils des pêcheurs catholiques hier sont des pêcheurs, de la région de Baie Ste-Anne. Ce

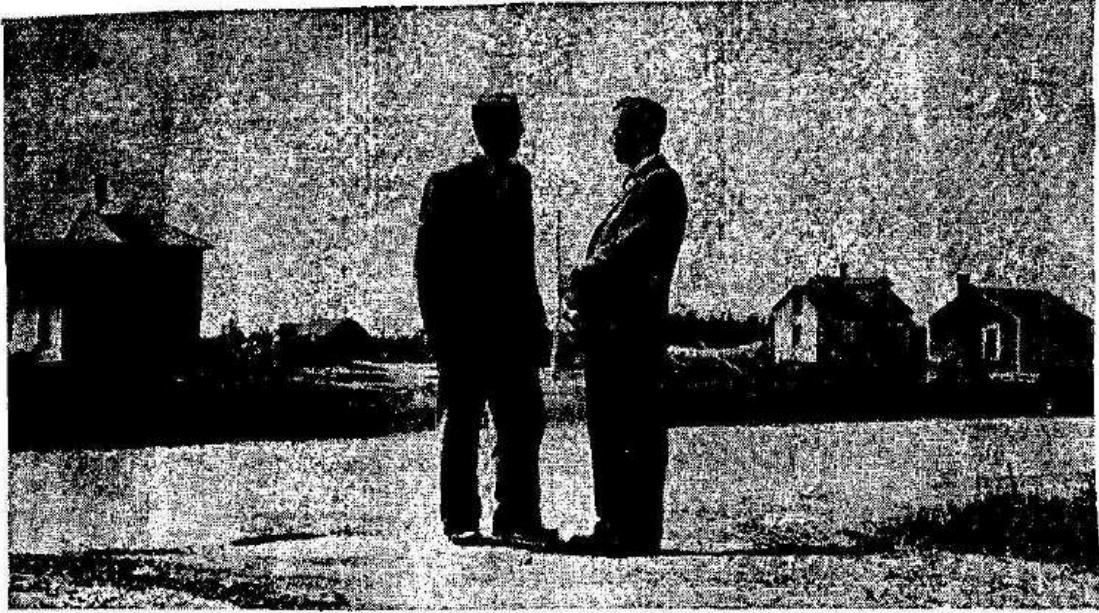
sont, pour le cercueil de William Manuel: Aurèle Manuel, Antoine et Albert Manuel, Benoit Morais, Obé Durelle et Lévi Savoie, pour celui de Rémi Martin: Ralph Gibbs, Jean MacIntyre, Rodolphe Martin, Melvin Martin, Albert et Abel Lirette; et pour celui d'Edgar Daigle: Léonide, Archie et Fernand Daigle, Alphée Mazerolle, Gabriel Daigle et Gérard Daigle.

Outre S. E. Mgr Robichaud, les officiants de la grand-messe chantée furent, diacre le R. P. François Roy vicaire à Moncton; et sous-diacre le R. P. Herbert Grathay, vicaire de la paroisse de St-Augustin. Les RR. PP. Edouard Cormier, curé de la paroisse de Pointe-Sapin, et E. Beliveau, officiaient dans cette même capacité à titre d'honneur.

Le R. P. Camille Johnson, de Moncton, fut maître de cérémonies.

Les Pères Albert Bidaud, de Grande-Digue, Cyrille d'Amour, de Jacquet-River et Arthur Gallien, de Néguaac, étaient présents dans le chœur.

On signalait la présence de M. Louis Robichaud, leader du parti libéral, dont le village natal de Richibouctou est situé à quelque 30 milles de Baie Ste-Anne.



La famille de Camille Chiasson a perdu cinq de ses membres

On n'a trouvé aucune trace jusqu'ici des cinq membres de la famille la plus éprouvée par la tragédie qui a frappé les petits villages de pêche de la municipalité de Hardwick en fin de semaine.

Deux des fils et trois des petits-fils de la famille de Camille Chiasson, Baie Ste-Anne, sont encore au nombre des 22 pêcheurs de saumon qui manquent à l'appel.

Les épaves de deux bateaux et une canne, qui ont été rejetés sur le rivage, par la tempête, témoignent du sort probable des cinq sur la mer.

La canne d'Albert Chiasson, qui est disparue avec son fils Alphonse 17 ans, a été retrouvée dans son bateau. Albert, victime de paralysie infantile, il y a quelques années, était infirme d'une jambe.

Au foyer, sa femme et ses 13 enfants survivants ont perdu tout espoir de le retrouver en vie.

Thadée Chiasson de la Marine canadienne l'aîné des enfants d'Albert, est arrivé chez lui hier matin. Il était en service avec l'escorte à la reine Elisabeth et du prince Philippe lorsqu'on l'a prévenu du désastre. On a fait un arrêt spécial au port de Rimouski pour qu'il puisse rejoindre sa famille affligée, le plus

tôt possible.

Maintenant que la maison paternelle n'a plus de chef, "il faudra bien que je pense à quitter la Marine," a-t-il dit. "Il faut que quelqu'un fasse le travail." Thaddée a 18 ans, et fait partie de la Marine depuis 15 mois déjà.

De l'autre côté de la clôture, la femme de William Chiasson a également perdu tout espoir. Ses trois jeunes enfants ne savent que faire sans la direction de leurs deux frères aînés Adrien et Robert, qui sont aussi portés disparus.

"Si seulement un d'eux avait été sauvé," a dit Camille Chiasson.

Parmi les victimes, membres d'une même famille, on note également Jean-Louis et Lionel Richard et leur père, Geoffrey; William Chiasson et ses fils Adrien et Robert; Raphael Robichaud et son frère Victor et Andrew Martin et son neveu Alonzo.

PERE EPROUVE — On voit ci-dessus M. Camille Chiasson 80 ans, de Baie Ste-Anne dont deux fils et trois petits-fils sont portés disparus. Il cause avec M. Charles D'Amour, gérant de L'EVANGELINE, également de Baie Ste-Anne et qui compte aussi de la parenté dans les victimes de la tempête. On voit à l'arrière plan, à gauche, la maison d'un fils, Albert, à droite celle de l'autre, William. Au centre à l'avant-plan, on trouve la maison paternelle.



June 24, 1959

FUNERAILLES — Trois des victimes de la tragédie maritime de fin de semaine ont été reconduites à leur dernier repos, hier, dans le cimetière paroissial de Bale Ste-Anne. Cidessus, la foule recueillie et émue prie, dans l'église, où trois cercueils se suivent, dans l'allée centrale, recouverts de drap noir et or. A gauche, les porteurs se mettent en marche, traversant la rue du village pour se rendre au cimetière. Dans la photo du bas, le R. P. Paul Arsenault récite les dernières prières au bord d'une des trois fosses fraîchement creusée dans cette terre qui recouvre et enserre maintenant les corps de ces pêcheurs, habitués aux grands espaces libres de la mer.



June 24, 1959



MASS FUNERAL HELD - Hundreds of mourners spilled over into the church yard of St. John's Evangelist Church, Baie de Vin, Tuesday, as the funeral services for three of the victims of last weekend's tragic storm were held. The three buried from this church were Harold Taylor, Cunnard Williston and Haley Williston. At nearby Baie Ste Anne, in the Roman Catholic Church, three others were mourned - Edgar Daigle, W.G. Manuel and Rémi Martin, all of Baie Ste Anne. Included among those attending were G. Roy William, MP for Northumberland County, W.J. Gallant, MLA, L.J. Robichaud, NB Liberal party leader and Herve Michaud, MP for Kent County.

CONTINUE HUNT FOR UNRECOVERED BODIES

24 Still Missing In Strait

ESCUMINAC (CP) — Six draggers continued the scooping of Miramichi Bay Wednesday night while beachcombing ground parties scoured the coastline for signs of 24 bodies still unrecovered in New Brunswick's fishing fleet disaster.

Meanwhile the stricken fishing communities along the Northumberland Strait continued to bury their dead. It was on the usually peaceful strait where the fleet of small salmon boats were caught Friday night by an unexpected gale.

Thirty five are listed as dead, but only 11 bodies have been recovered.

Funeral services in thronged churches have been held so far for eight of the victims. Geoffrey Richard and his son Louis were buried Wednesday in the small cemetery across from the Roman Catholic Church at nearby Baie Ste. Anne while a 35-voice children's choir sang

Church Jammed

The 900-seat Baie Ste. Anne church was jammed for their service. Cars outside lined the quiet street as far as the eye could see. Only one funeral, for Victor Robichaud, is scheduled today.

Aid for the distressed area was being sought. The New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund topped the \$50,000 mark Wednesday with contributions still pouring in.

The economic impact on the area is indicated to an extent in the fact that 45 of the 66 licensed boats in the area were caught by the storm. Practically all were damaged only a few of the 22 reported missing after the blow were salvageable. All boats were eventually accounted for from among the wrecks that piled up along the coast.

The boats cost \$2,000 to \$2,500 each. Salmon nets run to \$1,500 apiece and estimated 12,000 lobster pots at \$5 each were swallowed up by the storm.

Many Of Lost Are Related

Many of the 35 salmon fishermen lost in a weekend storm in Northumberland Strait were related. Some of their bodies have been recovered but others are still missing.

Geoffrey Richard was the father of Jean Louis Richard. Their bodies were recovered. Still missing is another of Geoffrey's sons, Lionel.

The greatest loss was that of the Chiasson family. Albert Chiasson, father of 14, is missing with his son Alphonse. His brother William, father of seven, is missing. With him were his sons Adrien and Robert.

Raphael Robichaud is missing. The body of his 43-year-old brother Victor was recovered.

Andrew Martin, 31, and his nephew Alonzo Martin, 22, are also on the missing list.

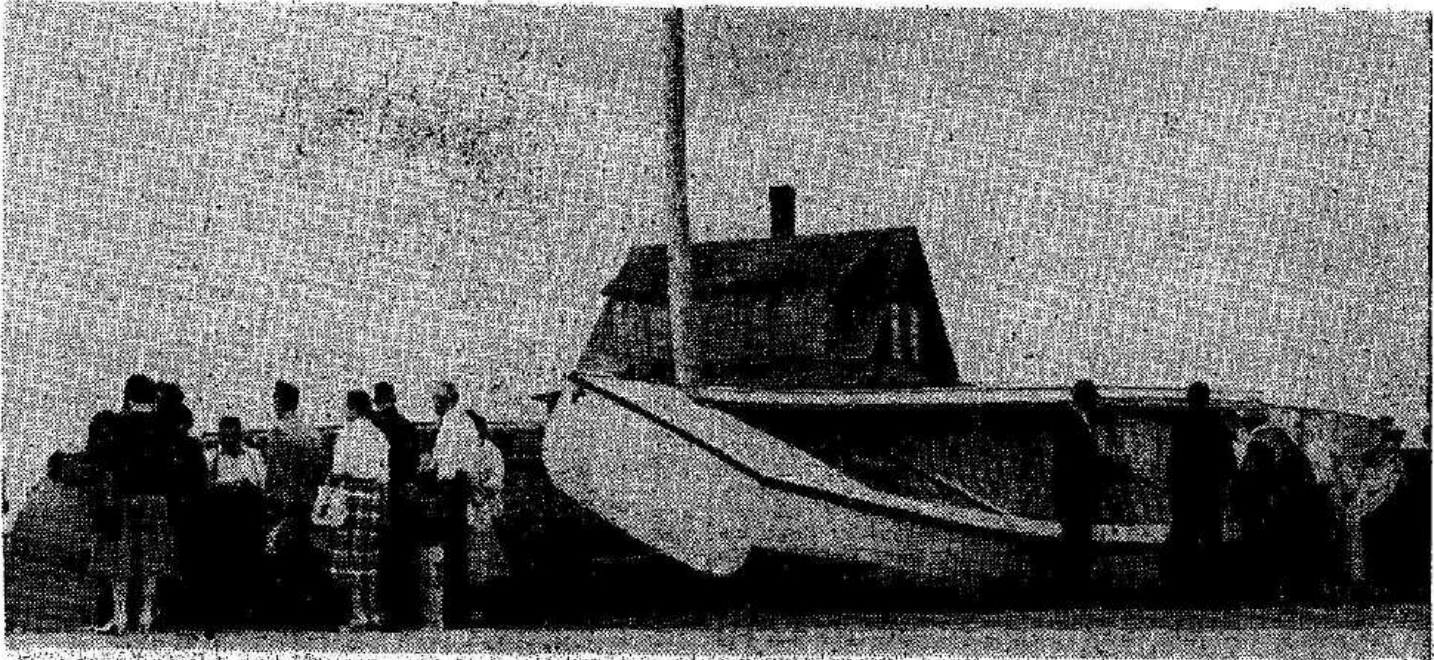
All were from Baie Ste. Anne, N.B., or nearby Manuel's Post Office.



APRES LA TEMPETE — La pire tempête du golfe St-Laurent en 50 ans s'est abattue sur le littoral du Nouveau-Brunswick causant la mort de 35 pêcheurs du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Ce pêcheur, assis au bord d'un quai, à Escuminac, semble se demander quel a été le sort de ses compagnons dans la barque dont l'épave gît à ses côtés.

June 26, 1959



GRIM REMINDERS — The battered hulks of two fishing boats, washed ashore at Escuminac, N. B. serve as a grim reminder of the men lost in last Friday's storm which claimed the lives of 35 fishermen. Residents of the area and other interested persons are shown here viewing the wrecks, which were owned by George McLeod and William Chaisson. McLeod was accompanied by 18-year-old John Chipman and Chaisson was accompanied by two of his sons when they left the wharf Friday afternoon. All are missing and presumed drowned.—(Abbass Studios Photo)

June 26/59



LA REINE RENCONTRE UN HEROS — On voit ici sa majesté la Reine Elisabeth, donnant la main au jeune Alphonse Chiasson, qui semble ici un peu ému à cette occasion. Le jeune Alphonse a risqué sa vie pour sauver son père et son jeune frère. A côté de la rei-

Photo L'EVANGELINE par Stan Comeau ne, on aperçoit le premier ministre Fleming. De gauche à droite sont M. Roy Lloyd, un autre héros de la tragédie, sa femme et ses deux enfants, dont Brian, 13 ans, qui était sur mer au moment où l'ouragan a frappé.

June 30, 1959



QUEEN MEETS WIDOWS — Two widows whose husbands perished on the night of June 20 in Northumberland Strait are shown above meeting Queen Elizabeth II Wednesday. At left is Mrs. Allan Mills of Black River Bridge and at right Mrs. Victor Robichaud, Baie Ste. Anne. — (Staff Photo by Bourgeois).

BODY 14TH VICTIM OF STORM FOUND

SHIPPEGAN (Special) — The body of the 14th victim of the raging June 20 Northumberland Strait storm was found yesterday. Charles Gauvin, 53-year-old fisherman from Lameque, was found on shore about three miles from Shippegan Gully. His body was found by James Hachey and was identified by the victim's brother — Romeo — and Hilaire Gauvin, a nephew.

The latter was a crewmember of Gauvin's fishing boat which capsized at the entrance to Shippegan Gully June 20, during the height of the vicious storm that churned up enormous waves. Charles Gauvin was swept off the boat, while the other crew members escaped.

Coroner Dr. J. D. Gauthier said death was by drowning. There will be no inquest.

Mr. Gauvin had 13 children. No funeral arrangements were announced.

Thirty-five fishermen in northern and eastern New Brunswick died in the weekend storm.

16TH VICTIM LOCATED

TABUSINTAC (Special) — The body of Adrien Chiasson, 21-year-old bachelor drowned during the June 20 storm which swept Northumberland Strait, was found Wednesday evening. It was the 16th body to be recovered from the sea.

Chiasson's body was found at Tabusintac Gully by Ben Russell of Leger Post Office

as he returned from a day's fishing.

He is the son of Mrs. William Chiasson of Baie Ste. Anne. His father and brother Robert were with Adrien during the storm and are as yet unaccounted for.

The body is resting at Maher's Funeral Home in Chatham. Funeral arrangements have not yet been completed.

17th BODY FOUND

ESCUMINAC (Special) — Royal Canadian Mounted Police Thursday afternoon reported the finding of the body of a 13-year-old boy who lost his life in Miramichi Bay during the storm of June 20.

Found on the shore near Escuminac, was the body of Eric Raymond Williston, of Bay du Vin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Phineas Williston. His brother, Haley is also a victim of the storm but his body has not been recovered.

Coroner E. H. Freeman of Chatham viewed the remains and said no inquest would be held.

The discovery raised to 17 the total of bodies found after the severe storm ripped the bay and shattered nearly 40 boats of the Miramichi salmon fishing fleet.

An RCAF crash boat from Chatham found the body shortly after 12 noon floating in Miramichi Bay off Escuminac. The body was brought to Chatham and is resting at Adams Funeral Home. The funeral will be held on Friday afternoon from the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Bay du Vin.

July, 1959

PROMPT AID FOR SURVIVORS HEROIC RESCUE STORIES TOLD

BRAVERY MEDALS URGED ON OTTAWA

Hon. A. E. Skaling has advised he has written to Veterans Affairs Minister A. J. Brooks, New Brunswick's representative in the Federal Cabinet, suggesting that some of the acts of heroism by fishermen during the storm merit appropriate medals and awards for bravery.

Widows, Dependents Of N.B. Fishermen Getting Assistance

By GRAHAM GALLOWAY (Gleaner Staff Writer)

Immediate financial aid is to be given widows, children and dependent mothers of the 35 fishermen lost in the Northumberland Strait storm of June 19 and 20. The administration committee of the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund made the decision at a meeting in Newcastle last night.

Payments for the next month — until a study committee brings in its report — will be on the basis of \$50 for widows and dependent mothers, and \$10 for children. Today the fund reached \$128,000.

Contributions were bolstered since yesterday by \$1,000 from The Globe and Mail, Toronto, and \$1,000 from George Burchill and Sons Ltd., South Nelson, a previously unacknowledged donation.

MEETING QUEEN

Labor Minister A. E. Skaling, acting premier and chairman of the meeting, announced that Queen Elizabeth would meet the widows of the lost fishermen at Point du Chene on Wednesday, July 29, before embarking on the royal yacht Britannia at the end of Her Majesty's New Brunswick visit. The three Northumberland

County MLAs — W. J. Gallant, P. C. Price and W. J. Martin — were named a committee to arrange details.

Mr. Gallant referred to the necessity for the mothers to take the children with them if they are to go to Point du Chene. It was agreed that this was a matter for discussion between the Northumberland County MLAs and the Premier's office.

A proposal by Mayor G. A. Percy Smith of Newcastle specified the amounts to be paid out for the survivors' immediate maintenance needs of the next month.

G. Roy McWilliam, MP for Northumberland — Miramichi, proposed that a temporary committee be appointed to investigate the immediate welfare needs of the stricken families. (Continued on Page 2 Col. 4)

(Editorial on Page 4)

WIDOWS, DEPENDENTS

(Continued from Page 1)
and to report to the general welfare committee within 30 days.

ON COMMITTEE

Members of this temporary committee, which will handle distribution of the immediate maintenance amounts approved last night, include: Rev. L. M. Pepperdene, Chatham, convener; Rev. C. M. Jones, Bay du Vin; Rev. Paul Arsenault and Rev. J. A. Boucher, Baie Ste. Anne; Roy Lloyd, Escuminac; Noble Williston and Ade Theriault, Bay du Vin parish councillors, and Roger G. Farrer, Newcastle, acting Red Cross relief officer.

FINANCE GROUP

The permanent finance committee, also approved by the meeting, follows closely the group announced after the fund was first established and consists of: Premier Hugh John Flemming, chairman; E. R. Howard, commissioner of the New Brunswick Division of the Canadian Red Cross Society, Saint John; A. F. Fraser, acting manager of the Fredericton Branch, Royal Bank of Canada, treasurer; Most Rev. Norbert Robichaud, DD, Archbishop of Moncton; Rt. Rev. A. H. O'Neil, DD, Bishop of Fredericton; J. E. Anderson, director of pensions and acting chief welfare officer for the prov-

ince, Fredericton; G. Roy McWilliam, MP, Newcastle; one MLA to be appointed by Premier Flemming; Michael Wardell, Fredericton.

'A GREAT CRISIS'

Mr. Wardell urged press, radio and television to keep the cause of Northumberland Strait fishermen before the minds of the people across Canada to "remind the world at large that there is a great crisis and that crisis must be met." Much more money was required. The present sum must be more than doubled, he said, to maintain the present scale of payments without any regard for the replacement of wrecked boats, lost nets and fishing equipment.

Based on past experience, Mr. Howard, the Red Cross spokesman, suggested that full publicity be given to an actual breakdown of the money raised and at the end publication of "a disbursement of what we have done."

PUBLIC ASSURED

Bishop O'Neil said that although some of the money might go into short-term investment to raise interest money for the fund this was "as good as liquid cash," and the public could be assured every dollar would be put to work to "feed and clothe" the bereaved families.

This would "give assurance

to those in need, and warm the hearts of contributors," said Bishop O'Neil, who also extended a message of thanks to newspapers, radio and TV for their co-operation with the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund.

OTTAWA ASKED

As a result of a question by W. J. Gallant, Northumberland County MLA, it was learned that application had already been made to the Federal Government for money from the National Disaster Fund.

Mr. Wardell mentioned that the federal government had given \$100,000 to aid victims of the Springhill tragedy and said "this disaster is not less than Springhill's."

C. S. Menzies, warden of Northumberland County, suggested that even greater assistance needed to be extended by the communications media to bring the fund up to the full amount required. It was a job for publicity, he felt, to adequately tell the full extent of the plight of the fishing villages.

THESE PEOPLE NEED HELP



THE ALBERT CHAISSON FAMILY: Albert Chaisson and his 17-year-old son, Alphonse, were lost overboard during the Escuminac disaster. Gone are eight salmon nets and the boat. Above are: bottom row, left to right: Carol, 3; Maynard, 4; Mrs. Chaisson holding Charlene, six months; Charles, 2; Gisele, 8; and Elizabeth, 6. Top row: Albert, 10; Gerald, 12; Real, 14; Thadde, 18; Velma, 15; Jean Paul, 11; and Margaret, 9.



THE ROBICHAUD FAMILY: Above are the widow and eight children of Victor Robichaud, who was lost at sea with his brother. They are: bottom row, left to right: Jobinal, Mrs. Robichaud with Simone and Nicole, and Dolphine. Back row: Francois, Catherine, Victor and Therese.



THE WILLIAM CHAISSON FAMILY: Above are the five surviving children and widow of William Chaisson, who was lost at sea with his two sons Robert and Adrian. The boat, on which \$3,000 is still owing, was damaged but can be repaired. Members of the family are, bottom row, left to right: Patricia, 9; Maurina, 17; Mrs. Chaisson. Back row: Sylvia, 14; Zael, 12, and Lucien, 10.



THE MARTIN FAMILY: Above are the widow and three children of Andrew Martin, 34, who was lost with his boat and nets in the Escuminac tragedy. In the photo are: Andrew, Jr.; Mrs. Martia holding Denise, and Francis.

Recording Machine Catches Remarkable Tales Of Courage

Capt. Bernie Jenkins, Escuminac fishing boat skipper, believes Canada should know the story of a "courageous young man," an unsung hero of the Escuminac fishing fleet tragedy.

Everett Doucet, son of Jack Doucet, Manuels Post Office, while clinging to a capsized boat together with his 14-year-old brother, and his father, caught a lifeline from a storm-tossed rescue craft and twice passed it on.

OTHERS CAME FIRST

"I asked him why he didn't come first; he had the first opportunity," said Capt. Jenkins.

The youth replied: "I didn't want to go and leave my brother behind. I wanted to make sure that he was saved before I was, and also my Dad."

RECORDED INTERVIEW

Capt. Jenkins' account of the heroic action in a tape recorded interview with W. J. Gallant, Northumberland MLA:

"The three men were clinging to the boat. The two boys were on the wheel house, and the father, Jack Doucet, on the bow of the boat.

"We couldn't get too close. On second casting, the oldest brother, Everett, I think his name is, caught the rope and passed it along to his kid brother who was 14 years of age.

HAULED ABOARD

"So my nephew Cyril pulled him through the water with the rope and I left the wheelhouse and helped to haul him aboard.

"And then there was another space of time gone around before I was able to turn and make the second attempt.

"When I did the same young guy passed the rope along to his father and we brought him aboard. He was in pretty bad condition. He was gasping and vomiting — kind of thought he wasn't going to come through.

LARGE SEAS

"We then had six very tremendously large seas and I was unable to turn. So we left him behind several hundred yards and he was afraid at that time that we had abandoned him altogether — that we weren't going to save him.

"When I had the opportunity I turned again and with the

(Continued on Page 2 Col. 4)

third casting we hauled him aboard."

"I think he was a pretty courageous young man and should be highly congratulated for his bravery," said Capt. Jenkins.

Mr. Gallant asked of Capt. Jenkins, "Did you ever believe that everything was lost or give up courage?"

BOAT FILLED

The reply: "Well, probably five minutes after we made the rescue our own boat filled. The sea came upon us.

"It was absolutely impossible to — how would I say that — to go over it because the short sea had built up on side of the large sea, and it took our boat up probably 20 or 30 feet, and the top of it went over the boat and the centre came aboard the boat.

"It half filled our boat and it threw our engine off . . . There was nothing left to do but bale so Jackie said: 'Our lunch pail.' He took the cover off and dumped our food in the water, and he got to work. . .

MAKING A SAIL

"I passed another pail to one of the other boys and Cyril. I gave a quick command and Cyril was very quick to catch on to what you meant to say . . . about a sail . . .

"And while I was making up the sail, I had him run forward and throw out the nets which brought the boat bow to wind.

"By that time our boat was six inches from capsizing, half full of water and we were just about to the top of our short rubber boots in the water.

EVERYONE COOL

"So I worked frantically because everyone remained very cool — and thank God we did for we'd have perished if we didn't remain cool. And we must have worked half an hour before we gained any headway at all, because the sea was washing in our boat, as fast as we were bailing it out.

"So through hard work and grim determination, because we had no other choice, we made headway. Seeing that we were gaining on the water, and seeing that our boat wasn't sumped, we ripped up the floor boards to make sure the timber boat wasn't punctured, although there was timbers broken and the planking of the boat was seriously damaged

HEADWAY

"Then when we saw that we were making headway it gave us more courage and we worked harder, and we worked for probably about three hours until we had the boat bailed dry and we had the balance back into its proper position. But then we were left without food, water, all but a few salmon that we had saved from the net in the morning.

"Our wood was wet and we had very little of it left . . . so we set down and got for the centre of the wood and made sails and then we used our tires that we used for tenders at the piers.

HOT FIRE ON

"We cut them up in small pieces and the buoys that were left and we kept a hot fire on and I worked on the motor.

"I worked from that time until six o'clock in the evening to take parts of the motor that contained water and drained the water through the pump and I got all the water out of the gas.

INTO THE BREAKERS

"Soaked off the distributors and the wires and dried them, — spark plugs and then we all got to work, full crew, five of us, with ropes, and pried the boards we had taken off the boat's floor, pried the motor back into position, got everything banked up and at eight o'clock in the evening we were back, had drifted back down the coast, back into dangerous waters — into the breakers.

"Our nets were all rolled into the ropes. We hooked up after some drifting over spars. Due to the fact our nets were rolled we got caught up in the spars and buoys and a strong tide going southeast was swinging out boat into the nets, and I saw we were again into trouble and at that time I had the motor going.

"I don't know why the motor ever made an attempt to go but it started right off and since then I asked the boys what the ceiling would be.

SAFEST AT SEA

"We tried to enter the harbor. We were at that time where it was. We could see the land, at least, or trying to get cover south of Escuminac wharf or go to where I thought was the safest — at sea.

"So the oldest Doucet boy, Everett, he said: 'Now Bernie, use your own judgment but be sure it's the right one.'

"Well, I said the safest thing to do is to go back to sea but we have no water, we have no food, but it is the safest thing to do."

AN EXAMPLE

After concluding the interview, Mr. Gallant said: "We certainly hope that his (Capt. Jenkins') example will be an example to many of us to follow and also those boys who showed extreme bravery and who like Cyril Jenkins, who was at the lines and the Doucet boys, we know that your brav-

not go unheeded by this grateful population."

RESCUE REVEALED

Roy Lloyd, Escuminac, who was out with his 13-year-old son, Brian, told Mr. Gallant about the rescue of a fellow fisherman.

"Who was it that you rescued?" asked Mr. Gallant.

"Cook, Young Cook from the Island," replied Mr. Lloyd.

"I was coming to that. We couldn't exactly see the breakwater. We picked up land and we knew that it was Escuminac Shore.

SAW THE CHURCH

"Coming along these shores you have to be pretty cautious with sea markers but the first one we picked up was our little Catholic Church here from where we started to sea.

"And then Chlorn Jimmo said 'That's the breakwater where we see the big breaker in the air.'

"So we kept on coming a little more and the first thing, I said to him, 'I believe there's a sinking boat up there and he said, 'Yes, and there's a man to the mast.'

FLOATING TO SHORE

"So we pulled back off our course and went up to him and sure enough Ed Cook was holding on to the rigging, was tied with a rope, and he was floating to the shore into the breakers, with a white breaker from him right to the shore . . . on to a rocky ledge.

"He didn't see us at all. He spoke though.

"We made three attempts . . . Mr. Gallant questioned, "He didn't hear you — he was afraid — he couldn't believe what he could see?"

FATHER OVERBOARD

"That's right," replied Mr. Lloyd. "He didn't even know that he was tied. I went to him and told him that he was tied and after I got him untied I asked him to jump but he wouldn't. He just couldn't do it, you know. After all, he saw his father go overboard."

Mr. Gallant: "What was his father's name Do you know?"

Mr. Lloyd: "His father's name was Fraser Cook and he was a fine gentleman. He's been drifting here for years and everybody liked old Fraser Cook and young Edward was a fine boy too and I am proud that it was I who saved him."

Mr. Gallant: "But he didn't know what was going on at the time, did he?"

Mr. Lloyd: "No, he was . . ."

Mr. Gallant: "He was just about gone?"

A LONG TIME

Mr. Lloyd: "Yes, he was just about gone. It took him a long time after we convinced him that he was untied — it took him a long time to unfasten himself."

Mr. Gallant: "I understand, Capt. Lloyd, that you made the wharf and brought young Cook that you found to your house."

Mr. Lloyd: "Oh, yes."

DONATION TO DISASTER FUND MADE BY QUEEN AND PRINCE



QUEEN'S GIFT—New Brunswick Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien, South Nelson (centre), on behalf of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, presents a cheque for the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund to W. G. Macnaughton, manager of the Newcastle branch of the Royal Bank of Canada. The cheque represented Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh's donation to the fund. Mr. O'Brien announced the contribution Tuesday morning. Also on hand for the ceremony, which took place at Government House, South Nelson, was Roger Farrer, left, acting chairman of the Northumberland County disaster committee. (Photo by Dupuis Studio).

July 15, 1959

ROYALTY DONATES TO FISHERMEN'S FUND

The benevolence of Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip towards the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund is, as has been so well and appreciatively expressed by Lieutenant Governor J. Leonard O'Brien, a most gracious, kindly act.

In speaking for the entire citizenry of this province, His Honor has given expression to the sentiments of all in fine terms that really require no further elaboration to register their grateful thanks for the totally unexpected gift from their sovereign and her Consort to aid the disaster-stricken families along the coastline of Northumberland and Kent counties who sustained great losses in the recent furious storm which convulsed the sea off these areas and in which 35 hardy fishermen perished.

All New Brunswickers, indeed all Canadians will long remember with gratitude, and with pride, the heartfelt solicitude expressed in so tangible a manner by Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh for those upon whom bereavement and distress had so swiftly descended.

The Fishermen's Disaster Fund, to which the royal subscription is among the latest announced, has reached a sum in excess of \$175,000. But that is far short of what will be required to adequately provide for the maintenance of the 24 widows and 83 children, besides the aged parents, young brothers and sisters of the victims who perished and who had been their sole source of support.

From practically all sources there have come subscriptions of varying amounts to the Fishermen's Disaster Fund originated by the New Brunswick government with a donation of \$25,000. The Nova Scotia government sent a sub-

scription of \$10,000. Mostly all civic and municipal governments in New Brunswick have also made contributions to help the stricken people.

The federal government has announced material assistance will be forthcoming for the fishermen who have sustained loss of or damage to boats, nets and other equipment necessary to their calling. An extension of the salmon fishing period has also been authorized. But essential as these aids are, more so is that of financial help for those whose sources of livelihood have been cut off by the tragic loss of the breadwinners. Their need — a truly humanitarian need — transcends all other needs.

Thus far, though, there has been no monetary contribution authorized by the Ottawa administration. And this recent tragic Northumberland Strait storm was not a provincial but a national disaster, in like category to those at Springhill mines and towards which financial assistance was extended from the federal treasury. There have been other cases, too, of disaster through tempest, fire and flood, some involving no fatalities at all, which received monetary aid from Ottawa.

Inasmuch as these bereaved and distressed families in the hard-hit northeastern New Brunswick fishing communities face a lengthy crisis as a result of nature's death-dealing sweep last month, much more in the way of financial assistance will be needed than is in the fund at the present time.

With the need for money now more urgent as distribution of sums from the fund proceeds, the authorization by the Dominion government of a contribution now is at once deserved and necessary to aid the stricken families. For this is not only New Brunswick's tragedy, but it is all Canada's tragedy too.

FREDERICTON (CP)—Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip have made a donation to the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund, Lt. Gov. J. Leonard O'Brien announced Tuesday. The amount of the donation was not disclosed.

There was immediate reaction from the fishing villages. Rev. Paul Arseneault, parish priest of Baie Ste. Anne, N. B., home of many of the dead fishermen, said "Just knowing the Queen has given something will be a great help".

Walter Bransfield who gave his Escuminac home as a relief centre during the disaster, said "it's wonderful for the Queen to do this".

The donation is a departure from royal precedent. It is the first time the Queen has made such a donation in Canada, and possibly the first time for any cause outside the United Kingdom.

Aid For Families

The donation, along with other contributions to the fund, will be used to aid families of 35 fishermen lost in a June 20 Northumberland Strait storm.

The howling nor'easter that swept down on the frail craft of the Escuminac salmon fishing fleet, left 24 widows and 83 children without means of support.

Fredericton publisher Michael Wardell, honorary secretary of the fund, said the fund has now risen to \$175,000. This does not include the donation of Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh as it is not permissible to publish details of any such donations.

An official of the fund explained further that it has always been the royal prerogative that on the rare occasions when royal gifts are made they are "buried" in the total credited to "anonymous" donors.

"Substantial One"

Therefore, the amount can't even be deduced by a check of individual donations with a subtraction from the total. The reason for this is that the Royal Family does not wish to be placed in a position where comparisons are made of past and future donations. However, the official said he understood the donation "will be a substantial one."

A committee of the disaster fund has already made initial monthly payments of \$50 for each widow and \$10 for each child. At the same time the committee is investigating needs of the stricken families and the payments will be reviewed next month.

Rev. L. L. Pepperdene, Anglican minister of Chatham, N.B. and a committee member said "it will still take a very great deal of money to prevent hardship for any length of time. They are a very brave people—we've had no requests for aid. In fact, some don't like to take it even though they need it."

Acting Premier and Labor Minister A. E. Skaling said he joined with Lt. Gov. O'Brien in expressing "heartfelt thanks of the people of New Brunswick," for the Queen's gift.

Premier Thanks Queen

Premier Flemming, out of the province on vacation, sent a personal message thanking the Queen.

In addition to making the contribution the Queen will meet the widows July 29 at Point du Chene, N.B., where she boards the yacht Britannia for Charlottetown. The 83 children will also be present.

"They feel it's a nice gesture," said Mr. Pepperdene. "We've arranged for buses to take them all."

"Some think it will be an ordeal, but I don't think so. The (Continued on Page 2, Col. 1)

Queen isn't that kind of a woman. I think they'll enjoy it—it will break the tedium of life. And these people need something like that now."

The official announcement of the royal donation follows:

"Hon. J. Leonard O'Brien, lieutenant-governor of New Brunswick, received a message Monday advising him that Her Majesty the Queen and his Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh graciously wished to make a contribution to the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund of which the lieutenant-governor is patron. On behalf of the people of New Brunswick the lieutenant-governor has sent the following telegram:

"Sir Michael Adeane, private secretary to Her Majesty the Queen: Please convey to Her Majesty the Queen and to his Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh my dutiful respects, and inform them that for the citizens of the province of New Brunswick and more especially as the patron of the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund, I gratefully acknowledge and thank Her Majesty and his Royal Highness for their most graciously splendid gesture and generous donation to the bereaved families of the disaster, which information I shall with Her Majesty's gracious permission as referred to in your letter, make known to our people through the press."

"Hon. A. E. Skaling, New Brunswick's acting premier and minister of labor stated that he would like to join with Lieutenant-Governor O'Brien in expressing the heartfelt thanks of the people of New Brunswick, and in particular the dependents of these gallant fishermen, to Her Majesty the Queen and his Royal Highness Prince Philip for this gracious act.

"Premier Hugh John Flemming, out of the province on holiday when informed of the gift, sent the following personal message:

"His honor the lieutenant-governor has been so kind as to inform me of the gracious generosity of Her Majesty the Queen and of his Royal Highness the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, in making a personal contribution to the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund. I am sure that this act of royal kindness is most deeply appreciated by every citizen of New Brunswick and will bring great comfort and encouragement to those bereft of loved ones by the disaster of several weeks ago. It is likewise an inspiration to greater effort on behalf of our unfortunate friends and neighbors who need assistance so badly."

"Michael Wardell, honorary secretary of the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund, said, "the total has now risen to \$175,000. This does not include

the donation of Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh as it is not permissible to publish details of any such donations from the Royal Family.

"This very generous act, is, I believe, a departure from precedent in Canada. It is touching evidence of the compassion felt by the Queen and Prince Philip on learning of the plight of the 24 widows and 83 children left destitute by the death of the 35 fishermen in the storm off Miramichi Bay on June 19.

"Most of the families are in desperate straits. For example one widow with her eight children is living in a one-room shack of about 14 square feet without beds, without chairs, without resources whatsoever but one rickety table. Yet the children are clean, intelligent and attractive and with a fair opportunity they and all the others can grow into useful and perhaps very successful citizen."



BEING OUTFITTED — Mrs. Winsor Kingston, Bay du Vin, a widow of the Escuminac disaster, and her eight children ages two to 10, are being flown to Toronto this weekend. The family will appear on the CBC TV program "Tabloid" Monday evening. Mrs. Kingston and her children are being outfitted for the occasion with new clothes supplied through the generosity of the J. D. Creaghan Co. Ltd. Each of the company's four stores in Fredericton, Newcastle, Chatham and Moncton will sponsor two children. The children are Bliss 9, Jane 8, Joseph 7, Dorothy 6, Donna 4, Nancy 3, Judy 2 and Stephen 1. Mrs. Kingston will be accompanied to Toronto by her mother, Mrs. Dorothy Dutcher, and her aunt, Mrs. R. Jardine, Chatham. Stephen, youngest of the family, is shown being outfitted for the trip by Mrs. Mary McDonald of the J. D. Creaghan Co., Ltd. Also in the photo is Stephen's grandmother, Mrs. Dorothy Dutcher (Photo by Dupuis Studio).

Calamity Courage and Challenge

July 18, 1959

Albert Chaisson and his seventeen-year-old son, Alphonse, were lost overboard during the disaster of the Miramichi Bay fishermen. At left are the other members of his family. In the front row, left to right, are: Carol, three; Maynard, four; Mrs. Chaisson, holding Charlene, six months; Charles, two; Gisèle, eight, and Elizabeth, six. In the back row are: Albert, ten; Gerald, twelve; Réal, fourteen; Thaddé, eighteen; Velma, fifteen; Jean Paul, eleven, and Margaret, nine.

CATASTROPHE STRUCK the southernmost point of the Bay of Miramichi on June 19th. The story of the disaster and of the plight of the wives and children of the fishermen who perished is now well known. It is summarized on page 57 of this issue by two newsmen who reported it for *The Daily Gleaner* through that weekend of tempest and death.

What is not as yet thoroughly realized is the selfless quality of courage shown by some of the survivors in rescuing others from certain death at the gravest risk of their own lives. No awards could be too high for the recognition of some of these acts and it is good that steps have been taken by the Government of New Brunswick to recommend them.

There was Captain Jenkins in his forty-foot boat named *Marie* in honour of his wife. He found the Doucets, father and two sons, clinging to their boat which was capsized in the mountainous seas. Time and time again Captain Jenkins tried to get near enough to cast a line. At last Everett Doucet caught it, passed it to his younger brother. He was pulled to safety. When the *Marie* was able to approach again, Everett again caught the rope and passed it to his father, and he was pulled aboard. It was with the greatest difficulty that Captain Jenkins was able to bring his boat round a third time to rescue the young Everett himself. Then the *Marie* was swamped. A huge sea smashed over her and half filled her with water so that she was within a few inches of capsizing. For hours they baled, the sea washing in as fast as they baled it out. It was many hours later that Jenkins brought his boat to safety in the harbour.

Then there was Captain Roy Lloyd. He was driving through the seas in the heavy gale wind with waves forty to fifty feet high and breakers ahead when he suddenly saw a sinking boat with a man lashed to the mast. He was nearly unconscious and unable to move. The rescue was made, but at heavy risk.

Jim Morrison, *Gleaner* news editor, and Art Carpenter, staff reporter and photographer, saw the final stages of the storm and its aftermath, counted the wreckage, spoke with the survivors.

The first and urgent necessity was the creation of a national fund. *The Atlantic Advocate* with *The Daily Gleaner* launched THE NEW BRUNSWICK FISHERMEN'S DISASTER FUND, and invited the Red Cross Society and the newspapers, radio and television stations of the province to join together as co-sponsors of the appeal.

Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien became the patron of the fund, and the Hon. Hugh John Flemming, New Brunswick's Premier, the chairman of the committee formed to administer it. The list of the committee members is given on the page opposite.

The first contribution came without being asked for, from England. Lord Beaverbrook telephoned from London on hearing of the disaster. His *Daily Express* covered the story of the storm as its lead on page one, with a graphic description of the disaster and the figures of its toll in the loss of thirty-four lives—the number has since increased to thirty-five—and the destruction of boats and nets which are the means of livelihood to that fishing community. He opened the fund with a gift of \$5,000, and with it sent a simple and heartfelt message of sympathy. He said:

"In this disaster, without parallel in the Miramichi Bay that holds for me life-long memories, I send my deepest sympathy to the bereaved, my sorrow for the loss of so many splendid lives, and my admiration for those who faced the dangers of the storm and survived."

Lord Beaverbrook's gift was followed immediately by two others. Lady Dunn sent \$5,000 from the Sir James Dunn Foundation; K. C. Irving, New Brunswick's leading industrialist and native of Buctouche, just down the coast from the disaster area, hastened to send his contribution of \$5,000, and the money started to flow.

The Government of New Brunswick gave \$25,000 with a message from Premier Flemming of sympathy to the bereaved families of the fishermen. Premier Stanfield sent \$10,000 from the Province of Nova Scotia, with memories no doubt of their own disasters in 1956 and 1958 at Shiphill. Donations of \$5,000 came from T. Eaton Com-

pany, Imperial Oil, Miramichi Lumber Company, the Royal Bank of Canada and the Bank of Nova Scotia. Large contributions have also been received from the Fraser Companies, the Junior Red Cross Society of Ontario, Moosehead Breweries and the Bathurst Pulp and Paper Company. Lieutenant-Governor Frank M. Ross of British Columbia sent \$1,000 from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

At the time of going to press the fund totalled \$150,000 with subscriptions coming in at the rate of several thousand dollars a day, including small and large sums from individuals.

Payments to the bereaved families have begun on a scale of \$10 per month for each child and \$50 per month for each widow or mother who was dependent on a son who perished in the storm.

The amount subscribed to the present, generous as it is, is insufficient for the continuance of payments on that scale and more funds are urgently required.

The disaster has opened the lid on a standard of life that is a shame to Canada. The sacrifice of the thirty-five fishermen who perished in the storm will not have been in vain if the conscience of Canada is aroused, so that not only can the destitution of these families be relieved, but urgent and imperative measures taken to examine the lot of the fishermen not only of New Brunswick but of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

Can it be right that men who are brave and skilful and risk their lives in carrying out their trade should be recompensed at a rate that at best hardly raises them and their families above the levels of starvation? Consider the state of the dependents of the thirty-five who died in this disaster.

They shall be nameless, but we give the details of each family with the remarks supplied by the relief officer of the Canadian Red Cross Society.

DISASTER AT SEA

Story and Photos by JIM MORRISON and ART CARPENTER



The shores of Miramichi Bay were strewn with wreckage brought in by high tides and heavy seas.

DARK, DISMAL, DRIZZLY, windy—money weather. This was in the minds of Miramichi Bay fishermen, Friday, June 19, as they milled around the breakwater at Escuminac, N.B. Cheerful greetings were exchanged as the crews prepared the tiny fishing boats. Similar weather during the previous two weeks had meant good catches, good money.

The clouds were ugly but not ominous to these rugged fishermen, used to putting out to sea in bad weather. There were families to support, livings to be made, bills to be paid. The waters were choppy, but no more than on other days, as fathers, sons, brothers readied their nets.

Motors coughed hoarsely, one after another. Ropes sighed as moorings were slipped and the boats left the shelter of the breakwater, battering the waves with their bows.

All was serene in the picturesque homes of fishermen at Escuminac, Baie Ste. Anne and Baie du Vin. Wives made preparations for the weekend, secure in the belief their husbands would be back in the morning with a good catch, meaning ready cash for a Saturday shopping trip. Some, too, were making elaborate plans to surprise their fishermen-husbands on Sunday—Father's Day.

Father's Day was also in the minds of some of the fishermen as the waters became more turbulent during the trip into

the Bay. Yvon Durelle of Baie Ste. Anne, fisherman, and Canadian and British Empire light heavyweight boxing champion, was fighting an inner battle. Durelle, who had taken time off from training for his title fight with Archie Moore, wanted to be home for Father's Day weekend. He wanted to go fishing but the pull of his home, wife and family was strong.

Now the waters of the Bay were becoming heavier. They had reached a stage that they had about ten days previously; and that time Durelle had lost \$900 worth of fishing gear.

"I'm turning back," Durelle told his crew. The "fighting fisherman's" other boats followed. Others in the fishing fleet, admiring Durelle both as a fighter and a fisherman, followed him back to the breakwater.

But many, not knowing of Durelle's decision, not knowing a violent storm was already on its way, continued into the bay.

Smashing waves, driven up Miramichi Bay from Northumberland Strait, powered by a strong north-east wind, tore at the fishing vessels. Another type of wave, which could mean life, passed unheard overhead.

At 8.45 p.m. a weather warning to east coast vessels was issued to department of transport marine radio stations for broadcast over their wave lengths. The Miramichi Bay boats could have picked up the gale warnings from several stations, and

beaten back to port. But not one of the boats had a marine radio.

Private radio stations carried the gale warnings at 10 p.m. But the boats carried no-ordinary radios either.

Fate had cast her die!

By the time the gale warnings had been broadcast, the fishermen had set their nets. Crews sought the warmth of their cuddies*, brewing pots of potent coffee. This became impossible as the night wore on, and the vessels, lightened by the absence of nets from their decks, tossed and rolled in the heavy seas, huge waves breaking over the decks, smashing down on the cuddies.

This was a time for fear, but the craggy-faced Miramichi Bay fishermen do not know the meaning of the word. These men respect the sea; grasp their living from it. They do not fear it. This is their way of life.

The fishermen remained in their beds in their cuddies. Work, if there were any to do, was impossible. It was not until dawn, about 5.30 a.m., that some of the fishermen tried to bring in their nets. Some succeeded. But by now the storm was furious.

Waves forty to fifty feet high towered over the small boats, then crashed down, sweeping engines, cuddies, nets—and men—into the chilly seas.

* Small forward cabins



Above, fishermen identify the stripped and battered hulk of a boat. At right another boat washed ashore. No one remained alive aboard either boat.

A few survived to tell of their ordeal. But many others—thirty-five in all—ended their lives in the waters that had given them their sparse and perilous living.

Some of the fleet, still able to make headway, sought shelter from the storm, some toward shore and some toward the open sea.

Roy Lloyd, Bernard Jenkins, and Jack Doucet, all of Escuminac, were among the skippers to head for Northumberland Strait.

Residents of the tiny fishing village of Escuminac had, by now, realized that there was trouble in Miramichi Bay.

"It was the worst storm ever to hit this region," one grizzled veteran said. Others were quick to concur.

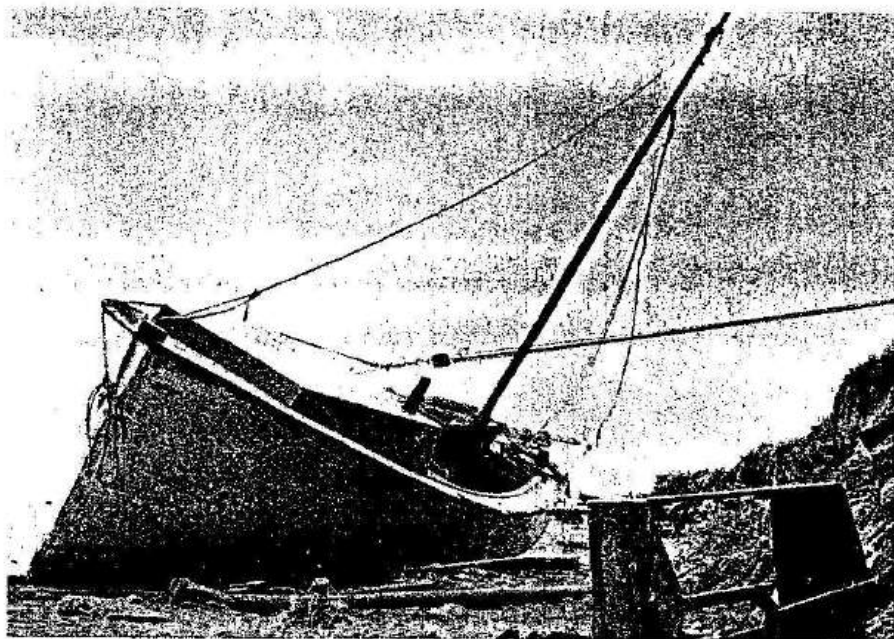
Roy Lloyd would have instantly agreed as he guided his boat, sluggishly, slowly into the bay. It was slow work, terribly slow.

"If it hadn't been for my nets, we would never have returned," Mr. Lloyd told us Saturday evening. He explained that as long as the engine continues to function and headway is kept into the sea, the nets provide an efficient sea anchor. The nets are abandoned only if the engine fails and the boat is abeam to the waves. Mr. Lloyd said that in this case the chances of survival are very slight.

Brian, his thirteen-year-old son, later told us of this nightmare trip.

It had been about 10.45 a.m. when the Lloyds and their crew, Chlorin Jimmo and Les Lewis, pulled their nets.

"It was about 3.15 p.m.," Brian said. "We were approaching the breakwater at Escuminac when we saw a boat just above the wharf. There was a man tied to the mast. We went up to the boat, but had



a hard time to get him to untie himself. It was Mr. Cook."

Edward Cook, a fisherman from Howard's Cove, P.E.I., later talked to us about his rescue by the Lloyds. His story was told at Hôtel Dieu, Chatham, where he was recovering from cuts, exhaustion and shock.

Mr. Cook said he and his father, Fraser Cook, who was sixty, had gone out in their boat on Friday night.

"It seemed to reach its peak about dawn," he said in describing the storm.

"It was the worst I have ever seen.

"There was just Dad and I aboard. The boat turned right over once but we were able to get back in. I lashed myself to the mast and hollered at Dad to do the same. He was clinging to the cuddy. Just as I hollered a huge wave came over the boat, sweeping the cuddy and Dad upside.

"They say the waves were forty to fifty feet high. I don't know. I just can't remember.

"Then a boat came along and I was helped into it by Roy Lloyd. My boat was about two miles from Escuminac when I was rescued, so they tell me."

Brian told us that Cook had been taken to the Lloyd home, after the boat landed at the breakwater late Saturday afternoon. He was later moved to hospital.

Mrs. Lloyd, overjoyed at the return of her husband and son, was, nevertheless, looking ahead.

"That was your last trip out fishing," she told Brian.

"The heck it is!" Brian retorted. "I'll be going out again soon."

The return of the Lloyds brought hope to others awaiting the return of fathers, sons and brothers. Hope began to wane, however, as the first sign of wreckage appeared, brought to shore by high tides and heavy seas.

Three bodies were found washed up on the beach by the angry waters.

Mrs. Bernard Jenkins of Escuminac was

one of the wives who sat at home on that fateful Saturday night, never losing hope that her husband and seventeen-year-old nephew Cyril would return.

"I have never lost hope," Mrs. Jenkins told us. "I know that my husband and nephew will come sailing through the breakwater, perhaps not today, perhaps not tomorrow... but they will come home."

One veteran fisherman of Miramichi Bay held no such hope for his son and brother.

"I never expect to see those two alive again," Albany Martin told us, "but, God granting if they walk across the breakwater and shake my hand, only then will I believe that they live."

Mr. Martin expressed his thoughts as we walked the beach, late at night, amid water-washed wreckage, past tiny knots



Corporal H. A. Trann of the Chatham Detachment of the R.C.M.P. confers with Yvon Durelle, the fighting fisherman.



Brian Lloyd

of men gazing seaward. They stood silently, smoking, speaking in hushed tones as they waited for a newly spotted piece of wreckage to reach the beach, or watched the battered hulk of a boat wash to shore.

During Saturday night people were silent in Escuminac. The wind howled steadily from the north, and mighty white-crested breakers boomed on the beach.

Greeting the grey dawn was a sail on the horizon—Bernard Jenkins returning home. Fishermen, still keeping a vigil at the breakwater, spotted the boat instantly and identified her.

Before Jenkins had reached the breakwater word was received that two more bodies had been found on the beach: John Louis Richard and his son Jeffrey.

When Jenkins reached the breakwater he had with him his crew, as well as Jack Doucet and his sons, Alphonse and Everett. A fourth crew member on the Doucet boat, William Manuel, was killed

when a boat being towed by the Doucets crushed the stern of their boat. Manuel's body was the first to be found.

Mr. Jenkins later told a deeply moving story. "My nephew [Cyril] called: 'There's a boat upset behind us.'... I... turned and went back... three men were clinging to the boat. The two boys were on the wheelhouse, and the father, Jack Doucet, on the bow... The first casting... we missed... I turned... and on second casting, the oldest boy, Everett... caught the rope and passed it along to his kid brother, who was fourteen... my nephew pulled him through the water with the rope, and I... helped... haul him aboard... [On] the second attempt... the same young guy passed the rope along to his father and we brought him aboard. He was in pretty bad condition... we then had... large seas and I was unable to turn, so we left him behind several hundred yards and he was afraid... that we had abandoned him altogether, that we weren't going to save him... I turned again and with the third casting we hauled him aboard... I asked him why he didn't come first; he had the first opportunity. He said: 'I didn't want to go and leave my brother behind. I wanted to make sure that he was saved before I was, and also my Dad.'"

Jenkins, after returning to his home to reassure his wife, went back into the bay with his boat to look for nets he had lost and to aid other searchers in their hunt for wreckage and bodies.

Yvon Durelle had three of his fleet out Sunday, and recovered two derelicts. R.C.A.F. Search and Rescue, out of Chatham, also was on the job. By night-

fall Sunday, with the aid of search aircraft, all twenty-two missing vessels had been located, some broken beyond repair.

Now the truth was known. Twenty-two fishing boats swamped and wrecked had been located; thirty-five fishermen would not return. There were twenty widows and mothers dependent on single boys who had lost their lives, and eighty-three fatherless children, left unprovided for and destitute.

Help was not long in coming for the stricken fishermen's families.

F. B. Fowlie, chairman of the Red Cross Disaster Relief Committee for Northumberland County, organized a central disaster information and aid centre at Escuminac. He and his fellow workers were on the job night and day, keeping in touch with every facet of the tragedy. The R.C.M.P., the R.C.A.F. Search and Rescue team and members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade carried out invaluable services throughout the trying period.

Within a matter of hours, this tragic event gained international attention and sympathy.

The New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund was launched under the joint sponsorship of *The Atlantic Advocate*, *The Daily Gleaner* and the New Brunswick Division of the Canadian Red Cross Society. Within a day all of the newspapers and radio and television stations in New Brunswick accepted an invitation to aid the fund as co-sponsors.

Lord Beaverbrook, favourite son of the Miramichi, telephoned from his office in London to Michael Wardell to hear details of the tragedy, and immediately gave \$5,000 to open the fund.

Extend Sympathy Widows, Children

By HARRIS SULLIVAN

POINT DU CHENE (Special) — A sympathetic Queen and her inquisitive prince spoke here to widows and survivors of the tragic Northumberland Strait sea disaster.

It was a touching, sad scene as Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip mingled with the lineup of humble men, women and children on the Point du Chene wharf. They included the wives, mothers and children of the 35 fishermen who drowned during the vicious June 20 storm that battered northern and eastern New Brunswick coast.

For several minutes the royal couple, switching from French to English, spoke to the quiet little contingent. Twenty-five widows and mothers and 64 children of the disaster victims were present as well as eight hardened fishermen who survived the storm that fateful June night.

The charming Queen expressed concern in most cases with how many children the widows had and how many members of their families were lost.

The prince, tall and handsome, fired several curious questions at the survivors and expressed intense interest in their ordeals.

Talks With Hero

His most extensive conversation was with Bernard Jenkins of Escuminac. The 52-year-old captain was one of the survivors and a hero among the courageous men of the sea, for he saved fellow fisherman Jack Doucet and his two sons Alphonse and Everett after their boat, overturned at the height of the lashing gale.

"Were you doing the same thing they were?", the prince asked. "Did you get swamped too . . . what happened to the others do you suppose?"

The Prince listened intently as Jenkins explained how he rescued the Doucet fishermen while bailing his own boat to keep afloat. He also spoke to Cyril Jenkins, a nephew of Mr. Jenkins and who was fishing with him the night of the storm.

The Prince said he pictured the boats row boat size. He was surprised to learn they were about 40 feet in length and larger.

"How many were in the other boats? he questioned.

"Four", answered Mr. Jenkins.

Further down the line, nervous Mrs. William Chiasson of Baie Ste. Anne, told the Queen

(Continued on Page 5, Col. 1)

SPEAKS TO WIDOWS

(Continued from Page 3)

she lost her husband and two sons — Adrian and Robert, 20 and 16—in the disaster.

The Queen inquired if she was being looked after well.

Mrs. Chiasson replied, "Yes".

Hard Storm

The monarch asked Theodore Williston of Hardwicke, a survivor, if "it was a hard storm?"

"Yes, it was an unusual storm", answered Mr. Williston.

The Queen smiled at Mr. Williston's young daughter, Joan who he held in his arms. It was a gesture she repeated throughout her brief association with the group.

The 18 - month - old Williston child flashed a winning smile to the Prince when he spoke to Mr. Williston and issued a warm, "Hi" to royalty.

The congenial Prince smiled: "Hi there".

Mrs. Burton Chapman of Bay du Vin thought it was "so nice of the Queen to spend the time with us."

"She was so sympathetic that I almost cried. She understood and then said something nice and I felt a lot better".

Mrs. Clifford Kingston, also of Bay du Vin, did cry. She wept quietly when the Queen spoke in sympathy as she held her two children in her arms.

The Queen asked Mrs. Allen Mills of Black River Bridge if she was getting tired. "A little", was the reply.

Husband, Son

She asked Mrs. Mills who she lost in the storm. Mrs. Mills told her her husband and one son drowned. She had four of her 10 children with her at Point du Chene.

Prince Philip paused to talk with Mrs. William G. Manuel, whose husband died in the storm. He asked if her husband had been fishing very long. Mrs. Manuel told him that he was 70 years old and had been fishing for many years. "He was an old man and we tried to keep him from going out too often. That night was his first night out this season", she stated.

The sad little group joined with the remainder of the large number of officials, members of the press and short-garbed cottage owners in the beach area who lined the shore and waved and sang farewell to the royal couple as they proceeded in a small craft to the royal yacht, HMY Britannia, anchored in Shediac Bay three miles north - east of the wharf here within sight of the very strait which became a grave for victims of the disaster.



SPEAKS TO WIDOWS—Queen Elizabeth took time out to speak with widows of 35 fishermen lost in a storm in the Escuminac-Bale Ste. Anne area in June, just before she left for Prince Edward Island last night. The Royal yacht Britannia departed from Point du Chene early last evening. She chats with Mrs. Windsor Kingston, centre, and some of her eight children, while two other widows of the tragedy are at the left and right of Mrs. Kingston. (See pages 2, 3 and 5 for other pictures and stories.)



Photo L'EVANGELINE par Stan Comeau

LA REINE ET LE PERE PAUL ARSENAULT — Sur le quai, à la Pointe-du-Chêne, le R. P. Paul Arsenault, vicaire de la paroisse de Baie-Ste-Anne, raconte les faits saillants du désastre maritime qui a frappé la côte nord du Nouveau-Brunswick le mois dernier. Au centre, dans l'arrière-plan, on aperçoit Mme Albert Chiasson, tenant dans ses bras l'un de ses 13 enfants survivants.



LA REINE S'ENTRETIENT AVEC UN GROUPE DE VEUVES:
le groupe comprend Mme Lionel Richard, Mme Clifford Kings-

Photo L'Evangeline par Stan Comeau
ton, Mme André-A. Martin, Mme Raphael Robichaud et Mme
Haynes Williston. A gauche, le Père Paul Arsenault.

Scènes émouvantes quand la Reine rencontre les veuves des victimes du désastre maritime

Une nuage de tristesse vint assombrir le voyage du couple royal tard mercredi après-midi lorsque la reine Elisabeth et le prince Philippe ont fait un arrêt spécial sur le quai de la Pointe-du-Chêne pour rencontrer les veuves des victimes du désastre maritime du détroit de Northumberland qui a fait 35 morts.

Vingt veuves et leurs 63 enfants longeaient le quai jusqu'à l'embarcadère où, quelques minutes plus tard, le couple royal est monté à bord d'une vedette pour se rendre au yacht Britannia.

Juste en face du quai, on pouvait remarquer quelques héros de la tragédie, Bernard Jenkins, son neveu Cyril et Alphonse Doucet, Roy Lloyd, Théodore Williston et Thomas Lewis.

Causant tout bas avec les veuves habillées en noir, la reine fut certes émue de voir les enfants groupés autour de leurs mères, parfois cinq, parfois trois et même une mère qui s'est rendue avec douze de ses enfants.

L'émotion fut grande et, sans le vouloir, une larme s'échappait de temps à autres, de ce petit groupe qui faisait un contraste pathétique avec les centaines de personnes, habillées pour la plage et qui se souciaient guère du petit drame qui se déroulait à quelques pas d'eux.

Après avoir salué les membres du clergé, la reine et le prince Philippe ont rencontré les six sauveteurs, s'arrêtant à plusieurs reprises pour demander des questions au sujet de la tragédie.

Le prince s'est particulièrement intéressé aux différentes méthodes de la pêche. Il questionna Bernard Jenkins, qui, avec son neveu, Cyril, a réussi à sauver trois membres d'une famille.

"Etiez-vous sortis en mer le soir de la tempête? a demandé le Prince. "Oui", de répondre le pêcheur. Et il raconta comment il put réussir à sauver les trois membres d'un autre équipage.

"Nous avons tenté à quatre reprises avant de les ramener à bord, un par un. Un autre était déjà noyé."

Questionnant le jeune Alphonse Doucet, 17 ans, au sujet du drame qu'il a vécu sur mer, Alphonse répondit qu'il était bien un de ceux qui se sont échappés.

C'est le jeune Alphonse qui, sans souci de soi-même, a aidé à son père, puis ensuite à son jeune frère de 14 ans à monter à bord le bateau de M. Jenkins, et ce dans des vagues de 50 pieds.

Le R.P. Paul Arsenaux, vicaire de la paroisse de Baie-Sainte-Anne, qui accompagnait le groupe s'est déclaré très reconnaissant du fait que la reine daigne rencontrer ce groupe.

"Je vous remercie au nom de toutes les familles attristées... C'est un vif moyen de promouvoir les contributions au fonds du désastre... Les gens apprécieront ce fait," de témoigner le R.P. Arsenaux à sa majesté la reine Elisabeth.

"Le moral de ces familles me semble bon", a fait remarquer sa majesté la reine, "ont-elles bien souffert?"

Et de répondre le Père Arsenaux: "Ils ont certes souffert mais leur esprit de chrétiens les a tout fait accepter avec résignation."

Le couple royal a rencontré les veuves suivantes: Mme William Chiasson, avec ses trois enfants; Mme Windsor Kingston, avec quatre de ses huit enfants; Mme Clifford Kingston, trois enfants; Mme André Martin, deux de ses trois enfants; Mme Raphael Robichaud, un enfant; Mme Haynes Williston: Mme Jean-Louis Ri-

chard, deux de ses trois enfants; Mme Jeffrey Richard, Mme Andrew Mills: Mme William Manuel, un enfant; Mme Albany Martin, quatre enfants; Mme Léo Roy, un enfant; Mme Edgar Daigle, quatre de ses cinq enfants; Mme Stanley Daigle, cinq enfants; Mme Allan Mills, quatre de ses cinq enfants; Mme Victor Robichaud avec ses huit enfants dont le bébé, Simone, âgée de quatre mois; Mme Walthen Williston, âgée de 74 ans; Mme Burton Chapman; Mme Arthur Kelley avec deux des six enfants; Mme Hugh Kelley, Miles Adeline Manuel Marie Manuel et Joyce Taylor et Mme Albert Chiasson avec douze de ses treize enfants.

Cette dernière famille paraissait la plus pathétique, alors qu'elle était groupée juste au bout de l'embarcadère, faisant face à la mer, dans laquelle se sont noyés le père et un fils.

Au moment de la tragédie le fils aîné, Thaddée, faisait escorte à la reine sur le bateau H.M.C.S. Cayuga, présentement à Dartmouth. On avait fait un arrêt spécial à Rimouski, P.-Q., le 21 juin, la journée suivant la tragédie, pour que le jeune Thaddée puisse rejoindre sa famille.

Deux autres familles, antérieurement privées ont transporté le groupe de la région de Baie-Sainte-Anne. Les gardes Elizabeth MacMillan, Betty Norris et Marion Johnson, du ministère provincial de la santé, garde Velma Weavers, V.O.N., de Chatham et Mme W.-H. Galloway, de la Croix-Rouge, les accompagnaient pour s'occuper des enfants.

Le député, William J. Gallant, accompagné de sa femme, s'occupait du groupe et veillait au bien-être des familles.

On y distinguait également le Rév. C.-M. Jones de Baie-du-Vin, et le Rév. L.-M. Pepperdene, de la Société d'aide à l'enfance de Chatham.

Tout le groupe s'est dirigé jusqu'au bord du quai pour faire signe d'adieu au couple royal.

Avant de mettre pied à bord la vedette qui l'attendait, la reine a déclaré: "Je suis contente d'avoir fait cet effort pour ces enfants. Cette expérience m'a très émue."



La Reine Elisabeth s'entretient avec le capitaine Bernard Jenkins, un des héros du drame maritime du 20 juin dernier. A côté de M.

Photo L'Evangelina par Stan Comeau
Jenkins, son épouse, son fils et son neveu, Cyril.



Mme Victoire Robichaud, entourée de ses huit enfants, attend l'arrivée de la Reine, sur le quai de Pointe-du-Chêne. Mme Robichaud a

perdu son mari lors du désastre maritime du 20 juin dernier.



PRINCE CHATS WITH SURVIVOR — Capt. Bernard Jenkins of Escuminac, a survivor of the June 20 storm in Northumberland Strait, chats with Prince Philip during a visit the latter and Her Majesty made with survivors and widows of fishermen on the Point du Chene wharf. Her Majesty and Prince Philip spent some time with the survivors of New Brunswick's worst fishing disaster during their visit to Point du Chene Wednesday. — (Staff Photo by Bourgeois).

17th BODY FOUND

ESCUMINAC (Special) — Royal Canadian Mounted Police Thursday afternoon reported the finding of the body of a 13-year-old boy who lost his life in Miramichi Bay during the storm of June 20.

Found on the shore near Escuminac, was the body of Eric Raymond Williston, of Bay du Vin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Phineas Williston. His brother, Haley is also a victim of the storm but his body has not been recovered.

Coroner E. H. Freeman of Chatham viewed the remains and said no inquest would be held.

The discovery raised to 17 the total of bodies found after the severe storm ripped the bay and shattered nearly 40 boats of the Miramichi salmon fishing fleet.

An RCAF crash boat from Chatham found the body shortly after 12 noon floating in Miramichi Bay off Escuminac. The body was brought to Chatham and is resting at Adams Funeral Home. The funeral will be held on Friday afternoon from the Church of St. John the Evangelist in Bay du Vin.

Night Of Terror For The Men Of Miramichi

The boats were out for the best fishing run in 10 years. Then
the great gale blew. And in its fury a third of the fleet met disaster

August 22, 1959



A survivor, Walter Williston (L), examines the remains of his boat to which he clung for four hours, until rescued by his distant relative Theodore Williston (R).

Photos by Bert Beaver—WEEKEND

FRIDAY, June 19, will be remembered as the blackest Friday in history by the 2,000 people who live in villages like Hardwicke, Bay du Vin, and Baie Ste. Anne, along a 40-mile stretch of New Brunswick's north shore. There was nothing in the 5 P.M. weather forecast to prevent the area's fishermen putting out across Miramichi Bay into Northumberland Strait to take advantage of the best salmon and mackerel fishing in 10 years. A later forecast, at 8.45 P.M., warned of an approaching gale. But by then 45 of the 66 licensed fishing boats in the area were at sea. None had radar, few radio. The 100 men in the boats thus had no warning of the most disastrous storm in Miramichi history — a sudden, deadly storm that ripped viciously through the fleet, sinking 22 boats and taking 35 lives . . . the lives of fathers, husbands, and even boys. Soon after the tragedy, a disaster fund was launched to soften the economic blow to an area that lives by fishing. But only time can heal the suffering of the relatives of men who died in the great storm whose fury is described here.

THE EDITORS

By Cyril Robinson

WEEKEND Staff Writer

TALL, burly Theodore Williston, 28, of Hardwicke, N.B., who had fished out of Miramichi Bay since he was a little boy, entered the cabin of his 40-foot fishing boat Gulf Prowler and took a seat on the edge of a bunk. Tension showed in his weather-tanned face.

"Boys", he said to his two crew members, Aquila Manuel, 20, and Larry Martin, 24, both of Baie Ste. Anne, "if it weren't so late and we weren't so far out, do you know what I'd do?"

"No, Theodore. What?"

"I'd run for shore."

The younger fishermen looked surprised. Gulf Prowler had just made a three-hour run from the breakwater at Escuminac and was now 30 miles out in Northumberland Strait. Her mackerel nets were set, her riding sail was up and she was ready to drift for the night. By morning she might well have a catch worth \$75 or more — not the sort of haul a fisherman would pass up lightly.

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Call it a premonition, or merely the sixth sense many fishermen seem to have when there's trouble ahead, but Williston was worried about the weather. When the three men left port at 6:05 this Friday night a thick fog hung over the bay, the sky was overcast and the sea fairly moderate. But now, shortly after 10 P.M., the northeast wind had stiffened and signs pointed to an unheralded storm.

None of the men in the 45 boats that put out this day liked the look of the weather very much. But foul weather had been the order of the week, and the official afternoon forecast pointed to nothing much worse than the previous four nights. Most of the fishermen readily gambled against the elements. For many of them, the gamble was to prove disastrous.

The first of the Gulf Prowler's series of mishaps hit around midnight when a driving wind, accompanied by rain, tore away her sail. Her crew tried to patch the damage but it broke loose again. The wind grew stronger and the sea rougher. The three men had crawled into their bunks after a late lunch but the pitching motion of their craft in the heaving waters made sleep virtually impossible.

By early Saturday morning the wind was blowing

more than 45 miles per hour and the waves had increased in size. At 5 A.M. the little craft reeled under a sledge-hammer blow which catapulted Larry Martin out of his bunk to the cabin floor. He staggered to his feet, dazed, bruised, but otherwise unhurt. The blow was so severe that Williston thought his vessel might have broken loose from her nets and run aground. But a quick look outside showed they were still in deep water. Gulf Prowler had been clobbered by a heavy wave and had shipped a lot of water.

"We've got to haul in", Williston decided. As Martin and Manuel hauled in the nets, which contained a small catch, and stowed away the remnants of the sail, Williston got the motor started. He took a westerly course to clear the rockbound Escuminac Point, while his two companions began pumping out the water.

The sea was now a boiling cauldron. The combined action of wind and tide made the action of the waves unpredictable. Williston pinned a label on that sea. He called it "hateful." Gigantic waves seemed to build up out of nowhere. He took a firm hold on the wheel and kept his eyes glued to the tumbling seas. Drifting fog had cut visibility to

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several hundred yards and he wasn't sure where he was. Then, to make matters worse, Gulf Prowler's engine suddenly spluttered and died. After many anxious minutes, during which his craft lay side on to the heaving sea, Williston got his motor started again.

It was now nearing 9 o'clock Saturday morning. If Williston's calculations were right, they should be getting near the Escuminac breakwater. Thus far, Gulf Prowler had sighted only two other vessels that day, a passing steamer and later a boat owned by Roy Lloyd, of Escuminac, who was holding to his nets because he had decided it was too rough to haul in. Standing beside Lloyd was his 13-year-old son, Brian, who had gone along for the trip. Lloyd's boat appeared seaworthy, his engine was in order and he reported "No trouble."

But for Gulf Prowler, real trouble lay ahead. Williston had miscalculated his position and instead of approaching the safe haven of the Escuminac breakwater, he was heading toward a treacherous sand bar which is regarded as one of the worst hazards in Miramichi Bay. At five fathoms he saw breakers ahead and still figured it was the Escuminac shore. At two fathoms, **(Continued on Next Page)**

he realized his error. He was almost on top of the sand bar. In a sea like that it would have been a certain death trap. Once aground on that deadly shoal, neither Gulf Prowler nor her crew would have stood a chance.

Just in time, Williston ran his craft back to six fathoms. A few minutes later he spotted the line spar which marks the salmon boundary north of the Escuminac breakwater. He now knew his position. He steered a northeast course which would carry him into deeper water when suddenly Aquila gave a shout of alarm, "There's three boats headed toward the bar!"

Williston gunned his engine and swung back to warn the craft of their danger. He recognized the boats as those of Bernie Jenkins, Placide MacIntyre and Jack Doucette, all of the Escuminac fishing fleet. The three vessels heeded the warning and headed away from the bar in Gulf Prowler's wake.

For Gulf Prowler, more trouble-shooting lay ahead. A short time later she came upon Raymond Thibeau's boat, which had suffered a severe battering and was drifting helplessly. It had broken clear of its mooring, its sail was gone and the engine was dead. It was in serious danger of capsizing in the raging seas. After a series of unsuccessful attempts, Gulf Prowler managed to get a line aboard the Thibeau craft and took it in tow.

At this point, Williston saw an incredible sight. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a great wall of water



Fishermen from Escuminac, N.B., search the waters of Miramichi Bay for bodies of their lost comrades.



Cyril Robinson

Doucette's 16-ton boat was tossed completely out of the water by the wave that overturned it. His 72-year-old friend, William Manuel, was drowned.



In Sunday best, Jack Doucette, of Manuels, with two sons, Alphonse, 17, and Everett, 14, set out for church after disaster. All were rescued after their

boat overturned. Alphonse first pulled his brother from the sea, then caught lifeline from the rescue craft for father and brother before saving himself.

descending on Jack Doucette's boat — the 16-ton, 45-foot Francine D., one of the biggest vessels in the Escuminac fleet. "Jack's boat just seemed to ride up the side of this huge wave, which flipped it end over end," Wiliston recalled later. "It cleared the water by two or three feet, turned completely over, and fell — mouth down — into the sea. I have never seen anything like the power in that wave. It's an awful sight to see someone you know getting killed or drowned. I didn't think any of them would have a chance."

Miraculously, Jack Doucette survived this disaster and was able to give a first-hand account of what happened. From his post at the wheel of Francine D., the 43-year-old fisherman from Manuels saw the wave coming too late to avoid it. In 28 years of fishing he had never seen anything like it. It looked to him like a great big square wall with a foaming, 25-foot crest as it raced toward his vessel's bow.

"Watch out!" he yelled. "We've got it this time." The warning was intended for his two sons, Alphonse, 17, and Everett ("Evy"), 14, and for his close friend and neighbor, William George Manuel, 72, who had come along for the trip. Manuel was standing beside him and Alphonse and Evy were inside the cabin putting some gas in the tank.

The gigantic wave struck so suddenly that none had a chance to heed Jack Doucette's warning. "My boat flew completely out of the water. It was like being hit by a rock. I wouldn't have believed it possible," he recalled.

The two brothers were trapped inside the cabin when the boat came down. Their father came to the surface about 10 yards from where his boat was tossing, bottom up, in the surging waters. Jack Doucette had never swum a stroke in his life, but somehow he managed to reach his boat, which by now had turned right side up. He was half-drowned but by a herculean effort was able to crawl on to the Francine D.'s bow. The vessel was full of water but still afloat.

GLANCING about him for some sign of the others, Jack Doucette was relieved to find that his sons were still alive. Somehow, they had managed to escape from the cabin. Alphonse was hanging onto the forward rail and Evy was swimming behind. Alphonse grabbed a mackerel crate and pushed it toward his brother, pulling him into the water-filled craft. William Manuel had apparently been killed outright when the boat overturned. His body floated inside the boat and there was a deep gash in the head.

Many of the stories of the disaster will remain untold — except by pathetic scraps of debris

By this time, Bernie Jenkins's boat, nearest vessel to the Francine D. when it flipped over, was coming to the rescue. Alphonse recognized Bernie's nephew, Cyril, standing in the stern of the rescue boat. He had a coil of rope in his hand. Alphonse got in position to catch the lifeline. He and Cyril had practised rope-tossing and catching on the dock at Escuminac. They made a good team. In a sea like today's, manoeuvring close enough for Cyril to make the throw would require real seamanship.

ON ITS first run, the vessel couldn't get in close enough for Cyril to throw the rope. Bernie Jenkins came around again in a great sweeping arc and this time got his boat within 25 feet of Doucette's. Alphonse caught the rope and quickly draped it over his young brother's shoulder and under his arm. "Hang on tight. Bernie's going to haul you aboard," he said.

Evy obeyed his brother's instructions and a few minutes later was pulled to safety aboard the Jenkins's boat.

Alphonse looked anxiously toward his father, who had swallowed a great deal of water. "The next one's for you," he called. Alphonse wondered if his father would be strong enough to hold on to the rope long enough to be pulled to safety. He knew it would take the last ounce of his father's strength. He came to a decision. *If he loses the rope and doesn't make it, I don't want to go either.*

Again the rescue boat circled and came back. Alphonse got set for the most important catch of his life. Once more Cyril's toss was true to the mark. Alphonse caught the snaking line and passed it quickly to his father, who took a firm grip on the rope and stepped back into the sea. Somehow, Jack Doucette found the strength to hang on to the lifeline, and before long he was safe in the Jenkins's boat, where he fell face down, gasping and vomiting.

Alphonse breathed a grateful sigh of relief when he saw that his father had been rescued. He was dismayed, however, to see the rescue boat head off into the distance. The thought flashed into his mind: *They're going to leave me here.* Gigantic waves periodically hid Jenkins's craft from view. Apparently the huge seas were making it difficult for Bernie to turn. Alphonse figured the rescue boat had gone 500 yards away before he saw it begin to turn. It seemed like an eternity to him before he again felt the lifeline in his hands. Within a few minutes he was pulled to safety.

"I wouldn't be afraid to bet that a third of the fishermen were lost in this storm," Jack Doucette remarked to Bernie.

Fishermen who were lucky enough to reach shore this Saturday bore out Doucette's estimate. They told tragic tales of men being washed overboard, of others

lashing themselves to the masts of their vessels, of sighting wreckage which gave mute evidence of the disaster.

Within minutes after the dramatic rescue of the Doucettes, Jenkins's boat was almost submerged by a huge wave. Cyril Jenkins saw it coming and shouted, "Look out, Bern!" But the warning was too late. The force of the blow as the wave hit them broadside sent the boat reeling over on its side and threw the engine off its bed. The vessel almost capsized, but came back on an even keel.

It was almost 6 o'clock that night before they got the engine back in position and started again. In the meantime all hands had helped to bail and pump the boat comparatively dry. The weather was still bad and the seas so rough that Bernie Jenkins and his companions decided it would be safer to stay in deep water until daylight Sunday.

When Bernie Jenkins turned back to go to the rescue of the Doucette craft, those aboard Theodore Williston's Gulf Prowler had watched from a distance. They could see that Bernie was doing everything possible to achieve the rescue. So Gulf Prowler left, still with the Thibeau craft in tow. Eventually Thibeau got his engine started and was able to proceed on his own.

Gulf Prowler had gone only a short distance when it came upon the wreckage of fishing boats and equipment. Empty gas cans, crates, spars, bits of cabins, broken sails and tangled fishing gear all indicated the havoc the storm had wrought. Among the floating debris, Aquila Manuel saw a familiar sight. He recognized the top of a newly-varnished cabin and its black rail. "That's the top of William Chiasson's cabin. William's in trouble!" he exclaimed.

Aquila and William Chiasson were neighbors in Baie Ste. Anne. There was no mistaking the cabin. He had seen William varnish it. It was not until later that he learned that Chiasson, 47, and his two teenaged sons, Adrien and Robert, had been lost in the storm. William's brother, Albert Chiasson, and his son Alphonse, also of Baie Ste. Anne, were lost too. Albert's widow was left with 13 children, ranging from seven-month-old Charlene to 18-year-old Thaddee, who is in the Royal Canadian Navy.

A few minutes after spotting the wreckage, Aquila yelled excitedly, "There's a man back there standing up in the water!" Theodore Williston looked where Aquila was pointing but could see nothing. However, he headed back to investigate. Sure enough, there was a man clinging to the stern of a badly-battered, water-filled boat. As Gulf Prowler drew nearer, the man waved frantically.

Theodore recognized him as Walter Williston, 35, of Bay du Vin, a distant relative of his. Beside Williston in the boat was the body of a dead companion, Harold

("Hab") Taylor, 20, also of Bay du Vin. The pair had been in the water over four hours and Taylor had died from exposure. After two unsuccessful attempts to get a line aboard, Aquila managed the feat. Walter Williston took the line and tied it around his dead friend. "He goes first," he called. The rescue boat got Taylor's body aboard and headed back to get Walter.

Getting Walter Williston into the Gulf Prowler required all the strength Aquila and Larry Martin could muster. He weighed 200 pounds and exposure had so sapped his strength there was little he could do to help himself. His legs were blue-black from the cold and he had almost given up hope of ever being rescued. When they finally got him into their boat, the Gulf Prowler crew members carried him into the cabin, got his shoes off and wrapped him in a blanket. Gradually, the circulation came back into his limbs.

"Poor Hab Taylor," the rescued fisherman said later. "He knew he was going to die and he was worried about what would happen to his body. That's why I wanted to make sure he was taken off first. If they couldn't have taken us both, I wouldn't have left him."

Walter Williston, who has a wife and three children, has since become known as "the luckiest man in Bay du Vin." Fourteen of his companions from that tiny village never returned.

Among the rescued was Edward Cook, 28, of Howard's Cove, Prince Edward Island, who had been out fishing with his father, Fraser, 60, when the storm struck. The son lashed himself to the mast and advised his father to do the same. But Fraser Cook was trying to get the engine started and didn't take the advice. He was washed overboard before his son's eyes. Hours later Roy Lloyd's boat came along and rescued Edward.

MANY of the stories of the disaster will remain untold. There are only bits of the wrecked vessels to indicate what happened.

As survivors straggled into port, the story of the tragedy slowly unfolded. They told of the havoc wrought by 75-m.p.h. winds and 50-foot waves. All day Saturday, wives and children waited anxiously on the docks. Some waited in vain. Others cried for joy when they recognized their loved ones. But there were many saddened homes. A grim total of 35 fishermen were listed as dead or missing in the worst fishing disaster the area had ever experienced.

The last vessel to return was Bernie Jenkins's. He came in to the Escuminac breakwater at 7:30 Sunday morning, the Doucettes with him. "Other storms," said Bernie, "were just dolls compared to this one." The most devastating gale to hit New Brunswick's north shore in years, it had, as Jack Doucette had predicted, wiped out a third of the Miramichi fishing fleet.

August 22, 1959



Mrs. Albert Chiasson, of Baie Ste. Anne, lost her husband and one son in the storm. She is left with 13

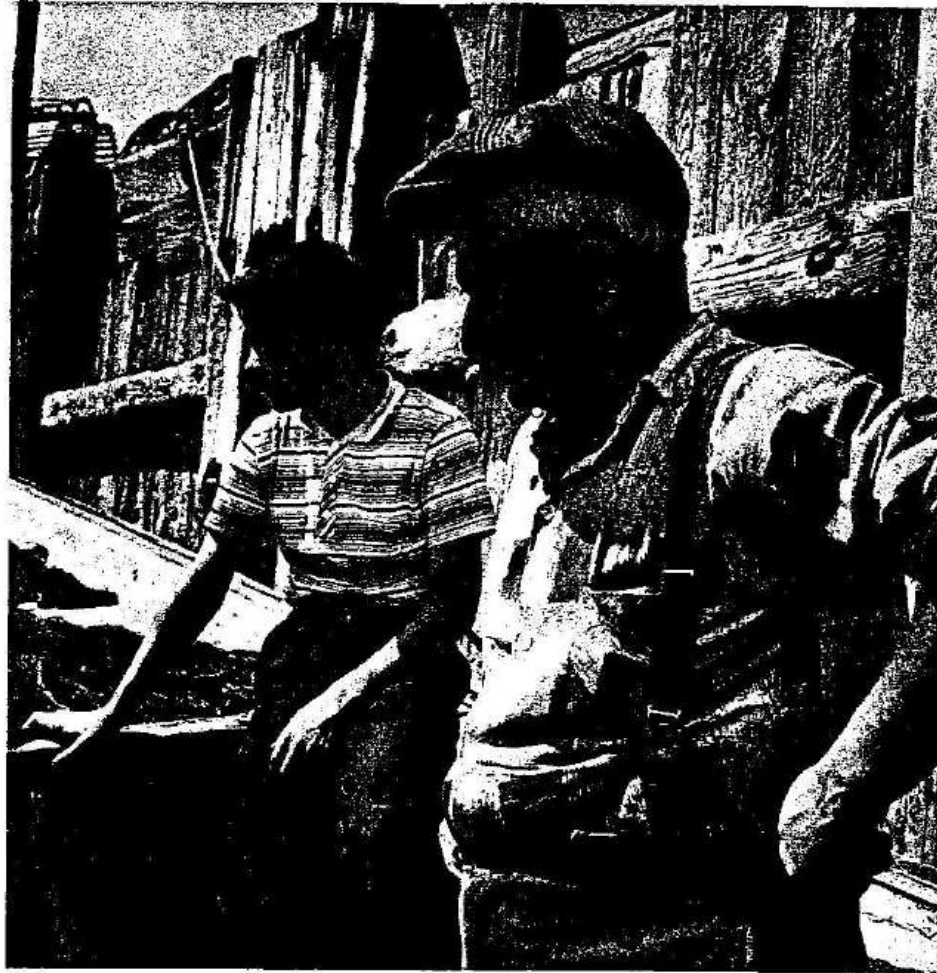
children, one of whom is in R.C.N. Also drowned were her husband's brother and two teenaged sons.



Freshly-dug grave in Baie Ste. Anne churchyard is mute testimony to disaster. The sudden storm trapped 45 boats, sank 22 of them and took lives of 35 men.



A badly-damaged boat is repaired at Escuminac and launched again to face the dangers of the sea. For these men live by fishing, and life must go on. ✓



Roy Lloyd, of Escuminac, and son Brian, 13, survived storm without mishap but rescued Edward Cook, who tied himself to mast of boat in which his father died.



Cyril Robinson

Theodore Williston, 28, lives with his wife and two children at Hardwicke. He lost his sail, almost ran aground, before rescuing Walter Williston (above).



Walter Williston, 35, is reunited with his family. He is known now as the luckiest man in Bay du Vin. Fourteen of his neighbors were drowned in storm.

August 22, 1959



Bernie Jenkins (L) and his nephew Cyril, of Escuminac, rescued Jack Doucette and his sons but almost paid with their lives when their own boat was swamped.



1960

I lived through New Brunswick's killer gale

by Miramichi fisherman WENDALL WILLISTON
as told to Byron Fisher

May, 1960

One year later, we're still reeling from the storm that killed 35, yet spared me.

Almost one year ago, on June 19, 1959, the most deadly storm in New Brunswick history struck Miramichi Bay on the province's north shore. With little warning, it cut through the 45-boat fishing fleet from villages like Hardwicke, Bay du Vin and Baie Ste. Anne, out that night to cash in on the best salmon fishing in years. By morning, 22 boats were sunk and 35 of 100 men were drowned—a huge toll in an area of 2,000 inhabitants. A year later, the effects are still being felt by those who lost their sons, fathers and husbands. One of those to survive the night of terror was Wendall Williston, skipper of a salmon drifter from Bay du Vin.

I'M NOT the kind who starts yelling to God whenever he gets into a jam. I can usually figure a way out by myself.

But that night one year ago, when I shipped out on my 39-foot salmon drifter, I know God was aboard with myself and Garth Williston, my 19-year-old cousin. There just isn't any other way I can explain how we survived the gale that wiped

out 35 of our fishing friends and relatives.

That afternoon, while we prepared for the night's fishing at the breakwater at Escuminac, everyone was talking about the 100-salmon haul that Ian Williston (no relation) had brought in that morning. It's worth about \$500 and it's real fishing. But then, with only a 62-day salmon run, a man has to work every day to bring in about \$5,000 in one year. And that's good going; in a bad year, a man will be lucky to take in \$1,500. Then he'll have to cke out a living the rest of the year with a little farming.

Our homes are mostly wooden two-storey affairs, strung along the seaside highway leading to the 7,000-soul town of Chatham, 20 miles away with the only movie house in the area. But we mostly make our own amusement, watching TV or organizing our own sports, dances and parties at our two Anglican and Roman Catholic churches.

This had been the best season in 40 years, and everyone was carrying quite a chunk of (Continued on page 36)



WAITING for gale survivors was trial for wives & children.



SEARCH PARTY faced grim tasks. Storm left 28 widows, 83 orphans, wiped out my brother, 40.



WRECKED with 21 others was this craft. My \$2,000 boat was unharmed. Storm struck during best fishing run in 40 years.

money. You see, during the season, we fish all week, get paid daily at the wharf, and get home only on the weekends. One of the bodies found later had more than \$800 buttoned in its shirt pocket.

I HADN'T that much, but I was hoping to get back a good piece of change on my boat. It's a \$2,000 open craft called the *Shaan*, named after a girl I once knew in Holland, when I was overseas with the fourth division. Aside from that time, I've been fishing all my 38 years off Miramichi Bay and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. To help me this summer, I'd hired young Garth, a strapping, 6-foot-2 student at the University of New Brunswick.

The weather was hazy and overcast and the 5 p.m. forecast said there'd be a light wind becoming north-east 20 miles an hour by morning. North-easters are what we dread, because they carry out boats toward the cliffs and reefs of the shore. But, it's only when a north-easter gets around 25 or 30 miles an hour, that you got to watch out.

I was one of the few with a radio on board; I would have caught the 8.30 forecast that warned of a north-east gale of 45 miles an hour, with gusts up to hurricane force. But about that time, a steamer ran across my bow and I ran up to see if she had done any damage. She hadn't, but I missed the weather report. We were out about 12 miles; and even then, if you try to run for it, in the dark, you can get caught up in other boats' nets or lobster spars. A few boats heard the broadcast and lit out.

We made sure our nets were set, our engine shut off, and that we were drifting with the current. Then we ate cheese and sardine sandwiches, and went to bed in the cuddy about 9.30. But, when you go to sleep on the Gulf of St. Lawrence, your ears stay awake.

I WOKE UP around 11, with waves pounding the sides of the cuddy. The sail was flapping hard, and that meant it was getting rough. I went back to tighten the sail, but I couldn't sleep again, though Garth kept sleeping.

I was getting nervous. I'd never been in blows like this one. I started to pray.

About 3.30, a big wave hit and my 40-pound anchor went over the side. It was held by the anchor fluke, and started to pound the side. I was afraid the boat would hold solid and be smashed to kindling; or worse, the anchor could stave a hole in her.

I'm 5-foot-9 and weigh only 135. And it took all my strength to wrestle that anchor aboard and tie it. At four o'clock, I woke Garth and we made tea, bread and butter and fried eggs.

"We've got a dirty morning ahead of us," I told him.

About five, I saw the light of the Escuminac Point lighthouse. When you can see that with the air filled with spray—you're too damned close.

A minute later Garth yelled: "Look.

Lobster gear." Lobster fishermen work close to shore, and their gear can really foul up your nets and rudder.

"We're getting out of here," I snapped. We pulled in three or four nets. But already, the lobster gear had roiled them tight like a big rope.

SOME SAY the waves were 70 feet high out there. I wouldn't guess how high the next one was—but it was one awful big slab of water. With a loud snap, the 20-foot mast and sail broke off and went over the side; we promptly swung tail-end to into our own nets. I slashed the guy ropes and Garth and I pulled the mast aboard and stowed it.

"We've got to let go the nets," I yelled to him. "Maybe somebody'll find them tomorrow."

I'd just started to set them adrift when another monster wave hit. It knocked me back into the boat, flat on my back.

I scrambled up and looked around for Garth. He was gone — and he couldn't swim.

He was thrashing in the water, rubber

Canadian housewives fight the yellow margarine war

by Frank Rasky
in next month's

LIBERTY

suit and all, a good 30 feet off the stern. And every wave was carrying him out farther.

Braced against the side, I lunged for the now-free nets.

"Grab the nets, Garth. Grab the nets," I was yelling.

Two fingers caught in the mesh, but the sea pulled them away. Then my hand caught behind a floater, but I could feel them slipping away again. I braced with my knees, and leaned far over with my left hand and teetered there — hoping these nets would come to me.

Little by little they came closer. I was still yelling for Garth to grab them, and he clutched them 30-40 feet out — all 200 plus pounds of him. I was nearly jerked overboard.

THEN, came the most sickening moment I've ever known. I realized I could never hold him. I remember thinking: "If I lose my cousin's only boy, I don't want to go back either."

Then — laugh if you like — I realized there was a Third Hand on the *Shaan*. I know Somebody was helping me hold those nets.

Hand over crawling hand, he came along the line. He was half strangling; his head went under every time he grabbed a handful, until he hauled himself above again. At last he caught the side. He was spent and I wasn't much better off.

Inch by inch, I worked him along the side by his leather belt, to the lower middle of the boat. If he let go, it was all over. Where the side was only three

feet high, I tried to pull him in but he was too far gone to help himself. We looked at each other, gasping, our eyes a few inches apart.

Then I croaked: "Here comes a big one down the side. It's now or never."

I used the last ounce I had. As the wave picked him up, he plunged in head foremost and lay there — vomiting salt water. I was exhausted. He'd been in the water three or four minutes — but it seemed like an hour.

The nets were fouling us now, and I slashed them until they floated free. They're worth \$1,300, but they're not worth much if you're not around to use them.

BY THIS time, it was six o'clock in the morning. We saw a boat behind and headed back to see if he needed help. It was Harry Williston (again no relation). He had two men with him and I muttered: "Hell, we're in worse trouble than he is." Later, we learned Harry went overboard but his men got him back on.

We headed into the gale to get sea-room, away from the reef-bound shore. Our oil was spilled and our matches wet. We were freezing cold as we started for the breakwater at Escuminac.

Suddenly Garth gasped: "What're those two white things?"

They were houses at Escuminac. I knew where we were at last. But a towering wave hit us broadside and we flopped over on our side. We lay there for 30 seconds, with me clinging to the steering-wheel and Garth dangling from the throft — the plank the mast sets in. Just a little push was all we needed to turn turtle. But our Third Hand was still there. Our engine didn't stop, and the wave that would have hurled us out like rocks out of a pail didn't come. Slowly, she righted herself.

WE GOT through the 50-foot gap at the breakwater, both suffering from exhaustion.

Every boat had a similar tale of terror. But the most terrible will never be told. They are the stories of the 22 boats that were found smashed along the coast.

The men who'd sailed them were found over 1,500 square miles of ocean. One was Ossie, my 40-year-old brother, who lived with me. I identified the body, though he had been six weeks in the water.

Luckily, I didn't have a wife and children waiting in agony for me then — though I've since married a widow with two children.

For that night of tragedy left 28 widows and 83 orphans. A relief fund was started, whose contributors included Prince Philip and Queen Elizabeth, then on the first leg of their Royal Tour of Canada; and boxing champion Archie Moore, who'd recently knocked out challenger Yvon Durelle, himself a Miramichi fisherman.

But, for those like the widow with eight children living in a two-room shack, or the widow left with 13 children (the youngest less than a year old), only time can heal the suffering such a disaster has brought them. ♦♦

N.B. Fishing Disaster Anniversary Marked

By JAMES D. MORRISON — Gleaner News Editor

ESCUMINAC — The breakwater here was deserted yesterday as I walked along its heavy wooden planking. Not a soul in sight. This was a tremendous change from the last time I visited this picturesque fishing village — just a year ago.

Then the breakwater was crowded with people: curious onlookers, wives and children of missing fishermen, relatives and friends.

Thirty - five men lost their lives in that tragic storm one year ago today. Five bodies are still missing.

Yesterday was similar in one

way to Sunday, June 21, 1959. The weather. A hot sun beat down on Northumberland Strait yesterday just as it had a year previously when Capt. Bernard Jenkins and his boat came into the breakwater here. His boat was the last to return safely.

CAPTAIN VISITED

I decided to pay a call on Capt. Jenkins, who received the British Empire Medal for his heroism a year ago. It was only a short distance from the breakwater to the neat Jenkins home. I asked what changes had

Contributions are still coming in for the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund. The Royal Bank of Canada, trustee for the fund, received a \$10 contribution over the weekend from Edward Craig, Oshawa, Ont.

been made in the small fishing villages of Escuminac, Bale Ste. Anne and Bay du Vin since the 1959 storm.

"There have been few changes," Capt. Jenkins reported.

"People have adapted themselves to the situation pretty well and the fishing fleet is continuing its work."

"That's right," Cyril G. Jenkins, nephew of the captain agreed.

Cyril, a member of Capt. Jenkins' crew on the night of the storm, also received the British Empire Medal for his heroism.

AMAZING RESCUE

The two men had been given the awards for their amazing rescue of John Doucet and his sons, Alphonse and Everett. Alphonse has received the Queen's Commendation for his role in the rescue. A second Queen's Commendation went to Fraser Cook, of Howard's Cove, P.E.I. Mr.

(Continued on Page 7 Col. 1)

(Editorial on Page 4)

Son of Victim Takes Part:

Memorial To Drowned Fishermen Unveiled

BAY DU VIN (Staff Special) — "We dedicate this stone, to the glory of Almighty God, and in loving memory of the members of the Bay du Vin fishing fleet who died at sea, June 20th, 1959."

With these words by Rev. C. M. Jones, rector of St. John the Evangelist Church at Bay Du Vin, yesterday afternoon a granite memorial was unveiled in front of the church, before a silent audience of about 400 people.

UNVEILING

The unveiling was carried out by Mr. Jones and Bliss Kingston, son of Windsor Kingston, one of the fishermen who perished in the Northumberland Strait storm one year ago today.

Names listed on the memorial are: John Chapman, Clifford Kingston, Windsor Kingston, Alfred McLenaghan, George McLeod, Allan Mills, Andrew Mills, Leo Roy, Harold Taylor, Cunard, Eric Haley, Haynes and Oswald Williston.

The memorial is the work of the people of the Anglican Parish of Hardwicke. It was they who contributed the money for its erection.

Two of the bodies, those of Clifford Kingston, and George McLeod, have never been recovered.

TEARS SHED

The memorial service was short and solemn. Tears ran down the cheeks of widows of the lost fishermen. But the tears were not confined to those courageous women. There was hardly a dry eye among the audience, seated and standing under a

(Continued on Page 2 Col. 3)

Memorial

(Continued from Page 1)

bright sun in front of the small church.

Eight fishing boats, the Bay Du Vin fleet, bobbed in the water only a short distance away, waiting for the fishermen of the village to take them out again today.

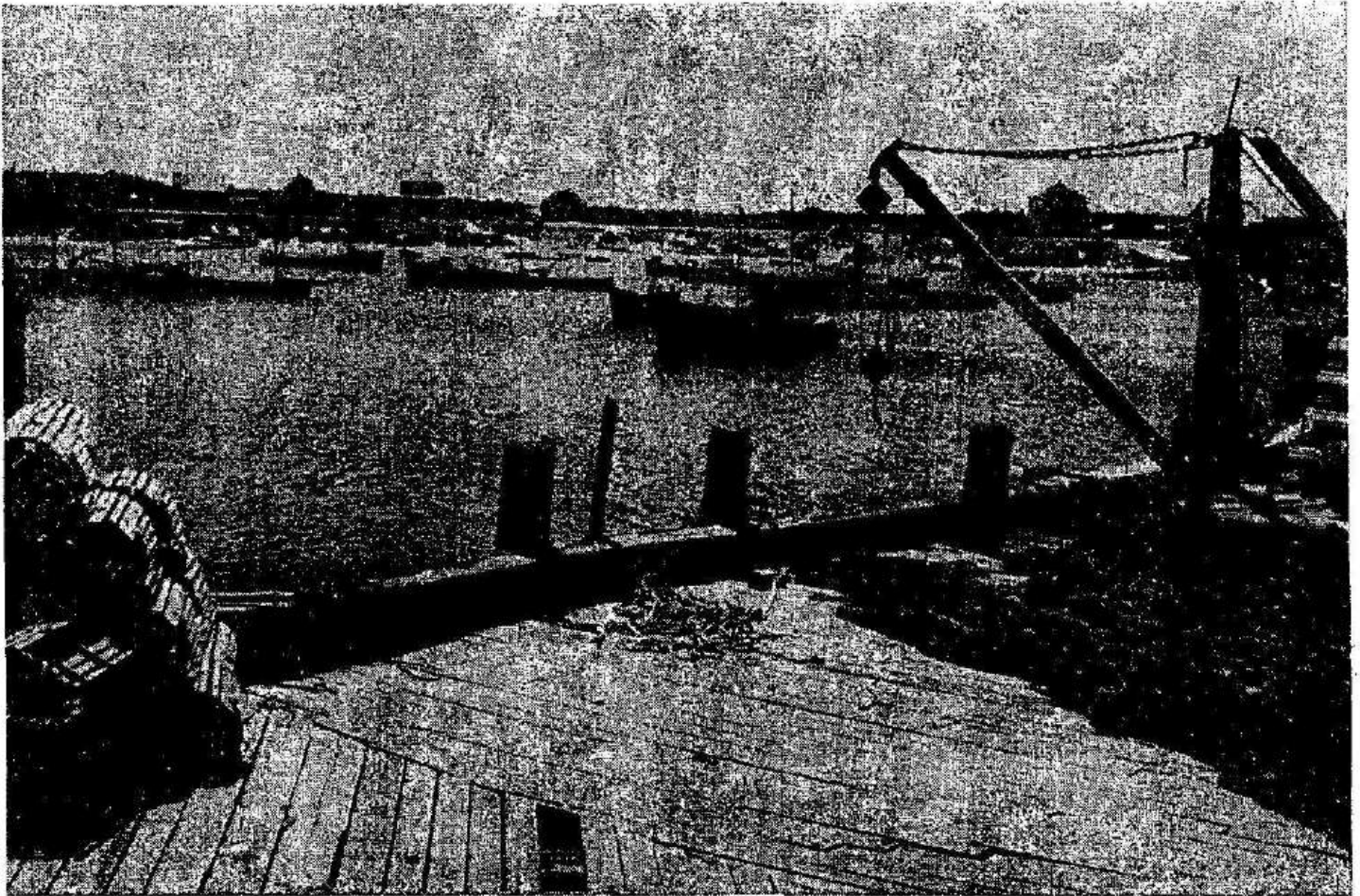
Tribute to the fishermen and their families was paid by Senator G. Percy Burchill, speaker at the memorial ceremony.

"We do not need this memorial to remind us of the tragic disaster," Senator Burchill said, "nor of the fortitude and dauntless courage of the men who perished on June 20th last year, nor to recall the vacant places in the homes of those who did not return."



UNVEILS MEMORIAL: Bliss Kingston, son of Mrs. Windsor Kingston and the late Mr. Kingston of Bay du Vin, stands to the side after unveiling a memorial Sunday in memory of 14 Bay du Vin fishermen who lost their lives in the Northumberland Strait fishing disaster one year ago today. His father was one of the storm's victims. Bliss is well known to TV audiences, having gone to Toronto and Barrie, Ont., with his mother for TV appearances. His photo has been in many newspapers. Yesterday's ceremony took place in front of the St. John the Evangelist church.
(Gleaner Staff Photo)

June 20, 1960



THE FISHING FLEET: One year ago today the Escuminac fishing fleet was caught in a Northumberland Strait storm that claimed 35 lives and wrecked many boats. This year the fleet is even larger than that of last year. Part of the fleet of boats is shown inside the breakwater at Escuminac in this photo taken yesterday. The homes of Escuminac fishermen can be seen in the background. (See Also Page 1)

(Gleaner Staff Photo)

The Storm's Anniversary

A year ago today a howling storm swept thirty-five Northumberland Strait fishermen to their deaths. It left twenty-four widows and eighty-two dependent children destitute.

Today New Brunswick remembers. And although its people could do nothing to bring back husbands, fathers and sons, the record of New Brunswickers as generous contributors to the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund is one of which to be proud. They opened their hearts and their purses, pushing the Fund over its \$440,000 goal. The people of the Northumberland Strait area will never forget their humanity.

Thus it is shocking to read the account of the disaster's anniversary in today's *Telegraph-Journal*. That newspaper, it will be recalled, after the tragedy occurred last year, stood back and attempted to embarrass the inauguration of the Fund. Now it is making the anniversary of the storm the occasion of a public display of criticism of the Fund's administration. A story today was mainly concerned with stressing the complaints of some people of the Escuminac area, overlooking the many dependents of the fishermen who are deeply grateful for what has been done for them. It says \$144,000 was subscribed. It is short of the mark by \$300,000. The *Telegraph-Journal's* contribution to the Fund and all it stands for can be measured by the quality of its reporting on this the anniversary.

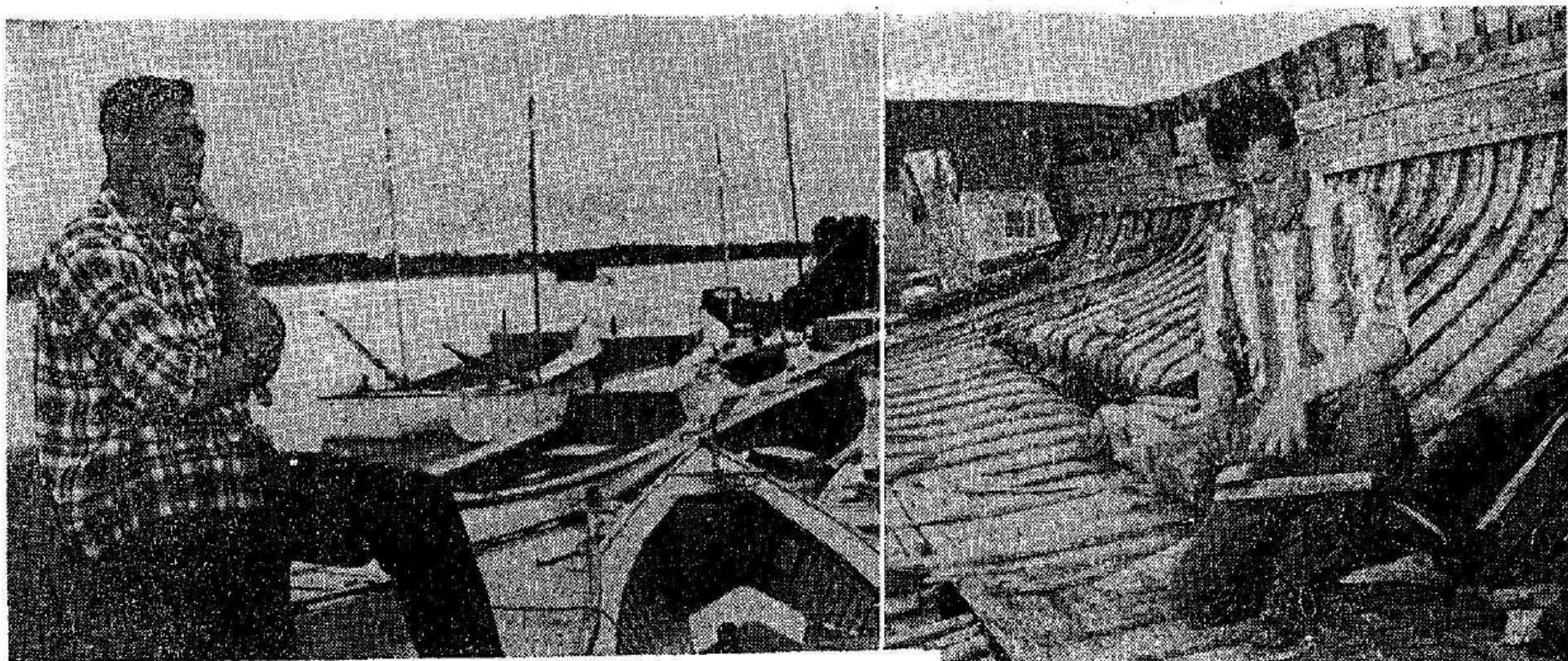
June 20, 1960



A mon mari et mes enfants

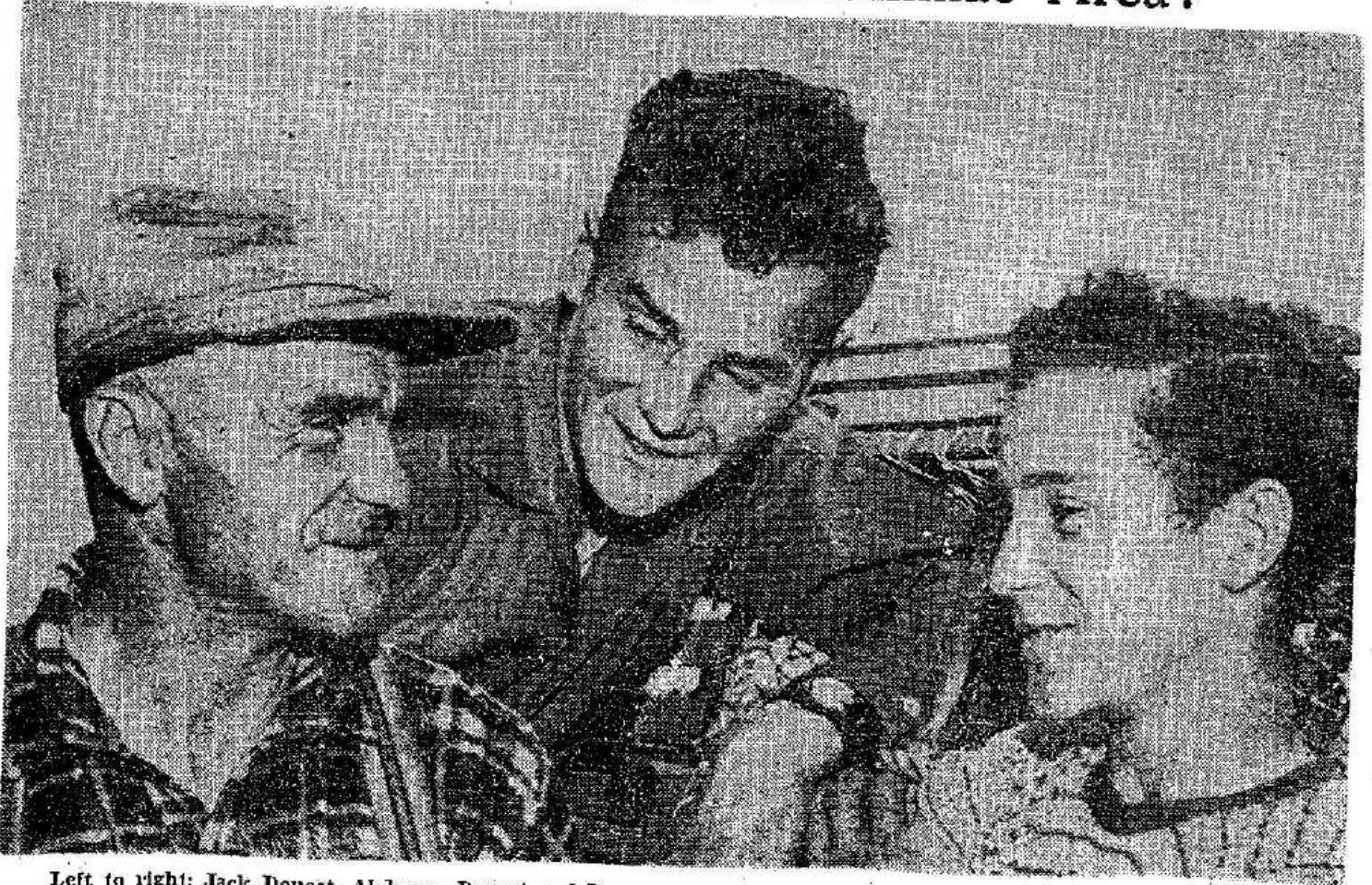
Sur cette photo, prise hier lors du dévoilement du monument aux pêcheurs d'Escuminac, nous apercevons Mme William Chiasson qui va déposer une gerbe de fleurs au pied de la sculpture. Mme Chiasson a perdu son mari et deux fils, Adrien, âgé de 20 et Robert, âgé de 16 ans, lors de la tragédie du 19 juin 1959. (Photo Dewar)

The Boats Are Back Where Disaster Struck



Yvon Durelle (left), former Canadian and British Empire light-heavy-weight boxing king, gazes toward the waters of Miramichi Bay and Northumberland Strait beyond, nearly empty of salmon this year. The Baie Ste. Anne fisherman is looking out from the end of the Escuminac breakwater. On the right, Roger Martin, who also drifts for salmon, stands in the rotting hulk of one of the boats which capsized last June 20 when 35 fishermen lost their lives. Several wrecks litter the beach within the breakwater, a stark contrast with the 100-odd boats which seek shelter behind the breakwater's high wharves.

What's Ahead For Escuminac Area?



Left to right: Jack Doucet, Alphonse Doucet and Everett Doucet.

Sitting on the deserted Escuminac breakwater, Jack Doucet and his two sons talk over the poor salmon season this year for fishermen in the surrounding villages. The Doucets were almost drowned when an Atlantic gale swept Northumberland Strait June 20, 1959.

Alphonse, 17, received a Queen's Commendation for his part in the rescue of his father and brother. The second of a series of articles on the disaster area one year later appears on Page 3.



TO RECEIVE MEDALS: Two heroic survivors of the Northumberland Strait fishing disaster of June 20, 1959, who have been awarded the British Empire Medal for gallantry, will receive their medals from Governor-General Vanier during his visit to Fredericton. The presentation to Cyril G. Jenkins, left, and Capt. Bernard L. Jenkins, right, will be made Monday, July 4, in the Legislative Chamber. Capt. Jenkins was the skipper of a fishing vessel which saved the lives of Jack Doucet and his sons, Alphonse and Everett. The Doucet boat was lost in the storm. The Jenkins boat was the last to return to Escuminac following the tragedy.

(Gleaner Staff Photo)

Merited Awards

Captain Bernard L. Jenkins and his nephew, Mr. Cyril G. Jenkins of Escuminac will receive British Empire Medals for gallantry from Governor-General Vanier at Fredericton on July 4.

The medals were awarded for feats of heroism performed in rescuing fellow fishermen during the disastrous storm in Northumberland Strait on June 20, 1959.

That storm took 35 lives and caused irreparable damage to boats and gear.

As is so often the case in human affairs, tragedy begot heroism. Feats of rescue in the great tradition of the sea and the gallant comradeship of those who sail it were performed on that fateful night.

Awards to these two men and to others of the Escuminac fishing fleet are fitting expressions of respect and admiration, presented from the highest sources.

Equally fitting as a recognition of all that was involved in the disaster of June 20, 1959 was the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund of more than \$440,000, raised by fellow Canadians for the relief of the widows and orphans of the storm.

But that cannot be the end. As a final memorial to those who died and as a merited tribute to those who survive, new measures must be devised and enacted to assure the fishermen of the Atlantic Province a decent and adequate living wage and to safeguard them from disasters such as the Northumberland Strait storm.

2 Escuminac Fishermen Given Empire Medals For Gallantry

OTTAWA (CP) — Two Escuminac, N. B., fishermen have been awarded the British Empire Medal for gallantry for their grave rescue efforts at the height of a sudden storm last summer that claimed 35 lives in Northumberland Strait, it was announced Friday.

The awards were made to Bernard Lawson Jenkins and Cyril Galvin Jenkins of Escuminac for rescuing John Doucet of Baie Ste. Anne, N. B., and his two sons.

One of the sons, Alphonse Doucet, who helped rescue his brother and another shipmate in the same storm, was awarded the Queen's Commendation for brave conduct.

A similar award went to Fraser Cook of Howard's Cove, P.E.I., for attempting to rescue a fisherman and thereby losing his life.

The story of the rescue June 20 was told in the official Canada Gazette.

John Doucet, his sons and another crew member were caught about 25 miles off Escuminac by a violent storm and heavy seas. They headed their fishing vessel for shore and, meeting the Jenkins' boat on the way, agreed to try to reach shore with them.

A wave capsized the Doucet boat, throwing John Doucet into the seas and pinning his sons and the third crew member underneath the cabin. A second wave righted the boat but washed one of the Doucet sons overboard. The citation does not identify him by name.

The other son, Alphonse, shoved a lobster crate to his brother and hauled him aboard while his father was climbing back into the

boat.

The third crew member who was not identified had died, meanwhile, of a head injury.

The Jenkins' boat turned back to help and "despite heavy seas and a high wind, Bernard Jenkins was able to get close enough on three occasions for Cyril Jenkins to throw a life line each time to the Doucets and pull them one by one to safety."

The Jenkins' boat then was swamped but didn't sink. The engine broke down and the cabin was washed away. With the aid of a sail and using their nets as a sea anchor they prepared to ride out the storm.

After bailing the boat for three hours, they were able to repair the engine, head out to sea and using their remaining nets as an anchor rode out the storm until the following morning when they returned to Escuminac.

"Bernard and Cyril Jenkins dis-

played courage and good seamanship in effecting the rescue of John Doucet and his two sons during the height of the storm," the citation says.

Details of the rescue in which Mr. Cook lost his life were not given, nor did the citation indicate whether he was the unidentified crew member aboard the Doucet boat.



PRINCE CHATS WITH SURVIVOR — Capt. Bernard Jenkins of Escuminac, a survivor of the June 20 storm in Northumberland Strait, chats with Prince Philip during a visit the latter and Her Majesty made with survivors and widows of fishermen on the Point du Chene wharf. Her Majesty and Prince Philip spent some time with the survivors of New Brunswick's worst fishing disaster during their visit to Point du Chene Wednesday. — (Staff Photo by Bourgeois).



1961

'Oversight On Someone's Part':

The Jan. 23 issue of The Canadian Gazette announced that Bernard Jenkins and Cyril Jenkins, both of Escuminac, had been awarded the British Empire Medal for gallantry in their rescue efforts during the storm. The Queen's Commendation went to Alphonse Doucet of Bate Ste. Anne, one of the men rescued by the Jenkins', and to Fraser Cook of Howard's Cove, P.E.I., who lost his life in the storm.

ALL DESERVED

There can be no quarrel with these awards. All were deserved. It is probable there were many other heroic feats worthy of awards, but these stories must remain untold for the men who participated perished in the turbulent Northumberland Strait during that tragic night.

There has been, in my opinion, an oversight on someone's part in the case of the 48-year-old Captain Lloyd. His feat of heroism has been chronicled and is known fact. In fact, Captain Lloyd and his crew — including his son 13-year-old Brian, Chlorin Jimmo and Les Lewis — saved Fraser Cook's son Edward, who had lashed himself to the mast of his father's boat.

YOUNG SAILOR

The 13-year-old sailor told me of that tragic storm and of his experiences during the fight for survival on the small fishing boat.

Brian told me how he and other members of the crew had huddled, cold and wet in the cuddy of their small vessel as they rode out the storm. They pulled in their nets about 10.15 a.m. June 20 and headed back to Escuminac. They were approaching the Escuminac breakwater about 3.15 p.m. when they saw a boat near the wharf. There was a man lashed to the mast.

FULL OF WATER

"We went up to the boat, but had a hard time to get him to untie himself," Brian said. "It was Mr. Cook (Edward Cook). We finally got him into our boat. His was full of water. Then we got to the breakwater and took Mr. Cook to our home. They took him to hospital a little later."

Brian didn't tell me in full the desperate struggle his father had in making the Cook rescue. Captain Lloyd had to climb aboard the sodden vessel on which Cook was lashed to the mast. The fisherman was delirious from exposure and the shock of seeing his father washed overboard. Captain Lloyd finally had to push him overboard and then struggle to get him aboard the Lloyd craft. This was finally accomplished, but not before Captain Lloyd had gone to considerable risk of his own life.

IN HOSPITAL

Mr. Cook told me his story of the rescue from a hospital bed in Chatham. He told of the intensity of the storm, with waves as high as 40 and 50 feet.

"There was just Dad (Fraser) and I aboard," Mr. Cook told me.

"The boat turned right over once but we were able to get back in. I lashed myself to the mast and hollered at Dad to do the same. He was clinging to the cuddy (small forward cabin). Just as I hollered a huge wave came over the boat, sweeping the cuddy and Dad upside down."

FEW MEMORIES

Mr. Cook had few memories of his rescue. He recalled seeing the Lloyd boat come alongside and that Roy Lloyd had to help free him from the mast.

W. J. Gallant, MLA for Northumberland, took an active interest in the Escuminac Disaster, and made it a point to talk with the survivors and their families. His investigation confirmed the story of Lloyd's rescue of Cook.

Mr. Gallant, in recommending that Captain Roy Lloyd be given the highest possible award, also noted that Captain Lloyd had rescued Les Lewis and Ovil Robichaud in a sea disaster four years previously. Mr. Lewis was a member of Lloyd's crew during the June 19 disaster.

It would also seem to me that it should have been Everett Doucet, 19, rather than his younger brother Alphonse, 14, who received the Queen's Commendation.

GRIPPING STORY

In the gripping story of the rescue by Bernard and Cyril Jenkins of the Doucets, Captain Jenkins went to great pains to emphasize the heroic action of Everett Doucet. This was in an interview with Mr. Gallant shortly after the storm.

Here is how Jenkins told his story to Mr. Gallant:

"My nephew (Cyril) called 'There's a boat upset behind us'. . . I . . . turned and went back . . . three men were clinging to the boat. The two boys were on the wheelhouse, and the father, Jack Doucet, on the bow . . . The first casting . . . we missed. . . I turned . . . and on second casting, the oldest boy, Everett . . . caught the rope and passed it along to his kid brother, who was fourteen . . . my nephew pulled him through the water with the rope, and I . . . helped . . . haul him aboard . . . (On) the second attempt . . . the same young guy passed the rope along to his father and we brought him aboard. He was in pretty bad condition . . . we then had . . . large seas and I was unable to turn, so we left him behind several hundred yards and he was afraid . . . that we had abandoned him altogether, that we weren't going to save him . . . I turned again and with the third casting we hauled him aboard . . . I asked him why he didn't come first; he

had the first opportunity. He said: 'I didn't want to go and leave my brother behind. I wanted to make sure that he was saved before I was, and also my Dad.'"

RECOMMENDATION

Mr. Gallant also recommended Everett Doucet for the highest possible award and recognition for his heroic action during the rescue. But it was the younger brother Alphonse who received the award.

These brave New Brunswick fishermen certainly earned the awards, though they probably would say it is all part of their job. Both Lloyd and Jenkins were out fishing again the day after Jenkins had returned to port.

Too Few Bravery Awards

Sir: Your article by Jim Morrison on fishermen's bravery awards which appeared in *The Daily Gleaner* on Jan. 26, I am sure is much appreciated—not only by those directly concerned, but by all persons who are still believers in "giving credit when credit is due" and "to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's".

Having played a minor role in getting the machinery going where by awards would be made for gallantry and courage displayed by these brave, honest fishermen, I was certainly alarmed and disappointed when the announcement from Ottawa was made public, through the newspapers, radio and television.

These men forgot all about their own safety to rescue other fishermen caught in that terrible storm of June 19-20, 1959.

The list of names recommended and known to have actually played paramount rescue roles follows:

Bernard Jenkins and Cyril Jenkins of Escuminac: rescued Jack Doucet and his two sons, Everett and Alphonse. All but Everett received awards. Everett, who was 17 years old, certainly displayed the highest of courage and admirable principle, by passing the rescue line to his younger brother and father to be safely taken aboard the Jenkins' boat (the award was given to Alphonse).

Roy Lloyd of Escuminac: rescued Edward Cook with a daring display of seamanship and courage.

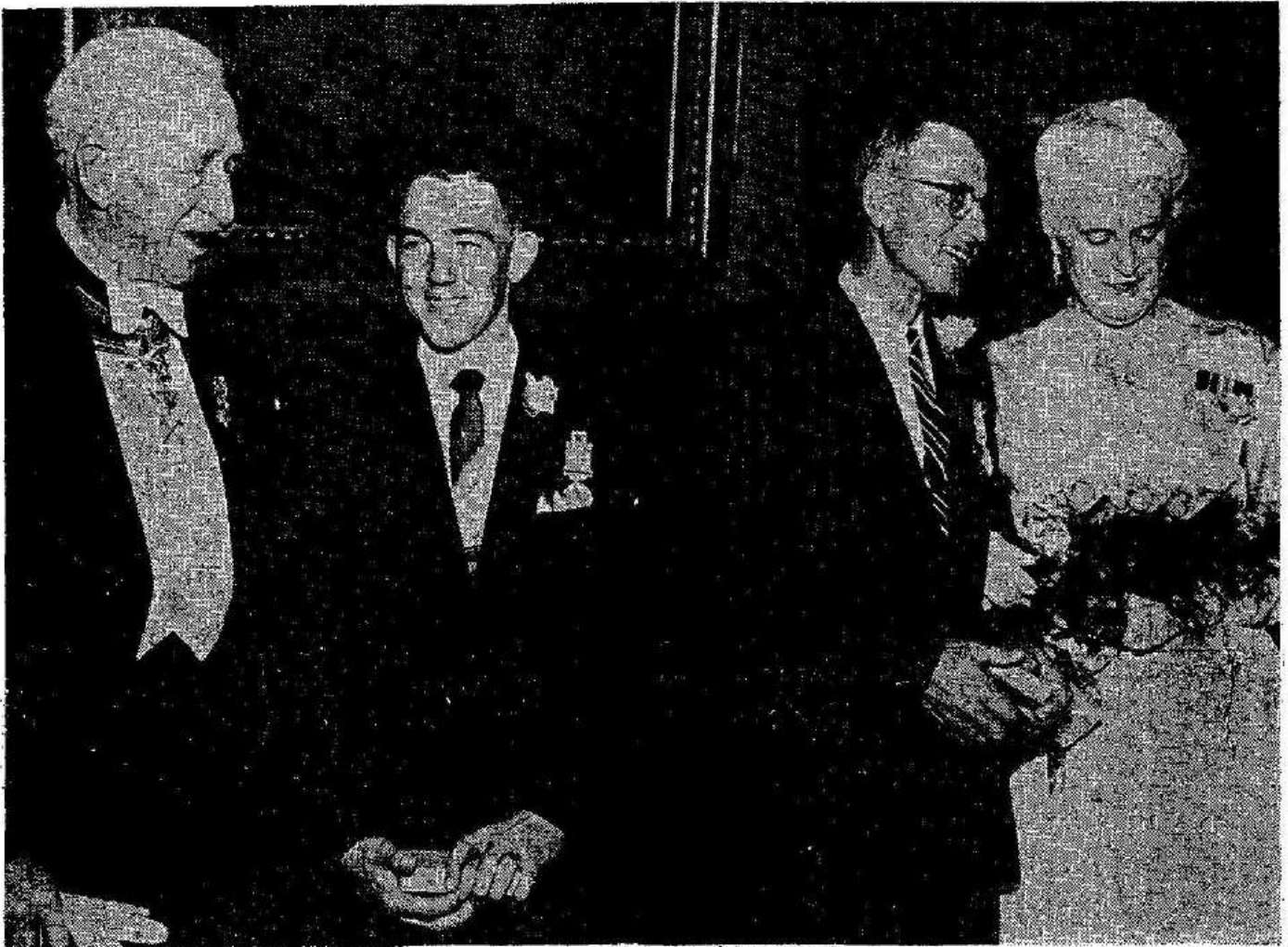
(did not receive award and was not mentioned).

Theodore Williston of Bay du Vin: a young fisherman, under 30, who rescued Walter Williston and brought ashore the body of Harold Taylor. Walter Williston refused to be rescued until the body of Mr. Taylor—killed when smashed against the side of their boat by a huge wave—was first taken aboard by Theodore Williston. This act of loyalty and humanity certainly cannot be ignored (neither Theodore nor Walter received awards or mention).

Thomas Lewis of Bay du Vin: after safely making the Escuminac Wharf, went out again in dangerous breakers and took in tow and rescued Gerald Goodchild (Bonnenfant) who earlier was reported lost. Mr. Goodchild, all alone and in a small boat considered unseaworthy, managed to ride out the storm but was in grave difficulty when Mr. Lewis left the wharf to go out and bring him to shore safe and sound (no award given and received no mention).

Alvin Durelle, formerly of Pointe Sapin but now of Escuminac; displayed exceptional courage, seamanship and fearlessness in the face of danger as he rescued Norman Williston, Bay du Vin, and his crew from certain death as the Williston boat was out of commission and taking water fast (no award, no mention).

W. J. Gallant, MLA
Rogersville, N.B.



MEDALS FOR HEROES

Bernard and Cyril Jenkins pose proudly with Governor General Georges Vanier and the British Empire Medals presented to them by the governor-general. The Jenkins, both of Escuminac, received the medals for saving several victims of the June, 1959 Escuminac fishing disaster al-

though their boat was damaged. The presentations were made in Fredericton during the governor-general's visit to the capital. Left to right are: General Vanier, Bernard Jenkins, Cyril Jenkins and Mrs. Vanier.



May 1, 1961

Governor-General Vanier invested two Escuminac fishermen with the British Empire Medal for gallantry during 1961 visit, Bernard, left, and Cyril Jenkins.



1965

Six Years Ago Today; The Escuminac Disaster

By DICK MacDONALD
Provincial Editor

For the night of Friday, June 19, the weather office at Halifax predicted light winds, shifting to northeast 25, for the Maritime Provinces for the coming weekend. Six hours later the forecast was changed to northeast gales, 35, shifting at dawn to northwest 35 and diminishing in the afternoon to southeast 25. Heavy rain was to change to showers and the sun was expected to break through the clouds.

All week, the weather had been poor, and fishermen along the coast knew another storm was on the way. But they didn't think it would be too severe.

As it turned out, the winds gusted to 75 miles an hour and whipped the waters of Northumberland Strait into waves 50 and 60 feet high. An inch and one-half of rain fell in a 24-hour period.

Monday morning, June 22, the Moncton Daily Times' front-page eight-column, two-line black banner headline read:

12 KNOWN DEAD — 22 MISSING IN WAKE OF HOWLING NORTHEASTER

That was the Escuminac fishing disaster of 1959, a tragedy unparalleled in the annals of the province's fishery.

By the next day, June 23, The Times reported that the

death toll had officially climbed to 35 and could go higher.

The same day, the newspaper announced that readers who wished to make an immediate donation to assist the tragedy's victims could do so by contacting the paper.

And that same day, the province established a disaster relief fund, headed by Premier Hugh John Flemming.

The devastating storm wiped out about a third of the Miramichi area's salmon fleet, a heavy blow to the district's economy. Most of the 66 licenced boats in the Escuminac area were at sea when the storm struck, taking advantage of a heavy salmon run. Twenty-two of them disappeared.

Four limped back to port, badly battered; the others were derelicts.

Boats and equipment lost in the storm were valued at approximately \$750,000.

Help For Stricken

Financial assistance poured into the province from all corners of the continent.

Condolences came from as many places, including word from Queen Elizabeth who was touring Canada at the time.

Families lost husbands or sons; often both.

Some of the families had as many as 14 children, left suddenly without their fathers.

And some of the women left to mourn were young, expectant mothers.

Fellow New Brunswickers

opened their hearts, larders and pocketbooks to help the stricken area 90 miles north of Moncton, where a drive resulted in the collection of more than \$2,000 worth of foodstuffs.

Not only those who suffered loss of life were helped; those who lost equipment and wages because of the storm received assistance, too.

In the days following the storm, tales of valor and heroism trickled from the communities of Escuminac, Bay du Vin and Baie Ste. Anne, which were hardest hit.

Stories telling about Bernard and Cyril Jenkins, who pulled John Doucet and his two sons from the scowling sea after their boat capsized at

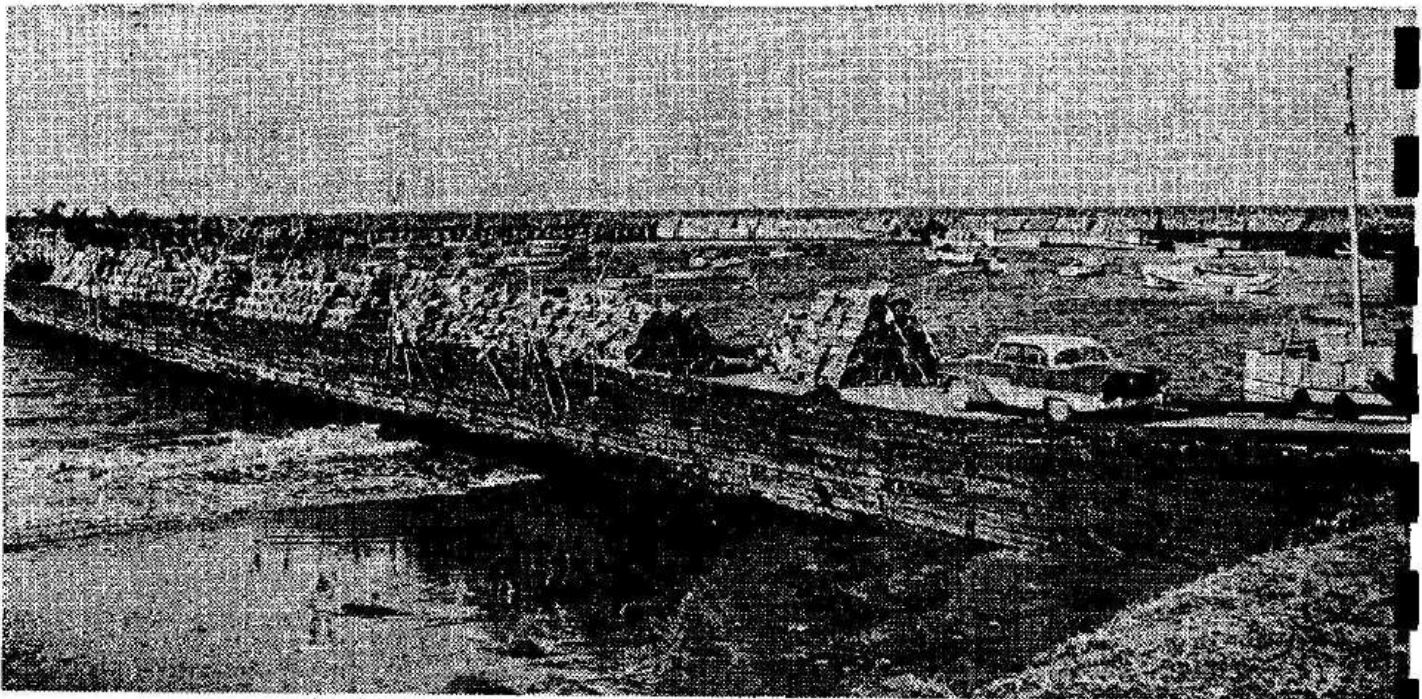
the height of the gale; or about Edward Cook, who lashed himself to a mast after his vessel overturned. There were many.

Many of the fishermen blamed the forecasts of Friday, saying they were too vague and didn't predict anything like that which developed.

But, even as bodies were being pulled from entangled nets and picked up from lonely beaches, the men who survived were making plans to return to their work.

"Men who go down to the sea are a hardy race", were the words New Brunswick Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien, a Miramichi resident himself, used to describe the men who died in the disaster, and the men who lived.

June 19, 1965



ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH SHORE TRAGEDY — Today, June 19, is the sixth anniversary of the Escuminac fishing fleet disaster. Some 35 men perished in the storm that lashed the waters of Northumberland Strait into waves 50 and 60 feet high. Gales of up to 75 miles per hour in

gusts ripped over the small boats and, when the grim totals were added up, it was the worst tragedy in the history of New Brunswick fishing. Above is the wharf today. (Photo by Dupuis).

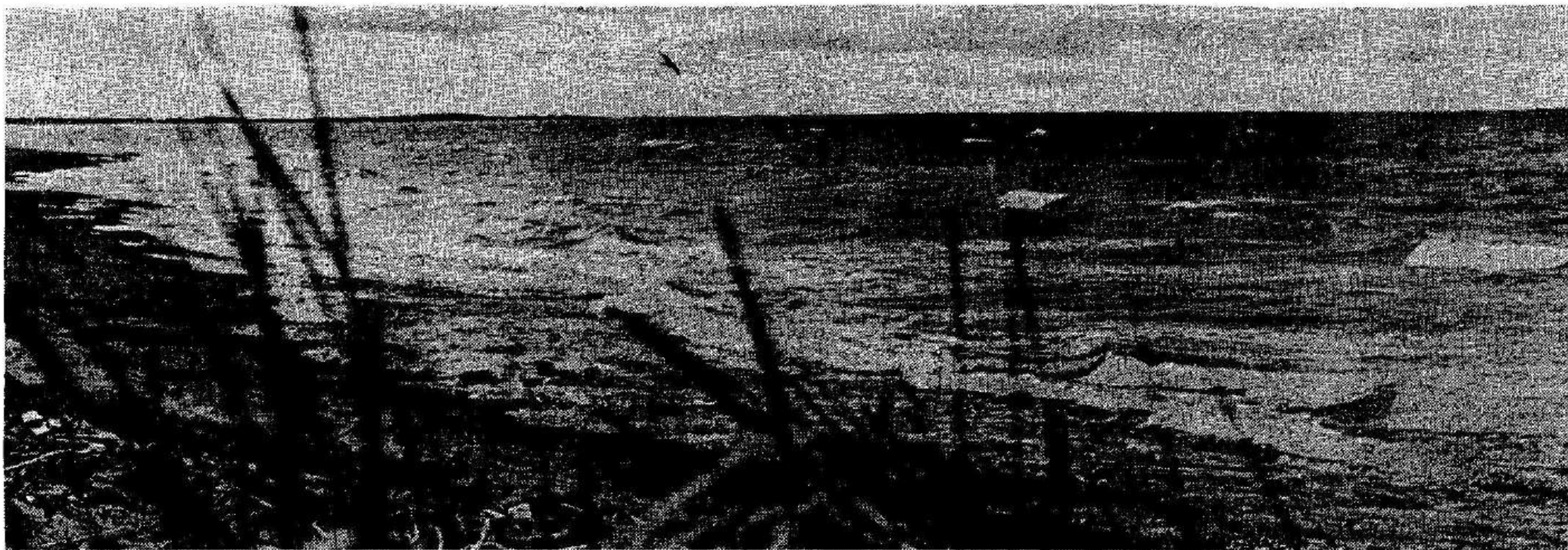


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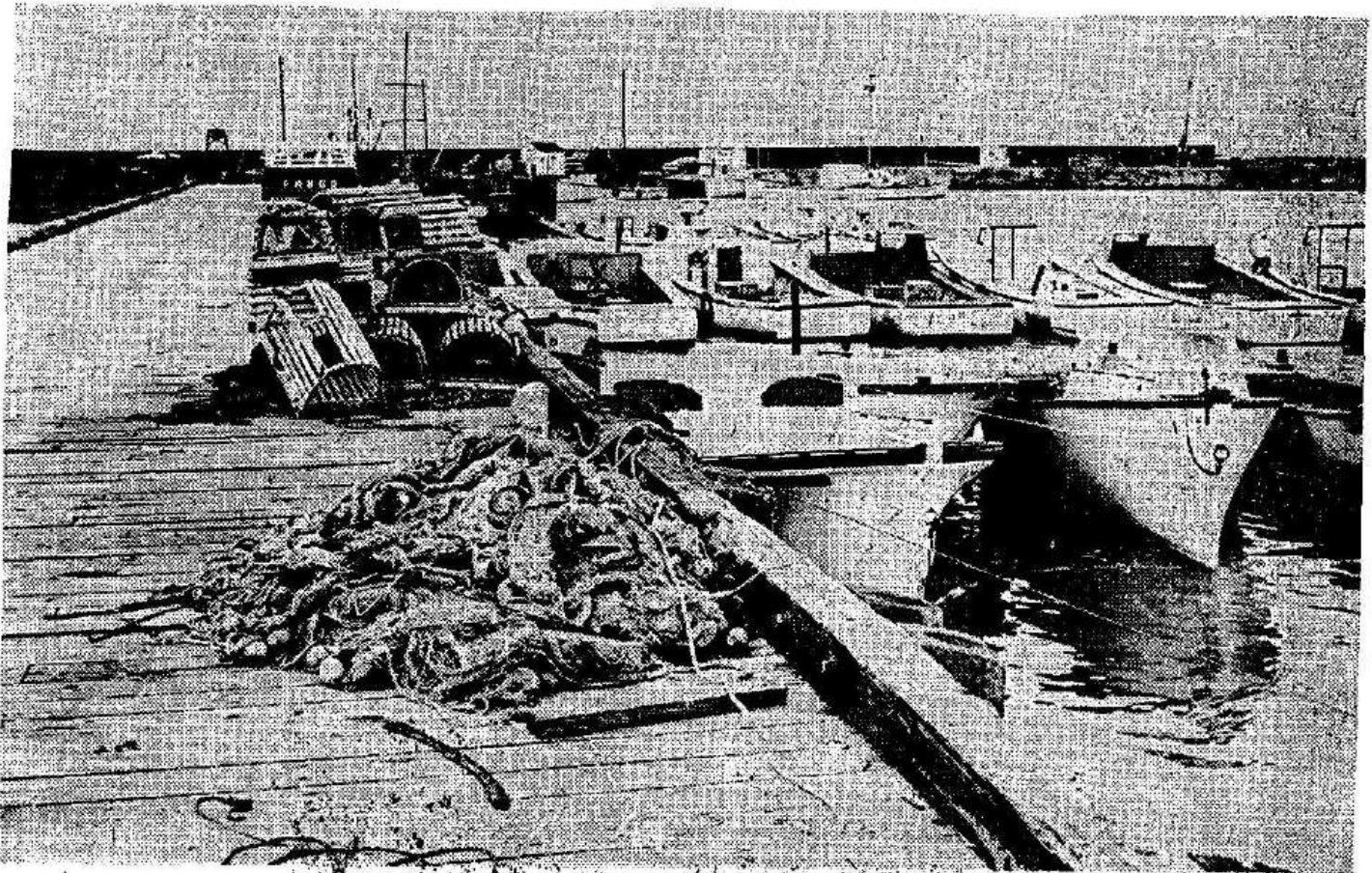
Escuminac Remembers And Lives With The Peril Of The Sea

In memory of the fishermen who lost their lives
in the Escuminac Disaster of June 19 and 20, 1959,
there will be unveiled by
The Honorable Wallace S. Bird,
Lieutenant - Governor of New Brunswick,
a memorial.
It will be dedicated by
The Most Reverend A. H. O'Neil,
Archbishop of Fredericton,
and blessed by His Excellency
The Most Reverend N. Robichaud
Archbishop of Moncton.

Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm doth bind the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea!

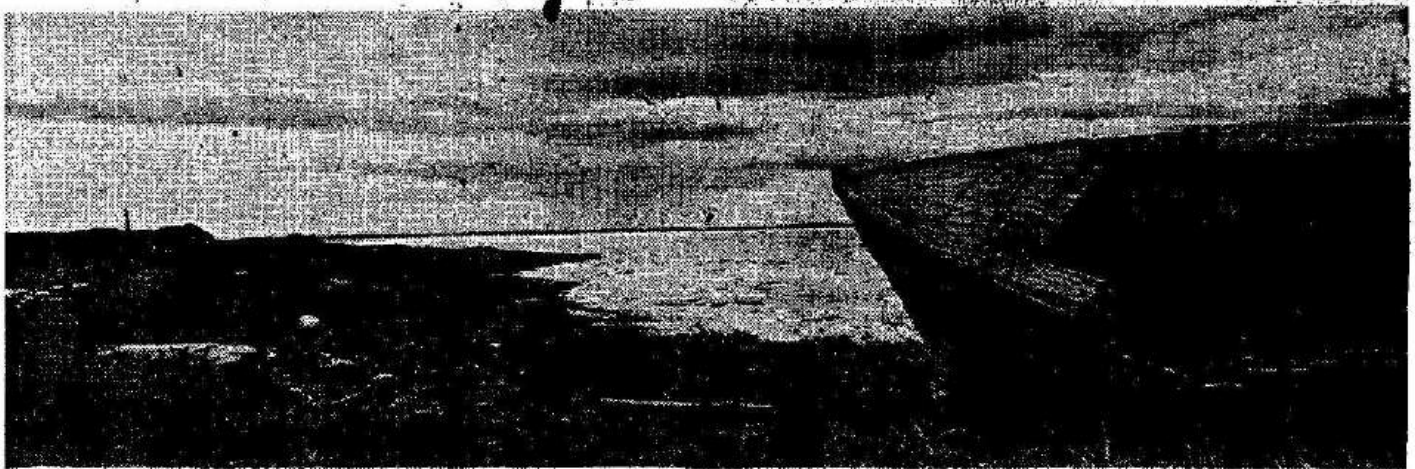


THE RESTLESS SEA, ever moving, sometimes calm, sometimes wild and brutal. A source of livelihood and a place of death. This view is from the beach at Escuminac.



LOBSTER POTS AND A SALMON NET are instruments the Escuminac fishermen use, calling in the boats shown

here at the wharf, when out at sea they strive to wrest from the waves a living for themselves and their families.



EVER PRESENT, the sea is always in the minds and the hearts of the fishermen who seek its riches, and the women

and children who wait at home knowing that at any time the waves could claim their loved ones.

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special) — It is a village of simplicity, catching up with the times, yet standing still.

There are horse-drawn carts and shiny new cars, outdoor toilets and television sets, flypaper and potbelly stoves.

There is poverty and there is wealth.

It is all here, 125 miles

north of Moncton at Escuminac, centre of New Brunswick's largest fishing fleet. . . site of New Brunswick's worst recorded fishing disaster of this century.

It is Wednesday, June 17, 1959, and Yvon Durelle, a fisherman from Baie St. Anne is saying: "I'm confident I'll be the new light heavyweight boxing king of the world on the night of July 15 in Montreal."

Durelle is to fight world champion Archie Moore of the United States that night in a rematch. The New Brunswicker lost his first bid the previous year, after pressing for most of the contest.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth arrived in St. John's, Nfld., Thursday night, June 18. The Queen is worried about the weather in the Maritimes, especially the fog.

She is saying, "I got a good view of it along the coastline and I can appreciate the worry and problem it has been, but I'm so happy that when we reached here the sun had broken through."

The papers talk about miner Joe MacDonald of Springhill, N.S., taking his first steps. MacDonald was trapped in an October mine cave-in which claimed 75 lives.

More than 50 boats will go out into Northumberland Strait Friday, fishing for salmon.

There was a storm earlier in the week, but the marine weather forecast calls for clearing conditions.

The weather does not clear up. It grows worse, with winds of up to 70 miles an hour and 50-foot waves Friday night.

Saturday morning there is horrible truth.

Out there in those gray, cold storm-churned waters are the men of Escuminac. . . dying. Sunday there is nothing left but hope.

Twelve bodies are recovered; several make it to shore alive, but 23 men remain missing out there.

Bodies are found strapped to masts and boat rings; some float in with the driftwood.

The count is growing, until the final score reads 35 dead.

Four bodies will never be found.

By Monday it is over.

Durelle is saying he almost went out to fish, but "I could read the signs and I knew she was going to be bad." He is saying the fog was very bad.

Her Majesty is in Chicoutimi, Que., Tuesday, asking to be notified of the severity of the disaster. She is saying

she will try to help.

Yvon Durelle is saying if the government would take the millions of dollars it was spending on the Queen's visit, Escuminac might be able to survive the disaster. He is saying it will take five years to recoup financial losses.

He is talking about the fishermen. He is saying, "I feel very, very bad. . . They were all my friends and some of the men were my neighbors."

But talk does not help.

Fishermen say it is the \$440,000 disaster fund which kept Escuminac alive.

The \$440,000 came from people of many lands and many walks of life from laborers to multi-millionaires.

From the late Lord Beaverbrook, a native of the Miramichi came \$10,000.

It is cold and windy this Saturday afternoon in Escuminac 10 years later. The sky is black, and rain is falling, cutting the white caps in the water of Escuminac Point.

Along the beach, only 50 feet from the main village, are neat piles of driftwood, standing apart from empty

containers strewn on the sand.

About 1,000 yards away, at Escuminac Harbor, only a few men are working. The weather has been bad and most will stay home today.

Anthime Manuel of Baie St. Anne is one of the few working.

The 46-year-old fisherman and his son Francis, 11, are aboard their drifter, the Giselle M. 2. They are "getting her secure for the weekend," Anthime says.

He says, "yes, I remember the disaster. It could happen again too. It could happen again."

Anthime talks about the weather forecast that year,

and about the light winds called for. He is here today, "because it took me a long time to get my nets ready, and it was late when I went out."

"I was getting set to drift, when the weather got bad, so I came back in." He says everyone "was terrified" they would all be killed.

He says it could happen again. It could happen again because "the weather reports get here too late, and because of those."

"Those" are the only two aids, besides ships' compasses, with which to find the breakwater during a storm.

They are an old rusted bell and clapper, and a small revolving light. "They are good when the weather is fine, but they are no good in a storm."

"It is not too hard to find the shore in a storm, but it is hard to find the breakwater." Anthime says, "there is a reef along there", pointing off in the distance, "and many were killed there."

"If we had a siren or whistle, maybe more would have been rescued. We have asked for something else, but they don't listen," Anthime says. He pleads, "if you are

Harry Grant's column appears on Page 11

talking to someone tell them we need a horn or whistle."

Now he is asked by a man on the wharf, "How was it this week?"

He says it was not good, but better than last week. Lobster is settling for "60, 65 cents a pound," Anthime tells him. "Maybe the salmon will be good," he hopes.

On June 7, the government let the men of Escuminac fish for salmon in Northumberland Strait. The government will let them fish until fall.

They go out in their boats about two hours into the strait, and cut their engines. They drift all day and overnight with their nets, just as the victims of the Escuminac disaster did.

They will go out like their fathers' fathers and their sons' sons. They will fish and drift, fish and drift.

"If we did not fish, we would starve," Anthime says. "I have thought of doing something else, but I do not have the education."

Now Francis is speaking. He is in grade five and doing well. He wants to finish school, but doesn't know what he will do.

His father hopes "he will not fish." He says, "I have four sons, and as soon as they finish school I send them to Moncton or Saint John to take a course."

Anthime Manuel does not want his sons to die in a fishing disaster. He wants them to finish school and leave the

sea.

"When they are all out of school I might try to do something else." But "there isn't any industry here," he says.

The only two industries in Escuminac — Lloyd's Construction Co. Ltd., and Melanson's Fish Packing Ltd. — are both small. He says there is nothing for "an old man like me" to do but fish, if he has no education.

Anthime chuckles that one of his sons will never fish. He is taking a course in Saint John, and "the last time he came home he got seasick."

But now he talking about

Photos by Rice

the disaster again. He talks about "Father Arsenault" serving mass at St. Mary's Cathedral for the victims, and of two brothers buried in one grave in St. Mary's cemetery.

How he was sad because "two of us" had to push a car from the wharf to the home of a friend's widow.

"But talk to Bernie Jenkins, he was out in the storm, and saved three men. He could tell you more than I could.

Bernie Jenkins is sleeping Saturday afternoon, but his wife will talk about the disaster:

"It was terrible. Thirteen of our neighbors were killed. I thought Bernie was dead, but he came home Sunday morning."

She talks about the weather report, and how the weather this year is about the same as "that year." She talks about her neighbors.

"It was awful," Mrs. Bernie Jenkins says, tears beginning to form at the corners of her eyes. "I don't know what it was like out there, but it was awful at home. It was..."

"Maybe you could come back when Bernie is up," she says, her eyes wet. "I know what it was like here, but I don't know what it was like out there."

"Jack Doucet at Portage River could tell you. He was in the storm." Mrs. Bernie Jenkins' husband saved Jack Doucet's life and Bernie Jenkins' wife is sitting in her kitchen remembering and crying.

It is Saturday night and a Baie St. Anne boy will leave Chatham. He will go to a dance back home.

He says he went to Chatham so he could drink beer in a tavern.

If he is hurt in Chatham, he is safe. There are doctors in Chatham, none in Escuminac. He says more people would have survived the disaster if there were doctors in Escuminac.

It looks like there never will be a doctor there, he says.

Andrew Bransfield, 77, is selling gas right now in Escuminac. He sold gas the night of the disaster, but "quit early" so he could help out.

Andrew Bransfield is an "old bachelor." He says it with a grin, and a gleam in his eye. He is a retired fisherman who only fished for his living because he just has "the eighth grade."

He says he will help out again, if they "need me." He is old now but he remembers.

Andrew Bransfield remembers a "freak storm, calming as fast as it come up." He talks of "young Father Arsenault from Moncton way", serving funeral mass for the victims. He hopes there are no more disasters.

Now it is Sunday morning and all the bells in all the churches will call for all the fishermen of Escuminac.

Bells will ring at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral and the good Father Boudreau will serve mass to Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Jenkins, and Anthime Manuel and his son Francis, and Andrew Bransfield and Jack Doucet and

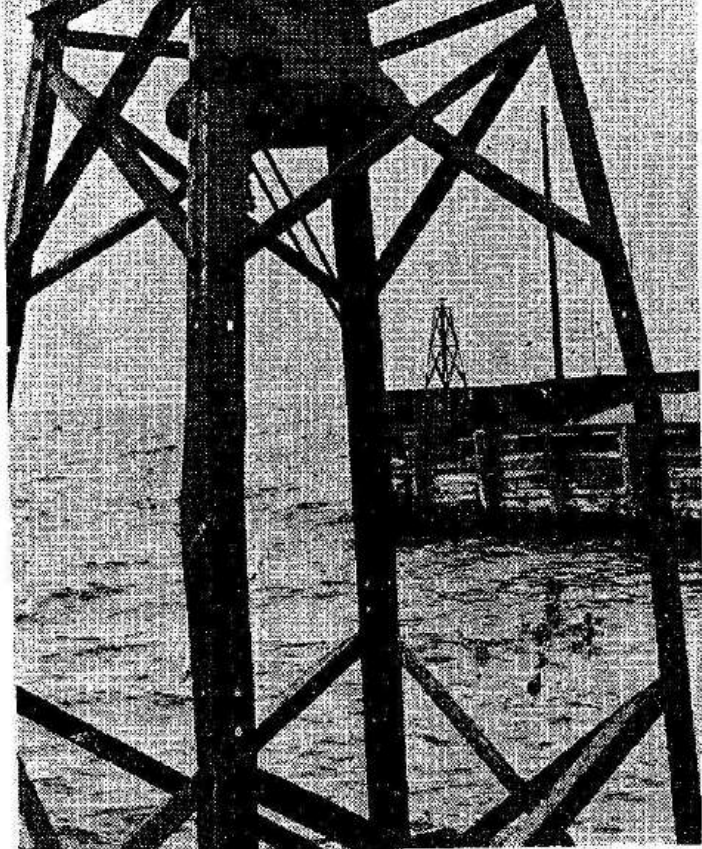
all the rest.

And some may cross the street and see the grave of Jeffrey Richard and his son Louis, and the simple-lettered headstone marked "disastre."

There may be thoughts of all the men killed here in 1959. All the fishermen from all the fishing hamlets... from Baie St. Anne, Bay Du Vin, Escuminac, and Prince

Edward Island. All who came home to die.

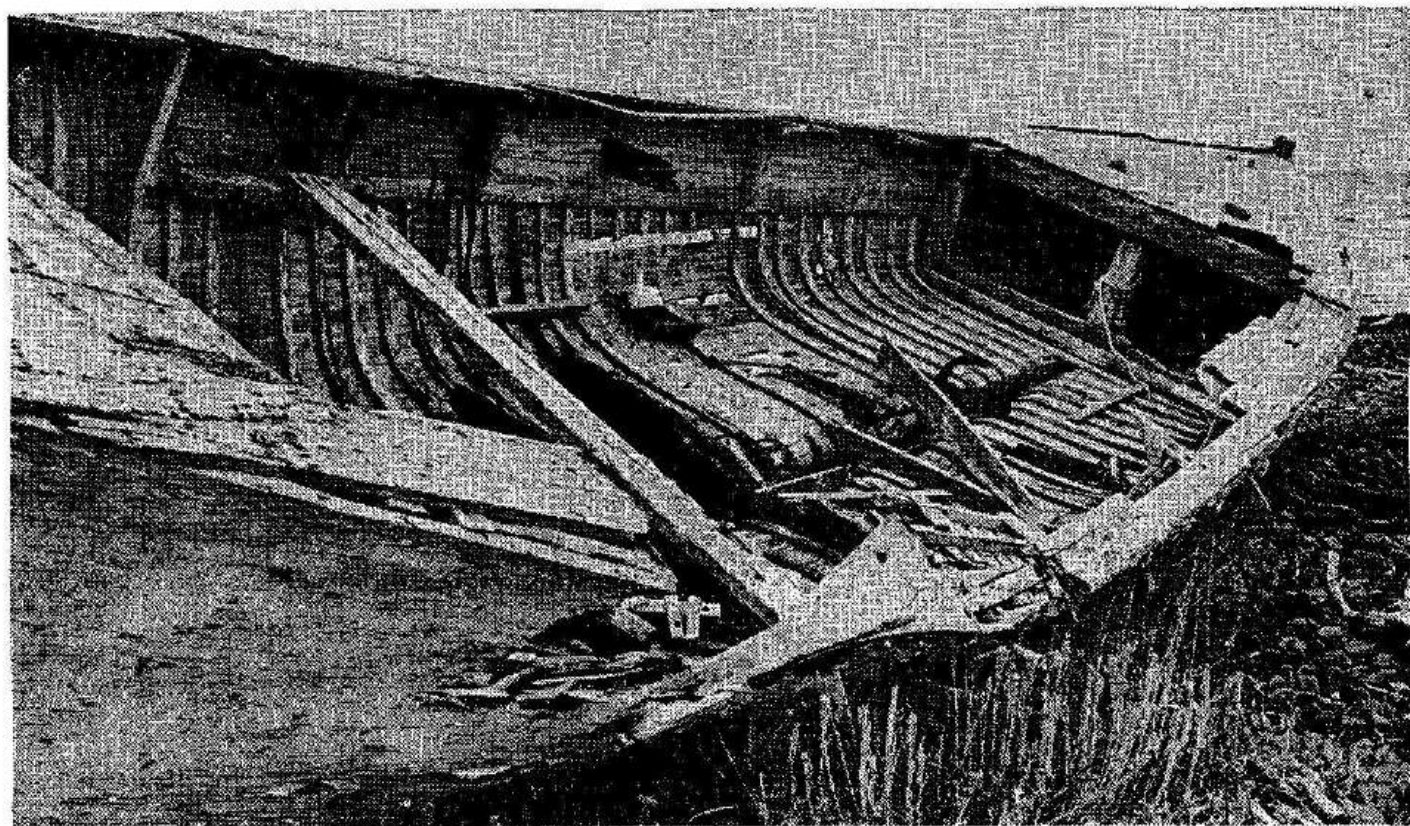
But Monday Francis Manuel will go to school, and Andrew Bransfield will sell gas, and Mrs. Bernie Jenkins will stay home and wait while her husband, and Jack Doucet and Anthime Manuel, and all the rest go out to fish and drift, fish and drift in the waters of Northumberland Strait.



"THEY DON'T LISTEN" the Escuminac fishermen say of the authorities who have turned a deaf ear to pleas for better navigational aids. The only way to find the narrow entrance to the breakwater is with the help of an old rusted bell and a small revolving light. The fishermen say that if they had a siren or a whistle "maybe more would have been rescued." As it was, men died on a reef outside the harbor.



ANTHIME MANUEL knows the sea for what it is. Pictured here with Francis, one of his four sons, he says he hopes none of them will fish for a living. He says he doesn't want to see them die at sea. He says that once he has them all raised and through school, maybe he'll find another job and quit the sea himself.



RAVAGED BY THE ELEMENTS this boat once carried an old glove and a rubber boot mute testimony of men to reap the harvests of the deep. Now it lies desolate, her past.

Fishermen's Memorial To Be Unveiled June 19th

In memory of the thirty-five fishermen who lost their lives in the Escuminac Disaster of June 19 and 20, 1959, a statue of three fishermen will be unveiled on the tenth anniversary of the storm on the high ground overlooking the harbour. The harbour itself will be filled by the fleet of white salmon drifters waiting to put to sea after the ceremony.

The unveiling will be performed by Hon. Wallace S. Bird, Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick, flanked by a bodyguard of scarlet coated members of the RCMP. In the bilingual ceremony which will follow, the Archbishop of Fredericton will dedicate the memorial and it will be blessed by the Archbishop of Moncton. A massed choir from the local churches will sing psalms and hymns in French and English to the accompaniment of the band of the Canadian Forces Base under the direction of Bandmaster Sergeant G. A. Dunn, by kind permission of Colonel A. J. Bauer, Base Commander, Canadian Forces Base, Chatham.

Both Archbishops will deliver addresses, and short speeches will follow by Jane Kingston and Lucien Chiasson, both of whom lost their fathers in the storm. Hon. Hugh John Flemming will then speak briefly in his capacity as premier of the province at the time of the disaster. Hon. Norbert Theriault, New Brunswick's Minister of Health and the local MLA for Northumberland County, will next introduce Premier Louis J. Robichaud.

Widow and children of the fishermen who perished will lay wreaths. Then, at 3:18 p.m. precisely, a flight of three Voodoo jets will roar in from the sea heading straight for the monument, this flying over the disaster area where the fishermen lost their lives. The aircraft will be from 416 All Weather Squadron from CFB

Chatham and will be piloted by Major M. P. Green, LT A. I. Morrell and LT D. S. Wilson. Navigators will be Major J. E. Houghton, LT G. M. Power and Captain M. E. Copeland.

Immediately after the jets fly past, Archbishop Robichaud will give the closing prayers and the Benediction. Then bandmaster SGT G. A. Dunn will sound the Last Post. There will be a thirty seconds silence, and he will sound Reveille. The choirs and the gathering will end the ceremony with the singing of O Canada and God Save the Queen. One verse will be sung of each, in French and English simultaneously.

The background to the spectacle of the unveiling will be the picturesque harbour, and the assembled visitors led by the Lieutenant Governor, will have an opportunity to walk out on the wharves and see the drifters leave the harbour.

The monument, carved out of a solid block of limestone more than seven feet high, stands on a base bearing bronze plaques with the names of the 35 fishermen who perished, and naming also the sixteen who survived and who saved the dives of others at great risk to their own. The sculptor is Claude Roussel, the director of the department of visual arts at the University of Moncton. He was born in Edmundston in 1930, has exhibited widely and won a number of awards for his work. The entire cost of the monument has been met by Sir Max Aitken out of the Beaverbrook Foundation left by his father.

The ceremony has been arranged by the Executive Committee of the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund which raised \$440,000 for the relief of the bereaved families, and it has been pointed out that no expense in connection of the memorial has been a charge on the fund. The arrangements were worked out

2,000 Pay Poignant Tribute To Escuminac Disaster Victims

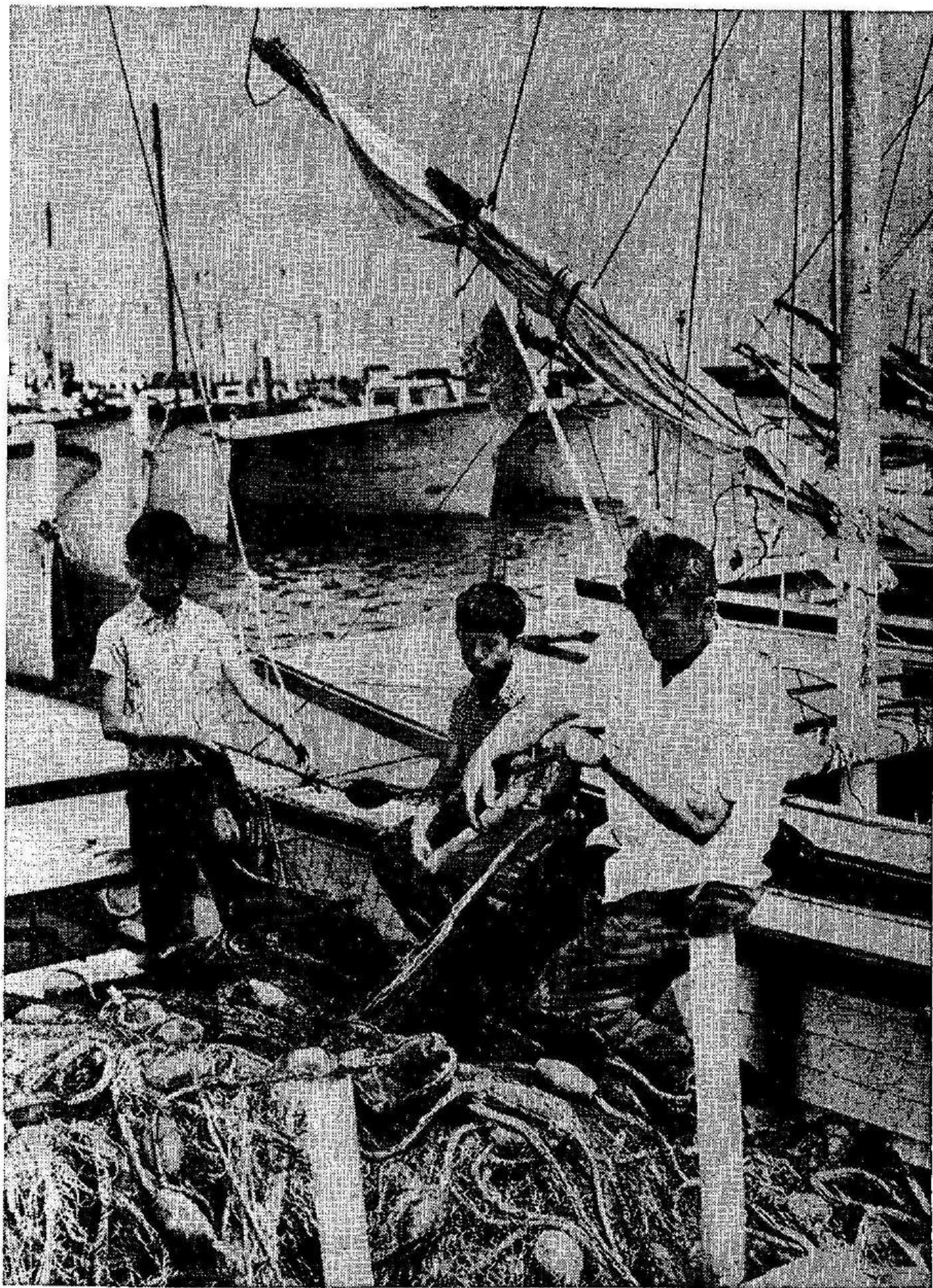
Friday,

June 20, 1969



AT ESCUMINAC: Dignitaries gathered yesterday at Escuminac for a ceremony commemorating the disaster that took place 10 years ago, when 35 fishermen died in a sudden storm. Left to right: **Lieutenant-Governor Wallace S. Bird**, who unveiled a seven-foot monument; **Health**

and Welfare Minister Norbert Theriault; Hon. Hugh John Flemming, MP for Carleton-Charlotte; **Premier Louis J. Robichaud**, and **Most Rev. A. H. O'Neil**, archbishop of Fredericton. More than 2,000 people attended the ceremony at Escuminac, about 30-miles from Chatham.



SPARED FROM THE SEA: Alfred Mercure, right, a fisherman for 20 years, survived the Escuminac tragedy and still earns his livelihood from the sea. He is shown here mending nets with his two sons, Joel, 12, left, and Charles, 11. 136

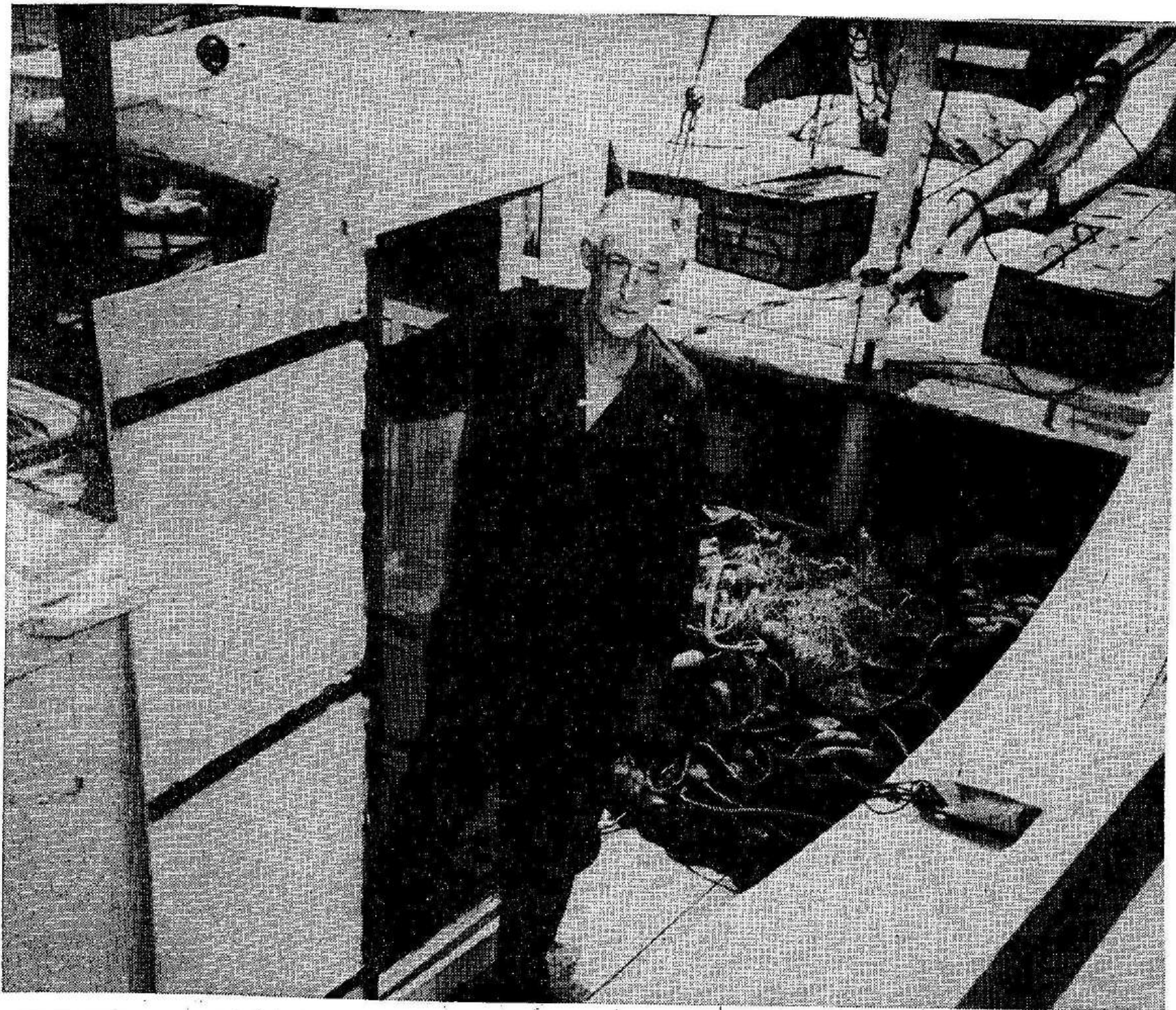
June 20, 1969



CHOIR AND BAND: A massed choir of about 30 young people from area churches, along with the band of CFB Chatham, under the direction of Sgt. G. A. Dunn, provided impressive music during the memorial service.



ESCUMINAC ORPHANS: Two of the 83 children orphaned by the tragic Escuminac disaster 10 years ago when 35 fishermen lost their lives in a hurricane that hit without warning, spoke at yesterday's unveiling of a monument to commemorate the bravery of these men, and of 16 others who risked their lives to save fellow fishermen. At left is **Lucien Chiasson**, 20, who lost his father, William, and two brothers. With him is **Jane Kingston**, 18, whose father, Winston Kingston, died in the disaster. They spoke at yesterday's ceremony. The impressive monument is by Claude Roussel of Moncton.



June 20, 1969

TEN YEARS LATER: One of the survivors of the Escuminac Disaster who still take to the sea in their fishing boats is Roland Williston. Five other Williston relatives perished in the great storm.

Memory Of Dead Is Honored, Bravery Of Survivors Is Recalled

June 20, 1969



UNVEILING: Lieutenant-Governor Wallace S. Bird, is shown as he pulls a cord unveiling a sculpture in tribute to the 35 fishermen who lost their lives in the Escuminac disaster 10 years ago. The sculpture was carved by Claude Roussel of Moncton.

June 20, 1969



FISHERMEN'S MEMORIAL: Lieutenant-Governor Wallace S. Bird is shown above after unveiling the sculpture in tribute to the 35 fishermen claimed by the sea in the Escuminac disaster.

June 20, 1969



WREATH LAYING: Mrs. Cecelia McLenaghan, Bay du Vin, laying a wreath in tribute to her son, Alfred McLenaghan, who lost his life in the Escuminac disaster of June 19 and 20th, 1959.

June 20, 1969



WIDOW AND ORPHANS: Mrs. Victor Robichaud, widowed in the 1959 Escuminac disaster, stands here with six of her eight children. In front are **Raphael** and **Nicole**. Behind are **Juyenal** and **Victor**, and two girls, **Catherine** and **Delphine**, are in the rear.

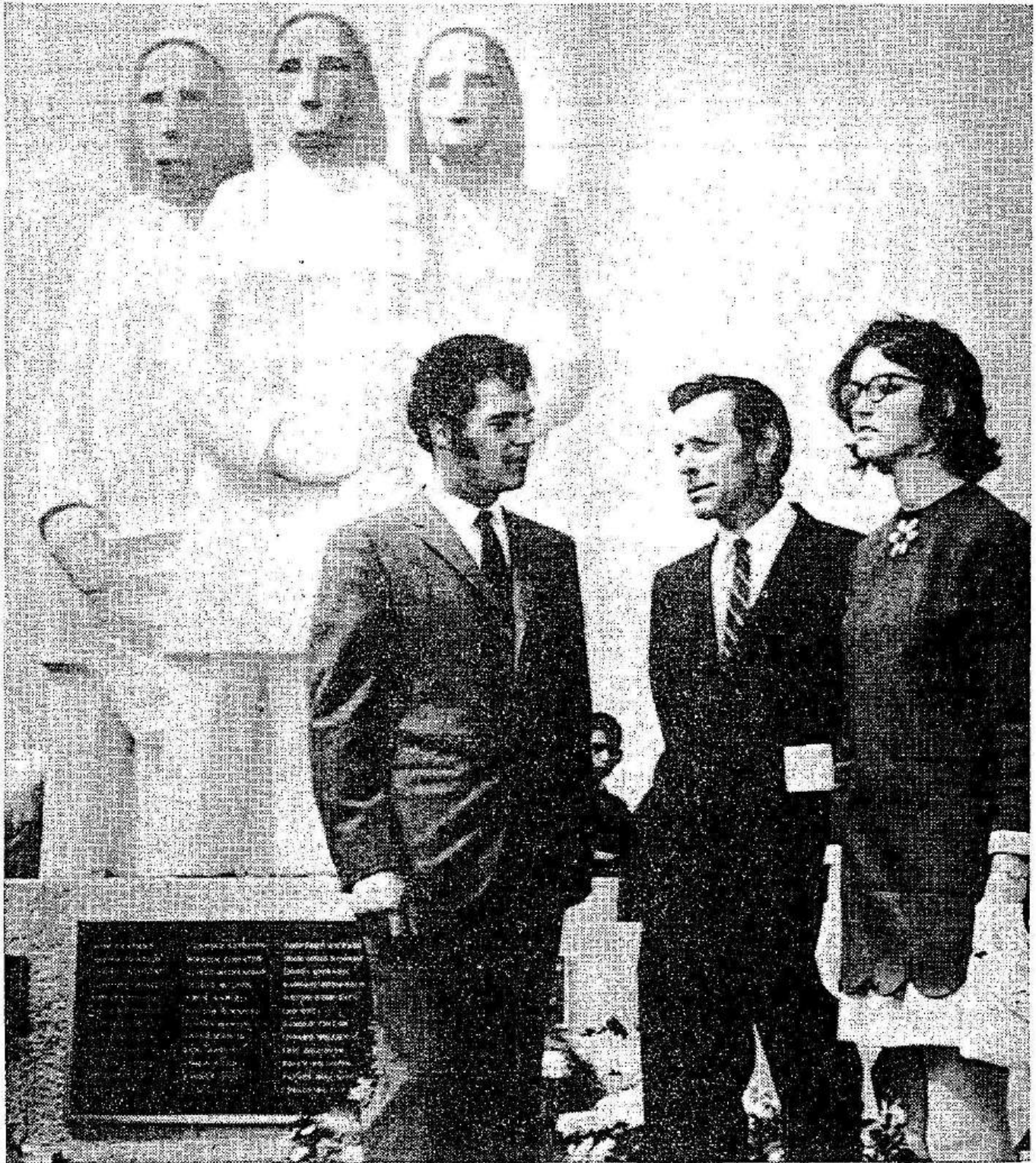


RECOLLECTION: Holding the Queen's Commendation for bravery, Alphonse Doucet recalls the 1959 disaster when, as an 18-year-old, he managed to survive the storm and save the lives of his father and brother on the "Francine

D". Alphonse and 15 other survivors now have their names recorded for acts of bravery on a bronze tablet affixed to the Escuminac memorial.

June 20, 1969

Sculpture Erected In Memory Of



AT MONUMENT: After yesterday's ceremony at Escuminac, two of the 83 orphans of the 35 fishermen who died in the great storm 10 years ago are shown in the photo at left talking with **Claude Roussel**, centre, who sculp-

tured the monument in the background. Left to right: **Lucien Chiasson**, who also lost two brothers; **Mr. Roussel**, and **Jane Kingston**, who now attends St. Thomas University. **Mr. Chiasson** and **Miss Kingston** gave short ad-



At right, Sgt. G. A. Dunn, bandmaster of the band of CFB Chatham, sounds The Last Post and Reveille. The storm sprang up virtually without warning on June 19, 1959, catching about 50

salmon fishing boats from the Northumberland County village at sea. Twenty-two boats did not return. Widows of the lost fishermen stood in the large crowd that attended the unveiling.
(Gleaner Staff Photos)

FISHERMEN'S

MEMORIAL

UNVEILED AT

ESCUMINAC

June 20, 1969

Escuminac Memorial Unveiled

The unveiling of a seven-ton limestone memorial—a permanent memorial of local stone to honor the memory of the men and boys who fell victim to the Escuminac fishing disaster of June, 1959, took place Thursday afternoon, June 19th.

A gift of Sir Max Aitken, son of the late Lord Beaverbrook, the statue is of three fishermen, life-sized, who now stand in this Miramichi Bay community.

It was probably the biggest day Escuminac has ever seen as the limousines of Lieutenant-Governor Wallace Bird and other distinguished men were parked beside the half-ton trucks of area fishermen.

Riding in the latter vehicles were men and women who were friends, and in many cases relatives, of those lost in the awful storm of 10 years ago—widows and children, fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers all touched by the tragedy.

Lt. Gov. Bird performed the unveiling, precisely at 2:19 p.m., after reading a letter from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Lt. Gov. Bird also read a letter from Canadian Governor-General Roland Michener in which he expressed his approval of the memorial.

As the veil dropped from the faces of the three symbolic fishermen in stone, the clear, plaintive notes of Last Post echoed across the bay, followed by a 30-second period of silence.

As Reveille broke the stillness a Canadian flag was slowly raised from its half-staff position to the top of its pinnacle.

The ceremonies were opened by Most Rev. Norbert Robichaud, archbishop of Moncton, who gave the invocation.

Scripture readings, in French and English, were given by parish priest, Rev. B. Boudreau and Rev. R. B. Barry of Bay du Vin.

Eulogies for the lost fishermen were given by Anglican Archbishop of Fredericton, Most Rev. A. H. O'Neill; Archbishop Robichaud; Hon. Norbert Theriault, local area MLAs and provincial health and welfare minister; Premier Louis Robichaud and then premier Hugh John Flemming.

In their remarks, all paid tribute to the courage of the 1959 fishermen and the hazards of their present-day fishery.

Many speakers mentioned the efforts of Brigadier Michael Wardell, publisher of The Fredericton Daily Gleaner, who was instrumental in setting up a disaster fund for dependents of the dead fishermen. Brigadier Wardell was also lauded for his work in organizing memorial ceremonies. The speakers also paid tribute to the Rev. L. M. Pepperdene, who also played an important part in the disaster fund and his interest in the bereaved families. Mr. Pepperdene was unable to be present at the ceremonies through illness.

Archbishop O'Neill said the words of his text applied to the valiant men who died in the midst of their work and to Mr. Pepperdene, who has given of himself in love for his friends.

Lucien Chiasson, whose father Willard Chiasson and brothers Adrien and Robert, all lost their lives thanked Mr. Pepperdene for his help and said he was sorry illness had prevented him from attending the ceremony. Lucien said he

hoped Mr. Pepperdene would continue to head the welfare committee for many years to come, so that not only he, but the younger children would have an opportunity for a good education. He also paid tribute to Mr. Wardell for organizing the fund and to Lord Beaverbrook, who made the first contribution.

Lucien is now studying at Radio College of Canada in Toronto and plans to spend three more years in University studying electrical engineering.

Jane Kingston, an arts student at St. Thomas University, Fredericton and hopes to be a teacher or social worker also spoke. Jane's father, Windsor Kingston, lost his life in the disaster.

The youngsters are two of the many who have been helped by funds raised shortly after the disaster for that purpose.

After speeches, widows, children and mothers of victims placed wreaths at the base of the memorial, while three Voodoo jet aircraft from CFB Chatham made a low-level sweep in from the sea and over the crowd and memorial.

Meanwhile, three fishing boats left their moorings near the Escuminac wharf and headed slowly out to sea.

Mr. Theriault acted as master of ceremonies, introducing special guests and making special mention of Claude Roussel, the sculptor who created the memorial.



UNVEILING: Lieutenant-Governor Wallace S. Bird, is shown as he pulls a cord unveiling a sculpture in tribute to the 35 fishermen who lost their lives in the Escuminac disaster 10 years ago. The sculpture was carved by Claude Roussel of Moncton.



ANNIVERSARY OF TRAGEDY: More than 2,000 persons attended yesterday's ceremonies at Escuminac on the 10th anniversary of the disaster in which 35 fishermen lost their lives. Lieutenant-Governor W. S. Bird unveiled the seven-foot-high limestone monument of three fisher-

men, shown in the photo at left. The work of Claude Roussel, director of the department of visual arts of the University of Moncton, it is a gift of Sir Max Aitken, whose father, Lord Beaverbrook, made the first donation to the Fishermen's Disaster Fund established to look after

the 26 widows and 83 children left by the victims. The harbour is in the background. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant churchmen officiated at the ceremony.



In the other photo, left to right: Most Rev. Norbert Robichaud, Archbishop of Moncton, who invoked the blessing; Most

Rev. A. H. O'Neil, Archbishop of Fredericton, who dedicated the memorial, and the Lieutenant-Governor. The program included a flight of three Voodoo jets roaring in from the sea over the monument.

(Gleaner Staff Photos)

2,000 Attend Ceremonies Honoring Dead

By MARIANNE WIEZEL — Gleaner Staff Writer

ESCUMINAC (Staff Special) — Yesterday on the 10th anniversary of the Escuminac disaster, when 35 fishermen lost their lives in a sudden, 70 m.p.h. hurricane that churned the waters of Miramichi Bay and the Gulf of St. Lawrence into a briny hell of 40-foot waves, a monument to the stark courage of those who perished and of those who survived, was unveiled and dedicated.

At the tiny fishing village of Escuminac, Lieutenant-Governor Wallace S. Bird unveiled an impressive seven-foot-high limestone sculpture of three fishermen carrying nets. It was carved by Moncton artist Claude Roussel.

Large Gathering

Attending was an audience of more than 2,000, including many of the 26 widows and 83 children left by the fishermen who died June 19 and 20, 1959, and the 16 brave men who lived through the horror of that time, performing many acts of heroism to save their fellow fishermen.

The monument was donated by Sir Max Aitken, son of the late Lord Beaverbrook, who made the first contribution — \$5,000 — to the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund, organized immediately after the tragedy by Michael Wardell of Fredericton, to look after the widows and children. Mr. Wardell

was also chairman of the fund's executive committee that organized yesterday's memorial tribute.

Despite a forecast of rain, the sun shone brightly during yesterday's simple and dignified ceremony. About 150 salmon drifter vessels lined the harbour in the background.

Different Mood

The scene, from the distance, may have looked like a holiday crowd, dressed in Sunday best, out to watch a gala official opening. But the mood was different by the monument, where the widows, orphans and parents of the lost 35 men were gathered. One after another, they began to cry as they recalled the tragic event, when many of them had waited in vain on that same spot for loved ones to return. One widow, surrounded by her eight children, put her arms around the younger ones for comfort, while

(See UNVEILING Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

another, who had also lost two of her sons, clutched a white handkerchief to her trembling lips as the memorial service began.

The ceremony was a moving example of the harmony that, in general, exists between the races and religions in New Brunswick. Both Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy officiated, and the language alternated between French and English.

Band Plays

Master of ceremonies was Cyril Sippley of Baie Ste. Anne. The band of CFB Chatham, under the direction of Sgt. G. A. Dunn, performed by permission of Col. A. J. Bauer, base commander. A massed choir of about 30 young people from area churches sang — their voices drifting out over the gently rippling water behind them.

Most Rev. Norbert Robitcaud, Archbishop of Moncton, opened the ceremony at 2 p.m. with the invocation, and the choir chanted the 23rd Psalm in French.

The scripture lesson from the Book of Wisdom was read in French by Rev. B. Boudreau and in English by Rev. R. Barry.

Lieutenant-Governor Bird brought a personal message from Queen Elizabeth II, who, with Prince Philip, had broken with royal precedent by personally subscribing to the fund in 1959.

Queen's Message

Her Majesty's message read: "I am very glad to know that a memorial has been set up in Escuminac in memory of the fishermen who lost their lives in the great storm of 1959 and in honor of those whose courage prevented further losses of life.

"My husband and I remember meeting members of the bereaved families on the wharf at Shediac in July of that year. We are sending our greeting to all who are taking part in the unveiling ceremony, and our congratulations to those whose imagination and generosity made possible the erection of the monument. Elizabeth R."

The lieutenant-governor said Governor-General Roland Michener had asked him to say he was very sorry he was unable to attend the gathering. "He also wishes to pay tribute to those men who risked their lives to save others from that terrible storm."

Pays Tribute

He said he was "grateful for the opportunity to pay tribute on this solemn occasion to the families and survivors of those who were lost on that tragic day, 10 years ago.

"I would particularly like to commend Brigadier Michael Wardell, through whose efforts of both 10 years ago and his planning for this anniversary, we are gathered here today, and I am sure I speak for all the citizens of New Brunswick in expressing our deep gratitude for his great humanitarian effort. To our benefactors, the late Lord Beaverbrook and his son, Sir Max Aitken, we also express our appreciation.

"May we continue to pause in future years to revere the memory of those who lost their lives as fishermen, and may this memorial always keep us mindful of their great bravery and heritage."

Unveiled

Lieutenant-Governor Bird drew the cords that lifted the Maple Leaf Flag covering the five-ton statue, and unveiled it for the public.

Most Rev. A. H. O'Neil, Archbishop of Fredericton, in a dedication address, quoted St. John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

He noted that many of the Apostles were fishermen. "I suggest that our Lord may very well have called fishermen to follow Him and to serve Him because of certain qualities which a fisherman must possess," which are required in both spiritual and daily work.

Fishermen must have patience, said the archbishop, and the next most important quality is perseverance, as they must work in all kinds of weather — sun, calm, storm and cloud, on sparkling summer days and the bitter cold of winter, and, as the Escuminac fishermen did 10 years ago — on a pleasant day, which suddenly became a bitter storm.

Trust

"I think all fishermen are men of faith and men of prayer," he said, as Mr. Wardell had recorded in the Atlantic Advocate: "Lord, ere we go, to Thee we trust our all, Thy sea is mighty, and our boats are small."

Archbishop O'Neil paid tribute to the great work of Rev. L. M. Pepperdene, rector of Chatham, now in hospital, who had gone with him to the first meeting of the disaster committee — July 6, 1959, at Newcastle, where he was made chairman of the welfare committee. "He insists that others have helped tremendously, and of course they have."

He expressed thanks to every member of the committee, the donors, and the general committee, under Mr. Wardell's guidance. "When we speak of generous donors, we thank God especially for Lord Beaverbrook and his son, Sir Max, who were extraordinarily generous."

Archbishop O'Neil said the words of his text also apply to "the valiant men who died in the midst of their work," and to Mr. Pepperdene, "who has given of himself in love for his friends."

Archbishop Robichaud addressed the gathering in French, and both clergy blessed the monument.

Jane Kingston, 18, whose father, Windsor Kingston, lost his life in the disaster, said that "through the generous contributions of those who subscribed to the Escuminac Fishermen's Disaster Fund, many of the dependents have received the helping hand of neighborly people."

Jane, an arts student at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, who hopes to be a teacher or social worker, said that besides the necessities of life, "many of us have received the benefits of a higher education."

"It is this opportunity to improve our lot that remains as the lasting memorial of those who lost their lives on the stormy waters of Miramichi Bay, just 10 years ago today."

Reminder

She said it was most gratifying to attend the unveiling of the permanent memorial of those who did not return, and noted that it was also a constant reminder of "those brave men, still living, who risked their own lives to save so many on that day."

Lucien Chiasson, whose father, Williard Chiasson and brothers Adrien and Robert all lost their lives, recalled the day of the disaster, when, as a 10-year old child, he waited by the breakwater, and saw the boats being destroyed.

Speaking in French, he said how difficult it was for the widows to carry on without their husbands, and how the children missed their fathers. He paid tribute to Mr. Wardell, for organizing the fund to help them, and to Lord Beaverbrook who made the first contribution to the fund.

Lucien is now studying at Radio College of Canada in Toronto and plans to spend three more years in university, studying electrical engineering. He wants to come back to New Brunswick.

Illness

He thanked Mr. Pepperdene for his help, and said he was sorry illness had prevented him from attending the ceremony. Lucien said he hoped Mr. Pepperdene would continue to head the welfare committee for many years to come, so that not only he, but the younger children, would have an opportunity for a good education.

Hon. Hugh John Flemming, MP for Carleton-Charlotte, who was premier of New Brunswick at the time of the disaster, and chairman of the fund, said he was pleased to attend the unique ceremony honoring those who died and recognizing the

heroism of those whose lives survived.

Recalling the visits he had made to the area at the time, he said, "The bravery of those who lost their near and dear ones in the disaster will ever remain in my mind."

Quick Action

"I shall never forget the quick and effective action taken to meet the needs of the survivors. The leadership of Brigadier Michael Wardell, in using his influence and publicity media to raise funds to meet the needs of immediate and later requirements is an indication of a great man with a great heart. The people of this community will ever remember him, as indeed will the people of all New Brunswick."

The monument to be unveiled, said Mr. Flemming, "is symbolic of the sacrifice of the victims who were lost in the activity of earning a livelihood for their wives and families, and the heroism of the survivors who risked their lives to save others — those who rose to great heights of supreme courage when facing the greatest test — that of death itself."

"All of these things are symbolized by the monument and the inscriptions."

By the presence of the clergy, government, and Her Majesty's representative at the ceremony, "we indicate to the young people gathered here and to posterity that we were, in the year of our Lord 1969, conscious of the important values and things of the spirit as we gathered here in commendation."

Cruel Master

Hon. Norbert Theriault, minister of health and welfare, who lives at nearby Baie Ste. Anne, said, "Those of us who earn our living by the sea know only too well how cruel a master it can be. From the placid tranquillity of a millpond, our ancient antagonist can become a raging monster within the space of hours, or sometimes minutes."

"Those of us who were here the night of July 19, only 10 years ago, still have engraved in our memories the terrible toll taken by the sea from among our friends and relatives."

"We can never forget the impersonal greyness of the sea as it yielded the bodies of loved ones who had gone out in their boats only hours before with hope in their hearts of returning with good catches," said Mr. Theriault.

Many lives were shattered that day in 1959 — as broken as the hulks of boats returned to our shores by the cruel sea." He said it became, for many "an unbearable ordeal of heart-break and sadness. For many, lamps shone unseen throughout the night as hope waned for the return of fathers and brothers."

Generosity

Mr. Theriault said that, "in that moment of sorrow and bereavement, men and women and organizations who had never before heard of these villages responded with an unrestrained outpouring of generous assistance." He paid tribute to such groups as the RCMP, Red Cross, and St. John Ambulance "which prevented a total breakdown of the hardy spirit of our people. As the reality of the situation became more apparent . . . the people of this area somehow found new reserves of strength and joined in the grim task of assessing their tragic losses."

"Today, we are here to pay tribute to the memories of those gallant fishermen who paid the cost demanded by the sea. But, at the same time, we must not neglect a tribute to those left behind and who each day cast off their nets in defiance of the sea's wrath, to support their families."

Deep Gratitude

The minister said that it was with a deep and lasting gratitude "that we remember the efforts of those responsible for organizing the Fishermen's Disaster Fund, and the hundreds of persons who shared their financial resources with those who had lost so much."

"Their names are all engraved in lasting gratitude in our hearts, but one man, Brigadier Michael Wardell, must be singled out for special mention. I hesitate to think what would have happened to many of the bereaved families had he not initiated efforts to raise those funds. The generosity of those involved in the fishing industry should not go unmentioned, because their immediate assistance was of immeasurable value."

He said that, as people stood before the memorial to the brave fishermen of the area, "I hope that each of us, in his own way, will beg silently of Almighty God that we are spared from ever again living through such a tragedy."

Courage

Premier Louis J. Robichaud, the concluding speaker, said the Escuminac tragedy was commemorated by a monument that would "face the sea for the times to come: a reminder that it takes courage to live a difficult life."

"Ten years ago, the sea took the lives of humble and courageous men. It was a cruel sea that left on those shores aggrieved parents, wives and children and friends. Ten years does not erase the memory of those we love."

Premier Robichaud added that the monument will also remind everyone of the province's

"Maritime vocation. Our provincial flag with its ship recalls our seafaring heritage."

"It is a long and proud heritage. These shores have seen the early explorers, they have received the early settlers, they still provide the livelihood of men."

"How fitting then that we should honor the memory of those who were claimed by the sea because the sea was their very life. How fitting that we should remember their courage and the courage of the proud people they left behind."

Down To The Sea

"We can repeat the words of the psalmist: 'They that go down to the sea in ships and occupy their business on the great waters; These men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders of the deep.'"

Two official wreaths were laid by widows of lost fishermen, Mrs. Clifford Kingston and Mrs. Jeffrey Richard, who also lost two sons.

Relatives of others lost then placed personal wreaths at the base of the monument. Col. Bauer laid a wreath on behalf of CFB Chatham.

Following this, there was a dramatic fly-past overhead of three Voodoo jets from No. 416 all-weather fighter squadron, CFB Chatham. The pilots were Maj. M. P. Green, Lt. A. I. Morrell and Lt. D. S. Wilson. Navigators were Maj. J. E. Houghton, Lt. G. M. Power and Capt. M. E. Copeland. Closing prayers and benediction were delivered by Archbishop Robichaud.

Last Post

The Last Post and Reveille were sounded by Bandmaster Sgt. Dunn, and the band then played O Canada and God Save the Queen, which was sung in both French and English by the audience.

Following the ceremony, the fleet of salmon drifters in the harbor put out to sea. A dinner was held later at the Baie Ste. Anne High School.

Yesterday was a full holiday for school children in the area. Outside visitors started to come into the small community, about 30 miles east of Chatham, in the morning, and by 1 p.m., the highway was jammed with spectators. Scarlet-coated RCMP directed traffic and provided an honor guard for Lieutenant-Governor Bird.

Among those attending the ceremony were Education Minister W. W. Meldrum, Natural Resources Minister W. R. Duffie, Opposition Leader Richard Hatfield, Cl a r e n c e Menzies, MLA for Northumberland, Leonide Cyr, MLA for Moncton, Msgr. D. C. Duffie, president of St. Thomas University, and K. C. Irving and his sons, Arthur and Jack, of Saint John.

Names Of Victims

The monument has on its front a plaque naming the fish-

ermen who lost their lives. They are:

John Chapman, Adrien Chiasson, Albert Chiasson, Alphonse Chiasson, Robert Chiasson, William Chiasson, Fraser Cook, Edgar Daigle, Charles Gauvin, Arthur Kelly, Hector Kelly, Hugh Kelly, Clifford Kingston, Windsor Kingston, Alfred McLenaghan, George McLeod, Amon Manuel, Wm. G. Manuel, Alonzo Martin, Andre Martin, Remi Martin, Allan Mills, Andrew Mills, Geoffrey Richard, Jean Louis Richard, Lionel Richard, Raphael Robichaud, Victor Robichaud, Leo Roy, Harold Taylor, Cunard Williston, Eric Williston, Haley Williston, Haynes Williston, Oswald Williston.

Acts Of Bravery

A second bronze tablet records the names of sixteen who survived and who were recognized for acts of bravery in saving the lives of others:

Pierre Doiron, Alphonse Doucet, Alvin Durelle, Bernard Jenkins, Cyril Jenkins, Chlorin Jimmo, Leslie Lewis, Thomas Lewis, Brian Lloyd, Roy Lloyd, Aquila Manuel, Edmond Martin, Hilarion Martin, Jack Preston, Robert Searle, Theodore Williston.

Also on the base of the monument is a plaque noting that Lord Beaverbrook was the first subscriber to the fund in 1959, and his message at that time: "In this disaster without parallel in the Miramichi Bay that holds for me my life — to the bereaved, my sorrow for the loss of so many splendid lives, and my admiration for those who faced the dangers of the storm and survived."



19 JUIN 1959

**Une tempête imprévue s'abat
sur le détroit de Northumberland:
35 pêcheurs disparaissent à**

ESCUMINAC

**Hier, dix ans plus tard, le lieutenant-gouverneur
dédie une statue à la mémoire des disparus et
au courage des survivants face à la Miramichi**

— nos informations en pages 2 et 3

C'était le 19 juin 1959 En 36 heures disparaissait la flotte d'Escuminac, sous des vagues de 40 pieds

La mer . . . Imprévisible, toujours égale à elle-même, sans cesse recommencée, pour le poète, source de vie, et source de mort.

La mer a des caprices. Ce 19 juin 1959, elle se sentait capricieuse. Il faisait gris, le vent soufflait, ce que les marins appellent "une jolie brise", et ce n'est pas rien.

Les pêcheurs de saumon sortent du port d'Escuminac. Une cinquantaine de bateaux, équipés de moteurs de voiture boulonnés à la coque, dépourvus de radio, qui s'en vont mouiller leurs filets et se laissent dériver à une vingtaine de milles de la côte. Les bateaux? On les connaît bien le long des côtes du détroit de Northumberland. Ils ont la proue relevée, effilée, la poupe basse sur l'eau. Ils tiennent la mer, coupent les vagues. Quelques-uns sont équipés de postes couverts, mais beaucoup n'en ont pas. Quelques-uns, pour appuyer leur moteur, ont hissé des voiles.

Les prévisions de la météo ne disent rien d'extraordinaire. Des vents de 25 milles à l'heure sont au programme. A

10 h. cela change: tempête, vents de 35 milles du nord-est, passant au nord-ouest à l'aube, tournant encore en fin de journée, le lendemain, pour se stabiliser sud-ouest, 25 milles.

Les vents qui devaient venir se préparaient à souffler fort: 70 milles à l'heure, avant le jour. Les bateaux commencent à danser, à sauter de crête de vague en crête de vague. Des patrons d'embarcation se cramponnent, gardant leurs filets comme ancres flottantes, mettant à la cape en attendant que la tempête perde de la force — elle ne devait pas en perdre.

D'autres coupent les filins de leurs filets et prennent la fuite vers le port, vers Escuminac. Tous n'y arriveront pas. L'entrée du havre est signalée par un feu tournant, et une vilaine cloche, montée sur des tourelleaux de poutrelle à l'extrémité des musoirs. La cloche, on ne l'entend pas. Le feu, on ne peut pas toujours l'apercevoir. Après coup, des pêcheurs expliqueront que tous leurs appels sont restés sans réponse lorsqu'ils ont de-

mandé qu'on remplace ces signaux par une sirène puissante. Ils sont toujours là, d'ailleurs.

Des bateaux n'ont pas pu atteindre les brise-lames et ont été écrasés sur les rochers. Des cadavres sont rejetés sur la côte, avec le bois d'épave, les débris divers.

En mer, des hommes se surpassent, des hommes sauvent leurs camarades, même si leurs propres embarcations sont pleines d'eau. Des hommes comme Leslie Lewis, Hilariion Martin, Aquila Manuel, Chlorin Jimmo, Pierre Doiron, Alvin Durelle, Alphonse Doucet et bien d'autres.

On retrouvera des bateaux écrasés, leurs hommes liés au mat, à la coque, noyés on verra aussi des navires rentrer, gagner l'abri des brise-lames, avec des survivants, repêchés au prix de quelquefois d'un bateau, d'une vie.

Des hommes comme Gérard Bonenfant dit Red Goodchild, qui, repêché par Thomas Lewis, a commencé aussitôt revenu à terre à aider les sauveteurs à rechercher des cadavres, à faire tout ce qu'il pouvait.

Les vagues, d'après les rescapés, atteignaient 30 pieds, 40 pieds 50 pieds de haut. Des bateaux ont trouvé refuge tout le long de la baie de la Miramichi, certains sont allés à Baie-Du-Vin, d'autres à l'Île-aux-Renards, à la recherche d'un abri.

La plupart des hommes qui ont sauvé leurs collègues n'ont jamais rien reçu en échange, malgré les citations, malgré les recommandations.

Personne ne saura jamais pourquoi . . .

La reine, en tournée officielle au Canada, les journaux du monde entier, et peut-être plus particulièrement ceux de Lord Beaverbrook, celui de son fils, le Daily Express de Londres, ont consacré leurs manchettes aux disparus de la Miramichi.

Mais le moment était venu de dénombrer les morts, de fouiller les plages et les récifs, de compter les absents, avec un dernier espoir, ancré désespérément, de voir un bateau mal en point apparaître derrière l'Île-aux-Renards, derrière l'Île de Baie-Du-Vin, derrière l'Île-aux-Oeufs. Espoir trop souvent déçu . . .

On compte les disparus

Alors commence la tâche macabre: fouiller les épaves qui sont rejetées à la côte, arpenter les grèves, à la recherche des corps, draguer certains endroits. Des chalutiers sont venus de Caraquet, des vedettes du ministère des Pêches, de la Gendarmerie canadienne prennent part à ces recherches. Entre certains des chalutiers, des filets ont été tendus, que les bateaux remorquent, dans l'espoir d'accrocher un corps, un filet dérivant entre deux eaux, une épave. On récupéreras des corps pendant trois mois. Le 26 juillet, on retrouve le cadavre de Robert Chiasson, 16 ans. Il était le fils de William Chiasson, de Baie-Sainte-Anne, qui avait également disparu. La liste des disparus s'allonge. Le corps d'un frère de Robert Chiasson Adrien, avait été découvert auparavant.

Seuls quatre corps ne seront pas retrouvés.

La liste est tristement longue. Des familles ont souffert plus que d'autres: dans la famille Chiasson, cinq pêcheurs ont disparu. Deux frères, William et Albert, fils de Camille Chiasson, et trois petits-fils: Robert, Adrien et Alphonse. 14 enfants restent sans pères, dans cette seule famille.

Sur le socle du monument, deux plaques de bronze honorent les morts et les héros. Trente-cinq noms de morts:

**JOHN CHAPMAN
ADRIEN CHIASSON
ALBERT CHIASSON
ALPHONSE CHIASSON**

**ROBERT CHIASSON
WILLIAM CHIASSON
FRASER COOK
EDGAR DAIGLE
CHARLES GAUVIN
ARTHUR KELLY
HECTOR KELLY
HUGH KELLY
CLIFFORD KINGSTON
WINDSOR KINGSTON
ALFRED McLENAGHAN
GEORGE McLEOD
AMON MANUEL
WILLIAM G. MANUEL
ALONZO MARTIN
ANDRE MARTIN
REMI MARTIN
ALLAN MILLS
ANDREW MILLS
GEOFFREY RICHARD
JEAN-LOUIS RICHARD
LIONEL RICHARD
RAPHAEL ROBICHAUD
VICTOR ROBICHAUD
LEO ROY
HAROLD TAYLOR
CUNARD WILLISTON
ERIC WILLISTON
HALEY WILLISTON
HAYNES WILLISTON
OSWALD WILLISTON**

Une seconde plaque porte les noms de seize pêcheurs qui se sont distingués pendant la tempête, sauvant leurs amis, leurs collègues, exposant leurs vies et leurs bateaux. Ces seize pêcheurs vivent encore. Voici leurs noms:

**PIERRE DOIRON
ALPHONSE DOUCET
ALVIN DURELLE
BERNARD JENKINS
CYRIL JENKINS
CHLOIRIN JIMMO
LESLIE LEWIS**

**THOMAS LEWIS
BRIAN LLOYD
ROY LLOYD
AQUILA MANUEL
EDMOND MARTIN
HILARION MARTIN
JACK PRESTON
ROBERT SEARLE
THEODORE WILLISTON**

Dès le dimanche, Baie Sainte-Anne creusait des fosses dans son cimetière. Les bateaux disponibles partaient, à la recherche des disparus, des survivants.

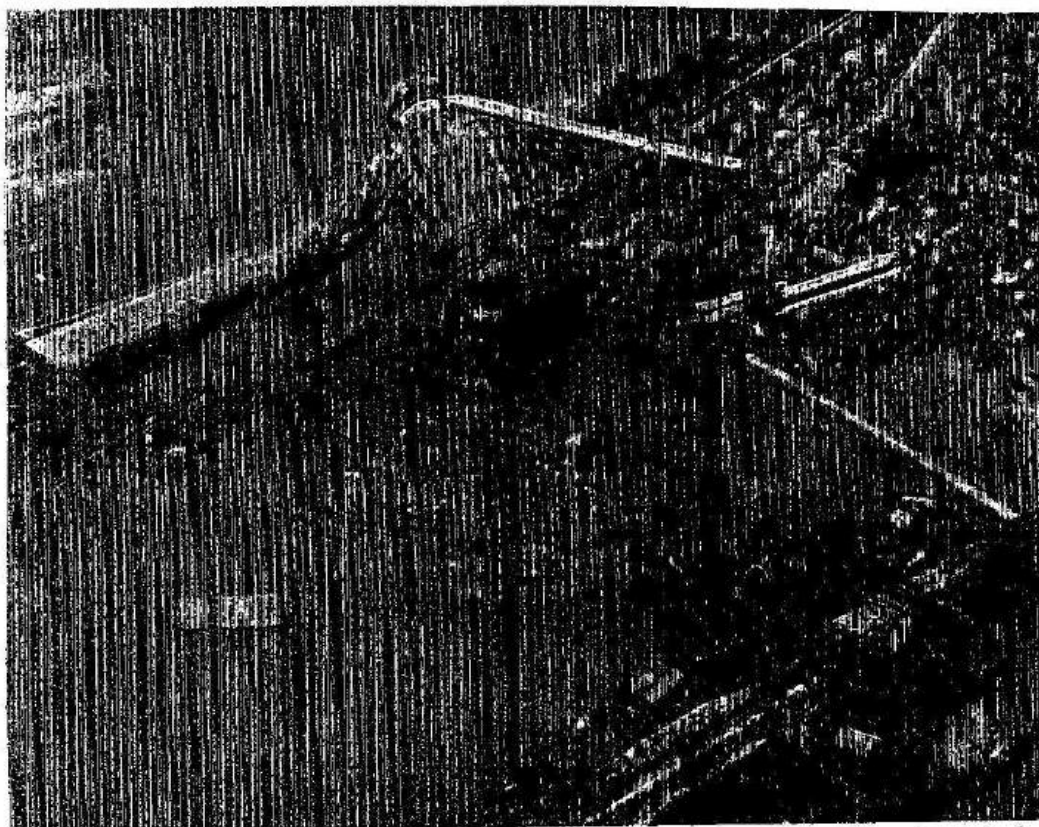
Avant de partir, les pêcheurs s'arrêtaient à l'église. 8,000 curieux avaient envahi la région, les familles éprouvées, espérant encore, se réunissaient sur le quai.

On retrouvait des corps à Richibouctou, 30 milles plus au sud.

Et la plupart des bateaux n'étaient pas assurés: on n'en perdait pas souvent. Chaque navire avait coûté de 2,000 à 2,500 dollars, chaque filet à saumon valait au moins 1,500 dollars.

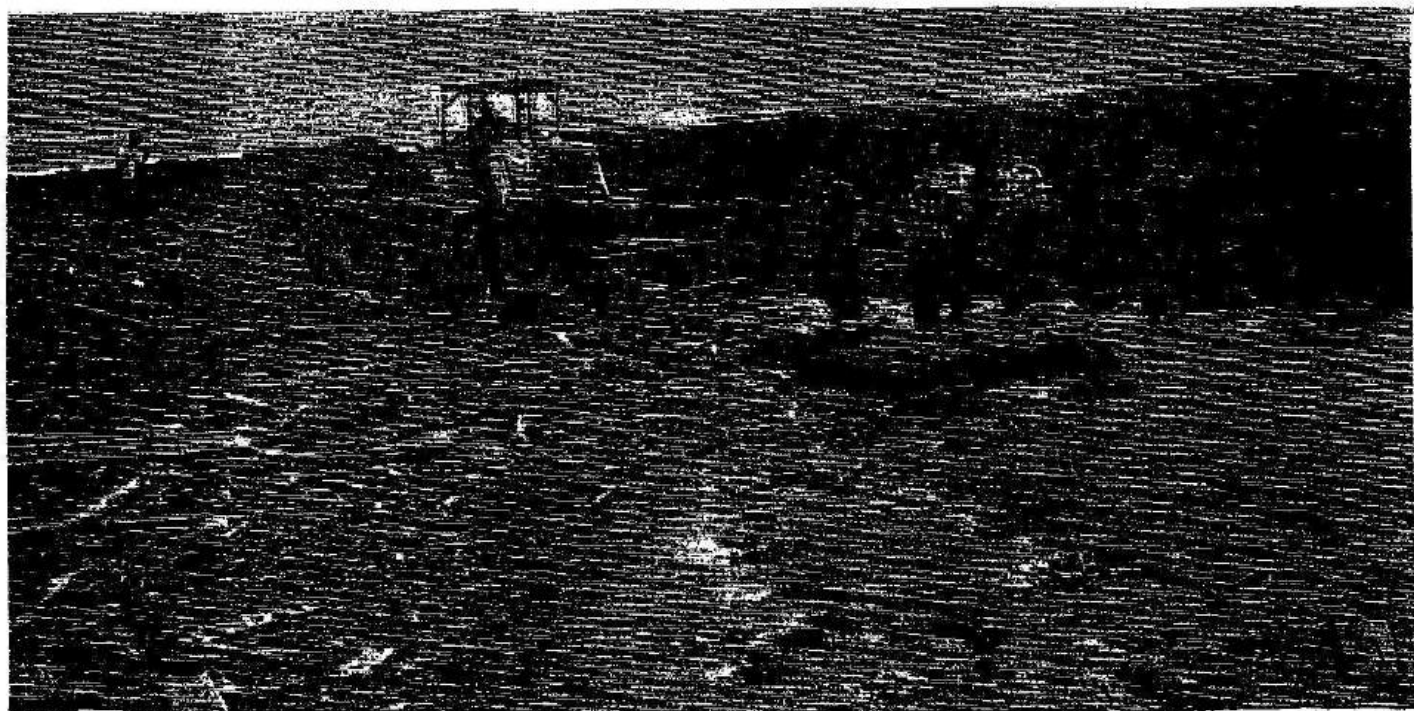
Yvon Durelle, échappé par miracle—il était sorti, puis rentré à Escuminac, rappelant ses trois autres bateaux—lance un appel le lundi, pour demander qu'on aide les pêcheurs.

Yvon Durelle est venu à nos bureaux la semaine dernière. Il se souvient encore de ces journées tragiques. Il nous a déclaré qu'il serait sans doute pire que mieux de réveiller les souvenirs: il y a des blessures qui mettent un certain temps à se cicatriser...



Charles Bonenfant avait été porté disparu. On avait retrouvé son bateau et ses filles. Mais un autre bateau l'a ramené, sain et sauf. Le dimanche, il travaillait. Le voici

dans un bateau plein d'eau et de débris, à la recherche d'un corps que les filets restés à bord auraient pu retenir.



Pendant les jours qui ont suivi la tragédie, des bulldozers ont aidé les chercheurs à fouiller les épaves accumulées sur les rives de la Baie de la Miramichi par la tempête. Des

débris de bateaux, des objets qui avaient appartenu aux disparus ont été retrouvés, mais pas de corps. La mer ne rend pas ses morts.

La vie continue

POINTE-DU-CHENE, le 29 juillet: au large, le yacht royal, le "Britannia", et quatre destroyers de la marine canadienne. Sur le quai, des femmes vêtues de noir, des enfants de tous les âges.

Ce sont les veuves et les orphelins des pêcheurs disparus le mois précédent au large d'Escuminac, dans la Baie de la Miramichi.

Voici la reine, accompagnée du prince Philip, du maire de Shédiac, M. Joe LeBlanc. Elle s'arrête, parle aux mères, aux enfants. Des enfants, il y en a 63, et les veuves sont 20. Elles sont venues à bord d'autobus, de voitures particulières. Des infirmières les accompagnent, pour s'occuper des enfants, pour voir que personne ne manque de rien.

Les badauds sont venus habillés pour la plage, tranquillement, pour voir la reine, pas pour les veuves. La détresse de ces 83 personnes leur est indifférente. Le prince Philip, qui est un marin accompli, discute avec les pêcheurs, se renseigne. Lui comprend. Il a passé la guerre à bord d'un bateau.

En tout, il y avait vingt-six veuves, quatre-vingt-trois or-

phelins. Les enfants qui sont là, sur ce quai de Pointe-du-Chêne, sont habillés pour la circonstance, et ce sont toujours des enfants.

A cet âge-là, il y a des choses dont la réalité ne s'impose pas brutalement.

Plus tard, la vie reprendra son cours à Baie-Sainte-Anne, à Escuminac, Escuminac, maintenant: 289 âmes. Baie Sainte-Anne en compte 1,930. Du petit port d'Escuminac, des bateaux sortent encore, chaque printemps, à la poursuite du saumon, qu'ils attendent en dérivant, lentement. D'autres pêchent le homard, d'autres encore ne sortent plus et gisent sur les plages comme des cadavres: ils sont là depuis 10 ans.

A l'entrée des musoirs, c'est toujours la même chose: une cloche rouillée, un feu tour-

Près du quai, dans les barques qui sont rentrées, dans celles qui ne sont pas sorties, des hommes, des enfants travaillent. C'est un moteur à régler, à vidanger. C'est un réservoir à remplir, des fonds à pomper. Un bateau à nettoyer, à couvrir en prévision du

week-end. Des hommes comme Anthime Manuel, qui espère que ses fils ne seront pas pé-



Yvon Durelle: il avait quatre bateaux à Escuminac le jour du désastre. Par hasard, il est entré à temps.

cheurs. Des hommes qui ont les problèmes qu'avaient leurs

amis, leurs voisins le 19 juin 1959: les prix du homard, les prix du saumon, les agrès, le résultat des jours et des nuits passées en mer, à la dérive.

Le fils d'Anthime Manuel vous le dira: il s'appelle Francis, il est en cinquième année. L'école, ça marche, mais la mer est là. Il ne sait pas ce qu'il fera, plus tard. Et son père intervient: non, pas la pêche. Il ira à l'école. Il finira ses études. Il quittera la mer.

Chaque dimanche, les cloches appellent. Près de l'église de Baie-Sainte-Anne, à Escuminac, à Baie-du-Vin, des tombes sont là, toutes simples. Les fidèles passent près d'elles.

Les cloches avaient sonné le glas dans toute la région, en 1959.

Les bateaux sortent, les bateaux rentrent, la vie continue, à la dérive, et parce que les enfants des disparus ont pu aller à l'école, vivre comme tous les enfants malgré l'absence du père, parce que 440.000 dollars ont aidé les survivants à continuer à vivre, Escuminac, Baie-Sainte-Anne vivent encore. Cinquante familles

d'un côté, cinq cent de l'autre. La vie est toujours là.

Il aurait fallu des radios, des radars sur les navires, mais qui en avait les moyens? Il aurait fallu une sirène puissante sur le brise-lame d'Escuminac. Il aurait fallu... La liste est trop longue.

Des enfants continuent à naître, le saumon court, il remonte la Miramichi, vers les coins isolés où il est né, où il mourra. Il y a encore des homards dans la baie de la Miramichi.

Et il y aura longtemps encore des bateaux à Escuminac, pour repartir, se laisser dériver dans le détroit, et revenir, à la grâce de Dieu, les filets pleins. Pour que les enfants puissent aller encore à l'école et quitter la mer, la pêche.

Dans son bateau, au pied du quai d'Escuminac, Anthime Manuel allume une cigarette et, observant le couchant, reniflant le vent entre deux bouffées de tabac, se préparera à repartir, à dériver, repartir, dériver.

Pour que Francis, pour que les autres enfants aillent à l'école et puissent quitter la mer. Si le saumon se vend bien...

d'un sport à l'autre

Yvon Durelle: ses souvenirs et ses craintes

A chaque mois de juin, Yvon Durelle se souvient des moments tristes et heureux qu'il a vécus au cours de ce mois. Ainsi hier, Yvon, un grand sentimental, revivrait la tragédie qui a frappé son village natal, Baie-Sainte-Anne, le 19 juin 1959. Il n'aime pas à en parler, et regrette presque la cérémonie qui s'est déroulée hier à Escuminac. Il prétend que cela a rappelé trop de mauvais souvenirs aux familles de pêcheurs qui ont perdu des parents lors de cette effroyable tempête. "Je serai là le 19, mais je n'aurai pas l'humeur à rire." Mais confiait-il lundi soir dernier.

Par contre ce mois de juin, lui rappelle aussi les plus glorieux moments de sa carrière de boxeur. Déjà champion mi-lourd du Canada et de l'Empire Britannique, Yvon, devait d'abord rencontrer Tony Anthony à Détroit le 14 juin 1957 avant d'avoir la

chance de devenir champion mondial des mi-lourds en boxant contre le titulaire d'alors Archie Moore.

Son combat contre Anthony, il ne l'a pas gagné, mais le verdict d'un match nul rendu par les juges, était peut-être la plus grande erreur du monde pugilistique. Au dire des experts présents au combat, Durelle l'aurait gagné haut la main. Un peu déçu de cette décision, Yvon et son gérant Chris Shaban de Moncton, ont pris l'avion dès le samedi, 15 juin pour revenir aux Maritimes. Mais c'est alors que son désappointement a pris fin. Moncton avait pensé à celui qui venait de faire honneur au Nouveau-Brunswick et au Canada, et Gaston Pépin, rédacteur sportif à L'Évangéline en collaboration avec le club Beauséjour, avait préparé une réception monstre qui devait débiter à l'aérogare de Lakeburn

et se terminer au Beauséjour.

Les journaux de l'époque nous rapportent que plus de 3.000 personnes attendaient Durelle à l'aérogare, que 1.800 voitures ont participé à la parade et qu'au moins 20.000 supporters et amis venant d'un peu partout au Nouveau-Brunswick, étaient massés le long du parcours.

On a même fait remarquer que la visite de la Reine Elizabeth en 1951 n'avait pas suscité l'intérêt du public au même point que le retour du champion boxeur acadien.

Yvon qui ne détestait pas la vitesse et possédait toujours des voitures de grandes classes, a été victime de plusieurs accidents dont la plupart ont eu lieu en juin.

Et lundi dernier, une dernière malchance lui est arrivée! Des farceurs de mauvais goût ou des collectionneurs de souvenirs,

lui ont dérobé son paignoire blanc, seule relique qu'il avait conservée de ses jours de gloire! J'espère qu'il s'agissait d'une farce et qu'Yvon le récupérera!

Maintenant lutteur

Durelle fait maintenant de la lutte. Est-ce qu'il préfère cela à la boxe? Jamais de la vie, mais comme il nous l'expliquait il peut de nouveau être entouré des câbles d'une arène et se servir de sa force. Ses adversaires le respectent car ils savent que si Yvon commence à se servir de ses poings, le combat sera court! Si les médecins le lui permettaient Durelle tenterait un retour à la boxe, mais il n'en est plus question, et il doit se contenter d'une arène de lutte!

Ses craintes

Ce colosse, qui ne craint pas un homme, quelque soit sa force ou son poids, admet candidelement qu'il plie devant son épouse Thé-

vèse! Il a confiance en son jugement et lorsqu'elle décide, il "passe par là"!

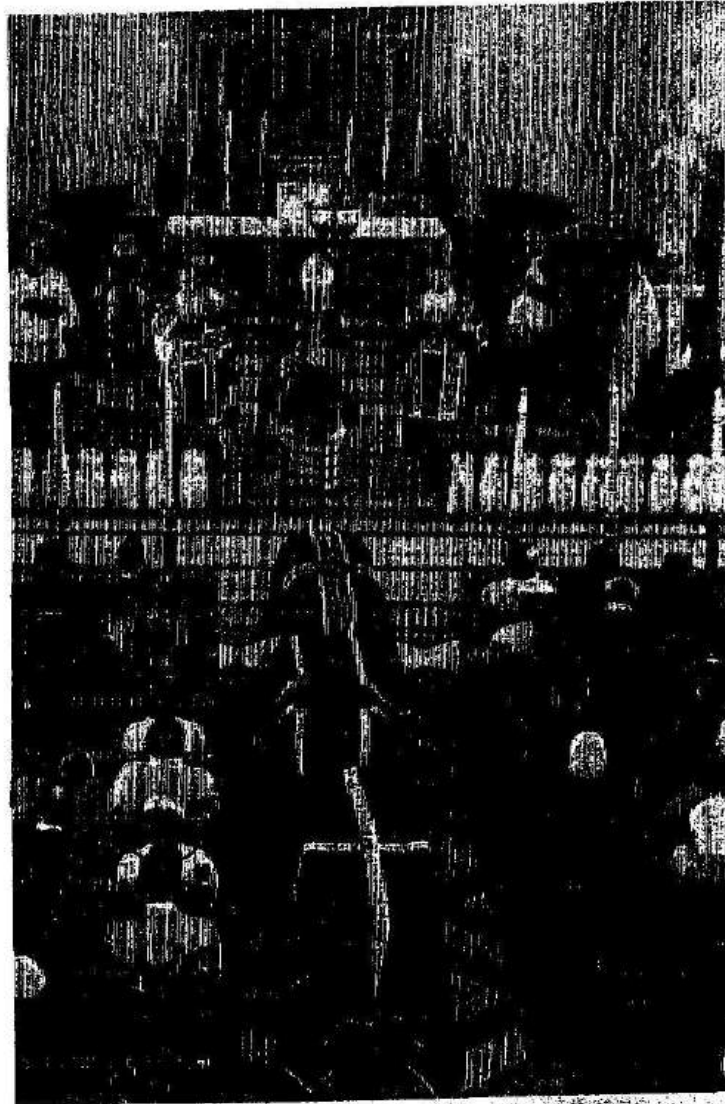
Croyez-le ou non, Yvon a peur des fantômes et des piqûres! Il ne peut entrer seul dans une maison inhabitée, doit être accompagné sur la rue dès que la noirceur survient, même si ce n'est que par un enfant de 6 ans! "Je crèverais du coup si je voyais un "ghost" nous confiait-il. De plus le médecin qui lui fera une injection n'est pas venu au monde! "Pas de piqûre pour moi. Des pilules O.K. mais rien d'autres!"

Un conseil: ne vous avisez pas à lui faire peur le soir, car il réagit terriblement vite et votre mâchoire pourrait en souffrir!

En terminant je souhaite tout le succès à Yvon dans sa nouvelle carrière de lutteur, et qu'il oublie les mois de juin et les fantômes!

Pierre Roy

June 20, 1969



A Baie-Ste-Anne, Mgr Norbert Robichaud a célébré le service-funèbre de trois des victimes, tandis que les recherches se poursuivaient dans la baie. Des chalutiers sont venus de Caraquet, de Shippagan, le ministère des Pêches a envoyé ses vedettes, comme la Gendarmerie canadienne, des avions de l'ARC ont pris part aux recherches. Entre les chalutiers, on avait tendu des filets pour essayer de retrouver les corps des disparus. Chaque église enterrait ses morts, l'archidiocèse tout entier était en deuil. Le mardi 23 juin, seuls 11 cadavres avaient été retrouvés: il en manquait encore 24.

Escuminac: le monument à la mémoire de 35 pêcheurs dévoilé et béni hier

Escuminac: 10 ans après la tragédie maritime qui enleva 35 vies courageuses à une population déjà pauvre en ressources, un monument a été élevé à la mémoire de ces pêcheurs.

Le 19 juin 1969, le soleil brillait malgré un ciel nuageux sur le quai d'Escuminac, ce qui aura eu pour effet d'adoucir l'amertume causée par un souvenir qui ne s'éteindra jamais.

Plus de 2000 personnes rassemblées à l'entrée du quai, au bord d'une route étroite encombrée par les nobles voitures des dignitaires, ont assisté au dévoilement, à la dédication et à la bénédiction du monument aux pêcheurs, œuvre de Claude Roussel.

Jane Kingston, fille de Windsor Kingston, victime du désastre et Lucien Chiasson, fils de William Chiasson et frère de Adrien et Robert Chiasson, également décédés ce 19 juin 1959, ont brièvement pris la parole devant les

invités, leurs parents et amis. Etudiants à Toronto et à Frédéricton, ces deux jeunes gens ont rendu hommage à la mémoire de leurs parents disparus et remercié leurs bien-faiteurs.

Dévoilé par M. Wallace Bird, lieutenant-gouverneur du Nouveau-Brunswick, dédié par le reverend A.H. O'Neil, archevêque de Frédéricton et béni par Mgr Norbert Robichaud, archevêque de Moncton, le monument gigantesque a plus aux gens simples comme aux plus fortunés. "C'est bien beau, c'est presque trop beau. Nous sommes heureux aujourd'hui," a souligné un pêcheur.

Ce pêcheur en question, sympathique et ému, n'a jamais oublié ses amis disparus en mer. Ce jour-là, il avait décidé de ne pas aller travailler. Cette décision, sûrement pénible à prendre, l'a favorisée.

Le premier ministre Louis J. Robichaud a, pour sa part, rappelé que la mer est "pour nous le trait-d'union essentiel entre l'ancien et le nouveau monde. Combien de vies a-t-il

fallu sacrifier à la mer pour que notre pays prenne souche sur nos côtes."

Faisant allusion aux 35 pêcheurs noyés, M. Robichaud a déclaré: "Leur vie qu'était humble, leur dur métier, sont un vivant symbole pour tous ceux qu'ils aimaient; leurs parents, leurs femmes, leurs enfants, leurs amis."

"Puisse ce monument nous rappeler, à chacun d'entre nous, la grandeur de la vie de pêcheur, leur courage et leur force. Puisse ce monument nous rappeler l'importance de nos traditions maritimes car, face à l'océan infini, nous continuons d'être par le courage quotidien de ceux qui affrontent la mer, le trait-d'union entre l'ancien et le nouveau monde."

Le ministre de la Santé et du Bien-être, M. Norbert Thériault, de Baie Sainte-Anne, a, de son côté, rendu hommage aux hommes, femmes et organismes qui ont aidé si généreusement les familles affligées.

"Le courage du pêcheur est légendaire. Depuis le début de tout temps, les villages de

pêcheurs connaissent autant de tristesse que de joie..

Que de victimes renferment cette mer à la fois généreuse et tyrannique. Le métier est dur. C'est un métier d'hommes courageux. Il faut nourrir la famille, mais aussi le monde. Les survivants nous parlent de leurs efforts désespérés contre les vagues géantes qui déferlaient contre ces petits navires en bois.

"Leur vie ne comptait plus. Il fallait sauver un père, un frère, un compagnon, un inconnu. Nous revoyons ce courage au village. On pleurera la perte d'un père, d'un frère, mais la vie reprendra. Il faudra. Il faudra encore pêcher. C'est l'homme aux prises avec la nature, si généreuse, si cruelle."

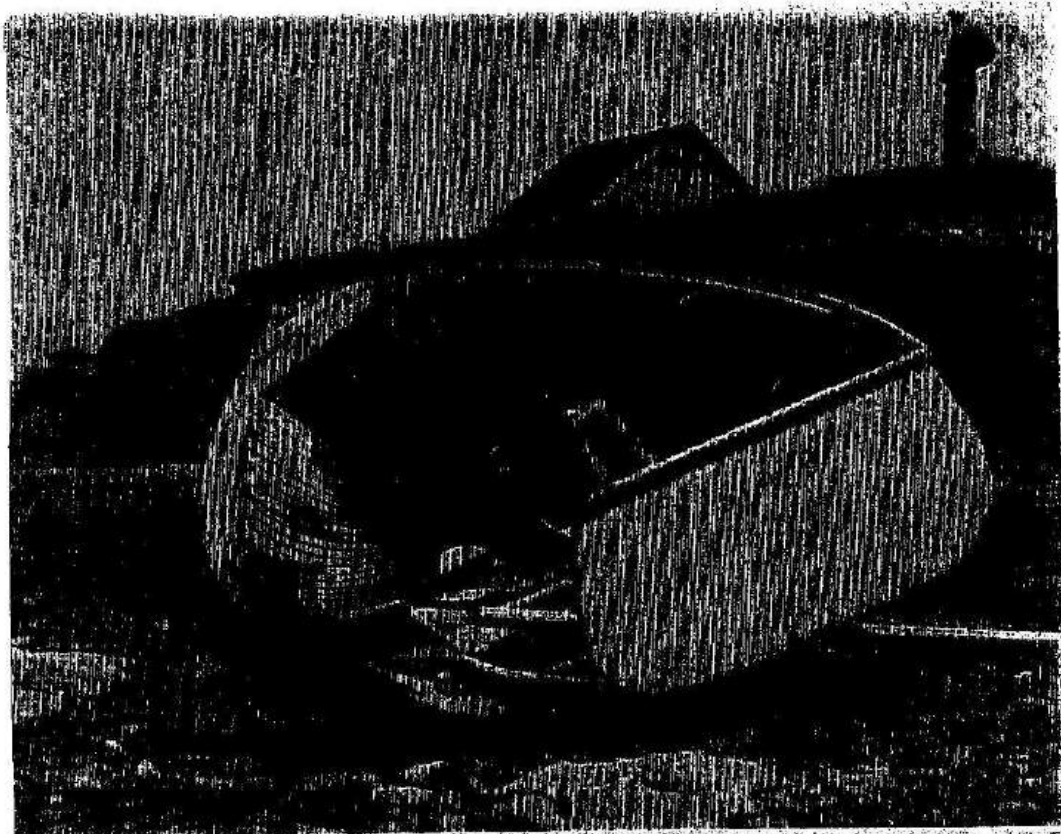
En effet, la vie reprendra. Elle a repris. De chaudes larmes ont sillonné les joues des

mères, des filles, des fils, hier à Escuminac. Mais le soleil et la résignation les ont rapidement séchées. Le courage forme les individus.

Le coût du monument a été défrayé par Sir Max Aitken, président de la Fondation Lord Beaverbrook. Un hommage spécial a été rendu au brigadier Michael Wardell, éditeur du Daily Gleaner, de Frédéricton, qui a lancé une souscription afin de venir en aide aux familles des pêcheurs disparus et qui administre le fonds depuis 10 ans.

M. Hugh John Fleming, premier ministre du Nouveau-Brunswick en 1959, était également de la cérémonie. Sa visite à Escuminac fut grandement appréciée. De nombreuses personnalités du monde politique et industriel y participaient aussi, entre autres M. Richard Hatfield et la famille Irving.

June 20, 1969



Dans ce bateau, que la mer a rejeté à la côte à 450 verges du quai d'Escuminac, deux hommes sont morts. Le cadavre d'Edgar Daigle a été retrouvé sous une pile de débris, à l'arrière du bateau, et ce-

lui de Rémi Martin était amarré sur le côté gauche du bateau. Beaucoup de cadavres avaient les poumons secs: la mer les avait tués, sans les noyer, en les fracassant contre leurs embarcations.



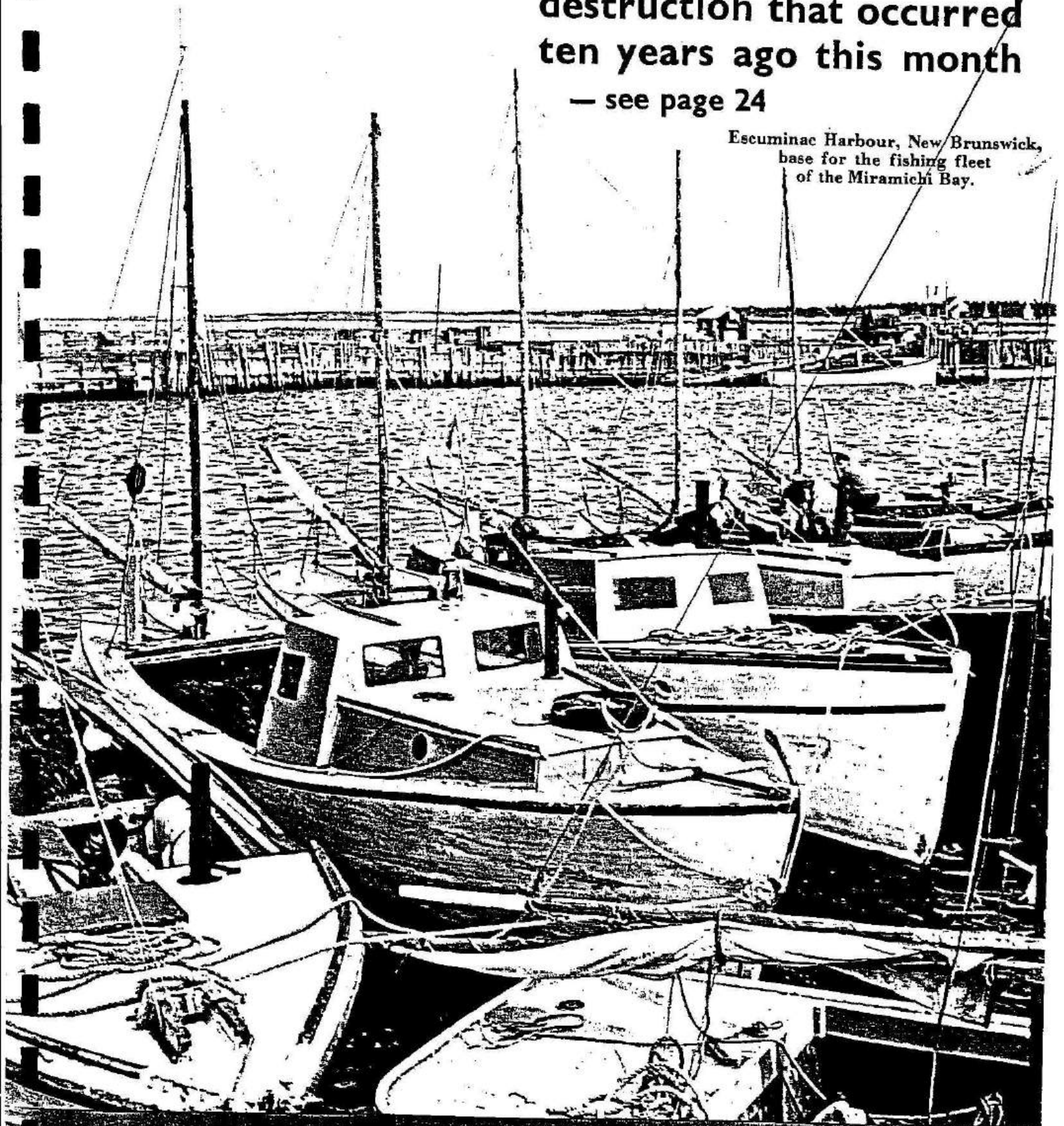
Ces enfants ont fait plus pour le fonds de secours aux pêcheurs sinistrés que tous les articles de journaux, surtout la petite Jane. Le photographe de L'Évangéline les a surpris à Moncton, où ils passaient, le 19 juillet 1959. De gauche à droite: Do-

rothy, six ans, Jocely, huit ans, Nancy, trois ans, Stephen, un an, Judy, deux ans, Donna, quatre ans, James, neuf ans, et Jane, huit ans. Ils entourent leur mère, Mme Winston Kingston, d'Escuminac, dont le mari avait disparu au cours de la tempête.

HEROES OF MIRAMICHI BAY

A story of supreme courage
during dire disaster and
destruction that occurred
ten years ago this month
— see page 24

Escuminac Harbour, New Brunswick,
base for the fishing fleet
of the Miramichi Bay.



HEROES OF MIRAMICHI BAY

a tribute to the dead—and to the living

By MICHAEL WARDELL



The aftermath of the storm in which thirty-five New Brunswick fishermen perished.

MIRAMICHI BAY IS part of the sea and, like its parent, it has its moods. It was moody that fateful day in June a decade ago. The date was June 19, 1959.

The bay had a cold and grey look. As fishermen would say, there was a "stiff breeze of wind" blowing in from the sea. It is possible that some of the older ones felt concern as they looked at the sea and the sky but, if they had qualms, they didn't show it. It is possible, too, as they set out in their salmon drift-net boats they may have murmured the prayer uttered by fishermen in diverse tongues for hundreds of years:

*Lord, ere we go, to Thee we trust
our all.*

*Thy sea is mighty, and our boats
are small.*

If there had been forebodings among the salmon drifter fishermen, they were soon forgotten as the fleet reached the fishing grounds and the nets were set to catch the elusive Atlantic salmon as they came in from the Atlantic wastes to seek the streams in the vast Miramichi River system where they were born. They must return to those same streams to reproduce their kind.

The white boats, many of them of the Cape Island type with high prows and low sterns, fanned out to sea from Escuminac Harbour like a flight of gulls from north to east. In terms of equipment they had little. Most of them were powered by automobile engines secured by bolts to the bottom of the open-decked craft. Few had radios aboard.

One of the boats with a battery radio was the drifter *Sharon Lloyd* manned by Roy Lloyd, his thirteen-year-old son Brian and crewmen Leslie Lewis and Chlorin Jimmo. The *Sharon Lloyd* was the largest, forty-eight-foot-six-inches long, of the fifty-four Escuminac boats drifting for salmon that afternoon. Those with radios heard the four o'clock marine forecast from the Dominion Public Weather Office in Halifax. "Light winds tonight, tomorrow northeast 25." Roy Lloyd heard the forecast. It was reassuring. Gale warnings were to come later, but few fishermen were to hear them.

After supper, early in the evening, Roy Lloyd scented a change in the weather. The breeze was stiffening. He was well out into the broader waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence before he set his net. He switched on his radio to hear the 10 o'clock weather bulletin. It was "North-

east gales 35, shifting about dawn to northwest 35, and diminishing in afternoon to southwest winds 25."

A far call, this, from the 70-mile-an-hour hurricane that was to churn the Gulf water and the Bay of Miramichi like a witch's cauldron before morning and beat up the waves to thirty and forty feet in clouds of fog and spray.

All through the night the wind increased as the waves smashed against the sides of Roy's boat, making it toss like a body in torment. Young Brian groaned in his distress. In spite of the acute discomfort, Roy, wise and ripe with experience, decided to stay holding on to the net for anchorage with a chance that the storm would blow itself out. It was not until noon that he made up his mind to haul in and start on the long run home. Some hours later he came upon a sinking boat with a man tied to the mast. And so begins a saga of the sea that could be read through the centuries and still stand unmatched for its narrative of sheer heroism.

The *Sharon* circled the crippled drifter until it was possible to approach near enough to cast a line and haul the young man aboard. Numbed and barely conscious, he was waiting for the death that

"He knew that was their only hope."

could not long be delayed. for the boat was being swept inexorably toward the breakers which crashed on the rocks ahead. This was Edward Cook, who had come with his sixty-year-old father Fraser from Prince Edward Island to take their share of the harvest of salmon. They had ridden the storm through the night, but at last the waves bore down on their small craft so mercilessly that they cut away their net and made for the breakwater. Before they could reach it, a great wave

broke over them and their engine stopped. Out of control, the boat slewed broadside to the waves and capsized. Father and son clung fast and, as it surfaced and righted itself, they somehow clambered back on board. Edward lashed himself to the mast with a heavy twenty-one-thread rope. He yelled to his father to do the same. But the older man went to the engine to re-start it. He knew that was their only hope. Just then, a massive wall of water descended on them. When Edward cleared the salt from his eyes, his father was gone, swept into the boisterous sea. The last sight Edward had of him was a hundred yards away. There was nothing he could do.

When Roy Lloyd came up to him, Cook could barely understand the words that were shouted to him above the roar of the wind and waves. They were repeated again and again before he seemed to hear, and Jimmo had thrown the line as many times. Then it landed between the shroud and the mast. All Cook had to do was to pick it up. "Untie yourself," Roy shouted, and at last Cook came to his senses and put his two arms in the straps. "Jump overboard," Roy called to him. "He

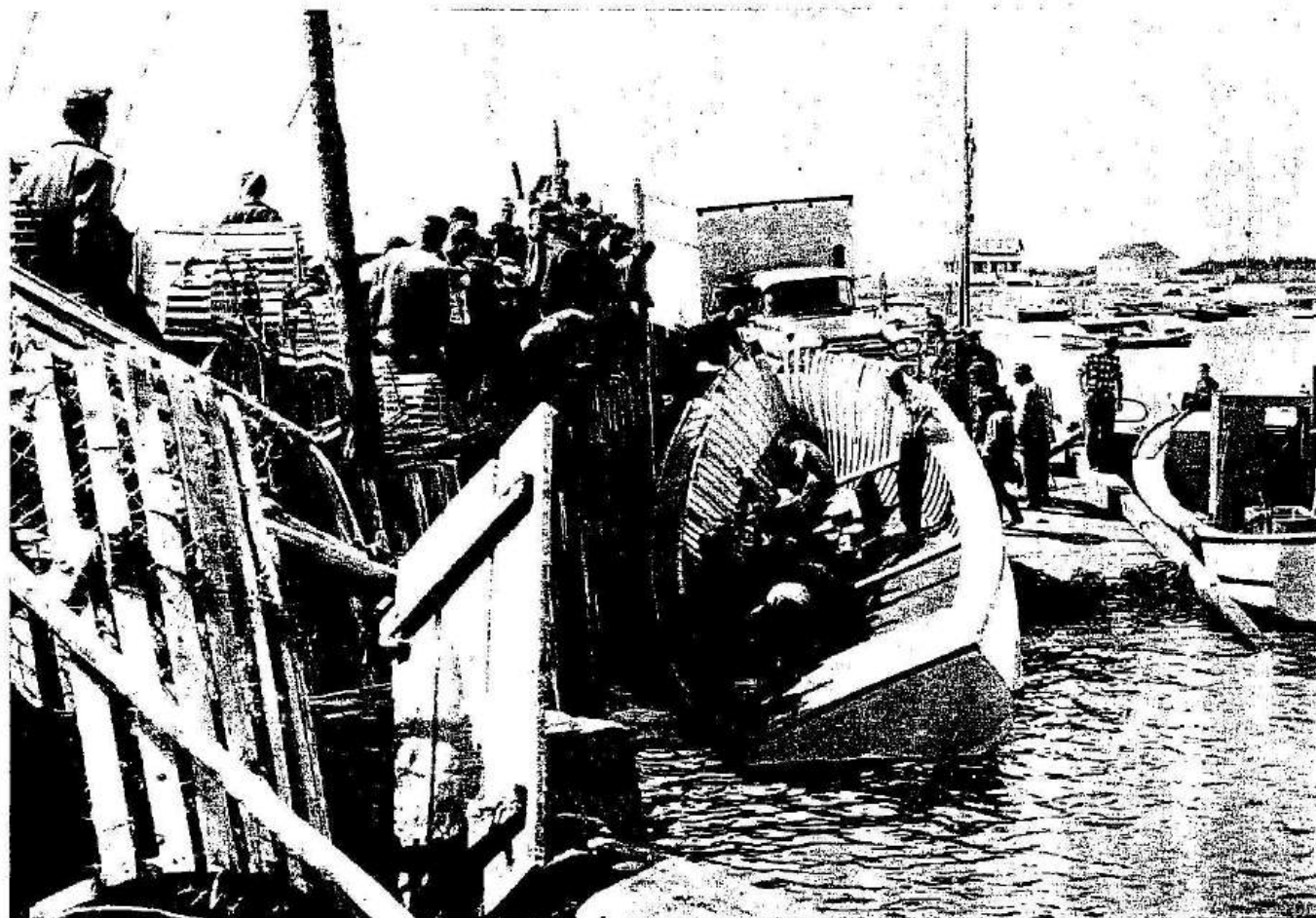


Above, Brian, Roy Lloyd's 13-year-old son, after the storm.



Left, Roy Lloyd, owner of the drifter "Sharon Lloyd."

Below, a battered and broken boat is washed ashore without motor or cuddy or crew.



"onlookers saw the vessel lifted up a sheer fifty feet... smashes"

wouldn't jump," Roy said afterwards, "but he crawled to the stern and we pulled him over into the sea. The bows of his boat were already under water, and a tangled rope from the submerged portion was entwined around one of his legs, and it yanked his rubber boot off. That shows what a close shave he had. But we hauled him up, a heavy dead weight with his big quilted jacket on." All this time the Lloyd boat was in deadly peril. But a life was saved, and the arrival of the Lloyds at Escuminac Harbour an hour later was received with cheering from packed crowds that thronged the breakwater.

This is but one of the stories of that day that will become part of Miramichi folklore. The boats passed each other in the night, with a shout of recognition from their owners and a word or a phrase that draws the drama into the focus of a story of friends and neighbours meeting the supreme challenge with a glory that is eternal.

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THE first to reach land next morning was Stirling Williston. Five other Willistons never returned. Soon after five o'clock on Saturday morning Stirling and his two young companions, David Gardner and Alexander Newton, made a dramatic landing. In the huge seas they were battling to reach the breakwater they saw the boat of Allan and Andrew Mills, and hailed it. There was no reply. Both were drowned, but Williston did not know it. Suddenly his steering gear broke and the engine stopped. As they reached the dangerous shallow water, a huge wave lifted the boat bodily and cast it on to Tom Nowlan's shore. The three men miraculously jumped to safety. The boat was wrecked.

The next two to land were Edgar Daigle and Rémi Martin. Both were dead in their boat when it was washed ashore.

Snatched from death was Gerard Bonenfant, called "Red", and commonly known as Goodchild, in the happy bilingual idiom of the region. Red was fifty-six years old and had the smallest of the fishing boats, just thirty-four feet in length. But he had twenty-seven nets with seventeen salmon in them. He had pulled them in, no mean feat for one man in such a sea. The last he could not lift, because he had a 300-pound porpoise in it. So he tied this net to the stern, and, using it like a sea anchor, he managed well enough until he came within sight of Escuminac wharf. Then the sea swamped his motor, and he was heading for a rocky reef and certain death, when Tom Lewis appeared in the very nick of time to snatch him to safety.

Thomas Lewis was from Escuminac and had brought two young friends out that



Gerard Bonenfant, commonly called "Red" Goodchild, was saved by Thomas Lewis. "The two boats were each rising and falling thirty feet and more with the waves, and Red had to judge his height and distance like a man on a flying trapeze before making the jump for his life."

night, Jack Preston and Robert Searie. In the huge seas they were taking in a lot of water, and the three men had to keep pumping to stay afloat. Then one of the straining shrouds pulled away and the mast collapsed with the sail torn to shreds. As they approached the breakwater, the waves were so high that Lewis decided he couldn't get in and would make for the lee of Fox Island. It was as he turned about that he came upon Red Goodchild floating to his death. He passed a rope, but it broke. At great peril to his own boat he came in close. After several tries, the closest he could get was fifteen feet. The two boats were each rising and falling thirty feet and more with the waves, and Red had to judge his height and distance like a man on a flying trapeze before making the jump for his life. Then followed the long run against the strong tide to Fox Island and a perilous race through a narrow channel that nearly swamped the small boat. So they reached Bay du Vin Island, and thence down to Hardwicke in the evening.

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THE rescue story of Theodore Williston is both magnificent and macabre. In his *Gulf Prowler* he had passed Roy Lloyd in the early morning.

"Hallo, there," he had shouted. "Are you O.K.?"

"I guess so," Roy had shouted in reply. "We're holding on to our net."

Williston had young Larry Martin and Aquila Manuel as crew. After a rough night, he had hauled nets in early and set course for home. Fog and spray were blinding, but as he approached the shallow water, visibility improved and he saw a sandbar on which giant waves were breaking into long white rollers menacing and destructive. *Gulf Prowler* quickly put about, and Williston was able to warn the three boats of Jack Doucet, Placide MacIntyre and Bernard Jenkins of the danger ahead.

Next he came upon Raymond Thibeau, struggling to get his engine started, but being washed relentlessly toward the bar. *Gulf Prowler* circled and a line was thrown to Thibeau and he was taken in tow until he could get his engine started again. Then, as glad to end the danger of the tow as were the crew of *Gulf Prowler*, he cast off and, with a cheery wave of his hand, steered away into the storm.

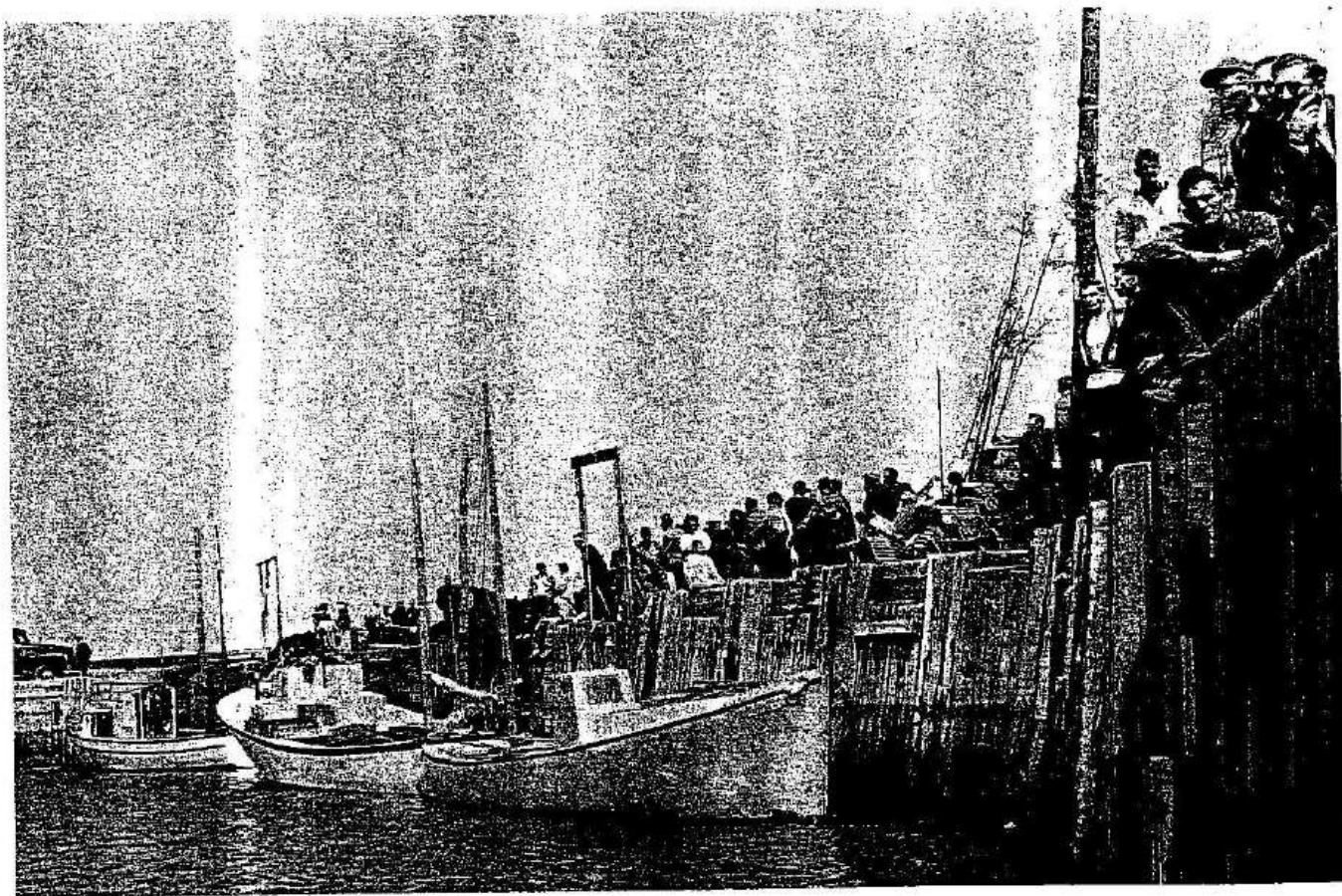
But this was not to be the last good act of the day for Theodore Williston. There was a warning shout from his crewman Aquila Manuel, and out of the murk a drifter appeared in the last stages of breaking up. It was barely afloat and a man was clinging to the stern. Theodore recognized his cousin Walter Williston. Aquila swung the line to him. Walter was evidently in the last extremities of exposure and shock. With him was his dead friend, twenty-year-old Harold Taylor. Walter wouldn't leave him and tied the rope to Taylor's body. Aquila pulled it through the sea, then threw the rope again for Walter Williston. Only after getting him aboard did Theodore put his craft about and run through the heavy seas to the harbour.

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AFTER being warned of the sandbar by Theodore Williston, Jack Doucet encountered the biggest wave of that manic storm. Theodore Williston saw it, and so did Raymond Thibeau and Bernard Jenkins. All but Jenkins were sure that Jack Doucet's boat, the *Francine D.*, was lost with all hands. This was the second biggest boat in the fleet, a forty-five-foot sixteen-ton vessel with a crew consisting of Jack's young sons Alphonse, seventeen, and Everett, fourteen. Seventy-two-year-old William George Manuel was out with them just for the sport of it.

When this monstrous wave bore down on the *Francine D.*, the horrified onlookers saw the vessel lifted up a sheer fifty feet and as swiftly smashed down into the trough, then shoot several feet clear of the wave and fall back upside down. It seemed impossible for anyone to live.

town in the trough... It seemed impossible for anyone to live."



Anxious crowds thronged the breakwater of Escuminac Harbour to await the return of the fishermen. Only half the boats returned.

William Manuel was killed instantly, but a miracle occurred to save the other three. They surfaced in time to see the boat right itself. Jack could not swim. Everett could, and Alphonse found himself clinging to the side of the boat. All three managed to haul themselves on board. But water was coming in fast and it was clear they soon must sink.

What happened after that is a commonplace of bravery judged by the standards of that day. Bernard Jenkins brought his boat at great risk to within twenty-five feet of the sinking *Francine D.* Cyril Jenkins, Bernie's nephew and the only other member of his crew, threw the lifeline and it was caught by Alphonse, who tied it under his brother Evé's armpits. "Jump for it, Evé," he yelled, "Bernie'll pull you aboard." And so young Evé plunged into the waves and was hauled aboard the *Alda Marie*. Bernie took another sweep through the storm and came round again to within throwing distance. Cyril threw a second time and Alphonse caught the line. This time he tied it round his exhausted father. Almost an hour passed before Bernie could manoeuvre his craft through the raging seas close enough for Cyril to throw the line a third time. This time, after the hour of dreadful suspense, Alphonse tied it round himself and was saved.

It was close on midday when another great wave broke over the *Alda Marie*, washing the engine off its mountings and swamping it. All went to work with buckets to bail. Bernie said afterwards that if the Doucets had not been aboard, the *Alda Marie* would surely have sunk.

Raymond Thibeau, meanwhile, had made it to the breakwater at Escuminac. He had seen the mountainous wave wreck the Doucet boat and had reported that no one could have survived. Imagine, then, the rejoicing when at seven o'clock that Sunday morning Bernie Jenkins and his *Alda Marie* with the *Francine's* crew on board, sailed into Escuminac Harbour. And as a footnote to that remarkable story it may be added that at his first approach the size of the waves made him decide to go back into deeper water because of his heavily laden boat. So he and his double crew improved the stormy hour before coming in by working on their nets and eating a meal of salmon caught in them.

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I HAVE written of five Willistons who lost their lives that day, and of two more, of Theodore and of Walter, rescued by Theodore. There was an eighth who was saved twice that day from certain death.

Norman Williston of Bay du Vin was swept overboard and his crewman Pierre Doiron rescued him at great risk to his own life. Back on board, battered by the storm, the pair were in desperate straits, the boat out of control and taking water fast. It was close to sinking when Alvin Durelle of Escuminac came up just in time to save them, aided by Edmond Martin his helper. Durelle was recommended for an award. The citation, recorded at the time, read: "Alvin Durelle displayed exceptional courage, seamanship and fearlessness before danger as he rescued Norman Williston and his crew. Alvin Durelle is recommended for an award."

Did he get it?

The answer is: "No".

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ALMOST all the men whose names I have mentioned were recommended in 1959 for recognition of their acts of gallantry in saving lives, Roy and Brian Lloyd for saving Edward Cook, Thomas Lewis for saving Gerard Bonenfant, Theodore Williston for saving Raymond Thibeau and Walter Williston, Pierre Doiron for saving Norman Williston, Alvin Durelle for saving Norman Williston and Pierre Doiron, Bernard and Cyril Jenkins for saving the three Doucets

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"It was Lord Beaverbrook's gift that set the pace."



Mayor Nathan Phillips of Toronto makes much of the Windsor Kingston family who journeyed through Ontario to raise money for the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund. Eight-year-old Jane Kingston is second from left. Mrs. Kingston is on the right.

and, of course, Alphonse Doucet who saved his brother and his father before himself. And there were the crew members who took valiant parts in the rescues, Leslie Lewis, Chlorin Jimmo, Hilarion Martin, Aquila Manuel and Edmond Martin. And there were Jack Preston and Robert Searle. Sixteen brave men, almost all of them recommended by one or all of the agencies or committees or provincial government representatives who were concerned to see recognition given at that time.

On January 23, 1960, it was announced in the *Canada Gazette* that Bernard Jenkins and Cyril Jenkins had been awarded the British Empire Medal for Gallantry. They were invested by The Governor General, the late General Vanier, at the Legislative Assembly in Fredericton on May 8, 1961. The Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct was awarded to Alphonse Doucet and posthumously awarded to Fraser Cook, who had died in the storm and whose son had been rescued by Roy Lloyd. But to Roy Lloyd, Thomas Lewis, Theodore Williston and the ten others listed above, nothing. The blue pencil of officialdom was busy. Who wielded it is a mystery that will defy all examination.

But awards aren't all that important. Nothing can take away the glory of the dead, whose names will be inscribed in bronze on a monument to be unveiled at Escuminac Harbour on the tenth anniversary of the disaster, June 19, 1969. Nothing can take away the honour of those men who went down without a

"inspiration came immediately after the disaster..."

whimper into the fury of the sea that night and day in the Bay of Miramichi.

And nothing can take away the glory of the living who that night and day ten years ago risked their lives over and over again to save, or to try to save, the lives of their comrades. We should be proud to know these men of Miramichi who are living with us today and to remember their names and to honour them.

It is for this reason that the committee entrusted with the arrangements for the memorial decided in addition to listing the names of the men who lost their lives, to add in letters of bronze the names of the men who were recognized for acts of bravery in saving the lives of others.

The memorial is sculptured from a block of local limestone more than seven feet high, to depict the figures of three fishermen who will symbolize the thirty-five who perished in the storm. It is the work of Claude Roussel, the director of the department of visual arts at the University of Moncton. The inspiration came to him immediately after the disaster. I was organizing the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund, and he gave me the model carved in wood, saying: "The emotion of the tragedy, the dignity and poetry of the fishermen's way of life, incited me to develop the sculpture." I was much impressed by the design and have seen it almost every day since then, a matter of nearly ten years. It is for this reason that I have some assurance that the stone monument will grow in the esteem and affection of the people who will live with it.

The entire cost of the monument has

Shine? Shoe 'Nuff!

been met by Sir Max Aitken, and he has his own special qualifications for presenting a memorial to courage. He was a very distinguished fighter pilot during the long years of the last war, and no one is better able to evaluate the qualities which will be commemorated. Moreover, it was his father, Lord Beaverbrook, who made the first gift to the fund. On the Monday morning after the disaster I was sitting in my office at the *Daily Gleaner* in Fredericton, reading reporters' accounts of the deaths and also of the heroism of survivors, and trying to figure out how best to create a fund to help alleviate the suffering brought to that small community, when the telephone rang. It was Lord Beaverbrook speaking from London, and he asked for the latest news. His *Daily Express* with its 4-million circulation had devoted most of its front page that morning to the report of the disaster. "I'll give you \$5,000 for your fund," he said. "More if you want it." And he gave me this message:

"In this disaster without parallel in the Miramichi Bay that holds for me life-long memories, I send my deepest sympathy to the bereaved, my sorrow for the loss of so many splendid lives, and my admiration for those who faced the dangers of the storm and survived."

That started the flow. The New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund was on its way that morning with Premier Hugh John Flemming as its chairman. In its public launching it was given a great lift by the action of the Queen and Prince Philip who broke with royal precedent by personally subscribing to it. They met the widows, mothers and children of the dead fishermen at Pointe-du-Chêne as an expression of the deep compassion they so truly felt for them.

The memorial will be unveiled at Escuminac Harbour on June 19 at 2 o'clock. The Protestant Archbishop of Fredericton and the Catholic Archbishop of Moncton will perform a joint ceremony of dedication and blessing. This will be a reminder of the great work performed by both churches in the formation of the fund, and of the active help that both have given to the survivors in the ten years that are past.

It will be a reminder, too, of the generosity of the givers to the Fishermen's Disaster Fund. And of the men and women who have administered it. The target figure of \$440,000 was reached within six months. Rich people and corporations, governments and institutions gave bountifully. But it was countless gifts of the little people, with no great reserves or resources, that were so moving at the time, and the strange anonymous gifts, such as one from Montreal that defied all efforts to trace, and came with a banker's order for \$3,000 and the message: "I only wish it were more." Collec-



Jane Kingston takes the front page of the *Toronto Telegram* with the above heading and caption which read: "Here's a young lady putting her best shoes forward . . . along with those of her seven brothers and sisters. Jane Kingston, 8, who is here with her family to seek aid for New Brunswick storm victims, leaves the footwear out for a shine at the hotel where they are staying."

tions of dimes and quarters were made and many subscribed the whole of their savings for several months on end.

There were twenty-six widows and eighty-three children. The widows received a monthly allowance for life, and the children until they reached the age of eighteen. Children with the capacity for further education have been helped in a number of ways. As examples of the fine young people who have been helped in this way, two students who lost their fathers will make brief appearances at the unveiling ceremony on June 19. These are Jane Kingston and Lucien Chiasson. Jane will speak in English, Lucien in French. Jane is a first-year student at St. Thomas University. Lucien is at the Radio College

of Canada in Toronto. Both are doing exceptionally well.

Of Jane I have some special memories. To swell the fund ten years ago, it was desirable to touch the warm hearts of "Upper Canada". Accordingly, I invited Mrs. Windsor Kingston, one of the widows of the storm, to come with her family of eight little ones on a visit with me to Toronto.

There they were fêted. The Mayor, the late Nathan Phillips, made much of them. Daily their photographs were on the front pages of the newspapers. They appeared on television. And always Jane, aged eight, stole the show. One day she would be seen on the front page of the *Telegram* putting out the shoes for her seven



Jane Kingston today. At the unveiling of the memorial on June 19, Jane will speak in English and Lucien Chiasson in French. He is a student at the Radio College of Canada in Toronto. She is a first-year student at St. Thomas University, in Fredericton.

brothers and sisters. Next day she would be disporting herself quite unself-consciously in a splendid private swimming pool. And all the while the money poured into the fund. Who better than Jane could represent today the younger generation whose fathers were lost to them at Escuminac?

Everyone concerned with the fund, during the appeal and afterwards in the years of administration, has worked without remuneration. It is for this reason that the costs during the appeal and for the ten years afterwards have amounted for the whole period in total to less than one-tenth of one per cent of the amount of the fund.

Particular mention must be made of the Rev. L. M. Pepperdene of Chatham, N.B., who has served since the day of the disaster as chairman of the Welfare Committee of the fund. This month he retires

from his rectorship at Chatham and his welfare chairmanship, and he will carry with him the gratitude and affection of the hundreds he has helped.

He himself insists that it was a combined effort that got the work done, and mentions the Red Cross, the Chatham Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion in the early days, and Rev. Paul Arsenault, Rev. T. A. Boucher, Rev. O. Porelle and Rev. Benoit Boudreau, successively Parish Priests of Baie Ste. Anne, and Rev. C. M. Jones, Rev. L. J. Galey and Rev. Robert Barry, Anglican Rectors of Bay du Vin.

This is true. But when it is said, still it is Mr. Pepperdene who carried the heavy responsibility for ten years. He could say, as in the ancient proverb: "In serving others, I am consumed." For he has spent his strength in service and his retirement is forced upon him by a breakdown in health. □

A bronze tablet on the Fishermen's Memorial records the names of the following thirty-five fishermen who lost their lives in the Escuminac Disaster of June 19 and 20, 1959:

JOHN CHAPMAN
ADRIEN CHIASSON
ALBERT CHIASSON
ALPHONSE CHIASSON
ROBERT CHIASSON
WILLIAM CHIASSON
FRASER COOK
EDGAR DAIGLE
CHARLES CAUVIN
ARTHUR KELLY
HECTOR KELLY
HUGH KELLY
CLIFFORD KINGSTON
WINDSOR KINGSTON
ALFRED McLENAGHAN
GEORGE McLEOD
AMON MANUEL
WILLIAM G. MANUEL
ALONZO MARTIN
ANDRÉ MARTIN
RÉMI MARTIN
ALLAN MILLS
ANDREW MILLS
GEOFFREY RICHARD
JEAN LOUIS RICHARD
LIONEL RICHARD
RAPHAEL ROBICHAUD
VICTOR ROBICHAUD
LEO RÔY
HAROLD TAYLOR
CUNARD WILLISTON
ERIC WILLISTON
HALEY WILLISTON
HAYNES WILLISTON
OSWALD WILLISTON

A second bronze tablet records the names of sixteen men living today who were recognized for acts of bravery in saving the lives of others during the great storm of June 19 and 20, 1959:

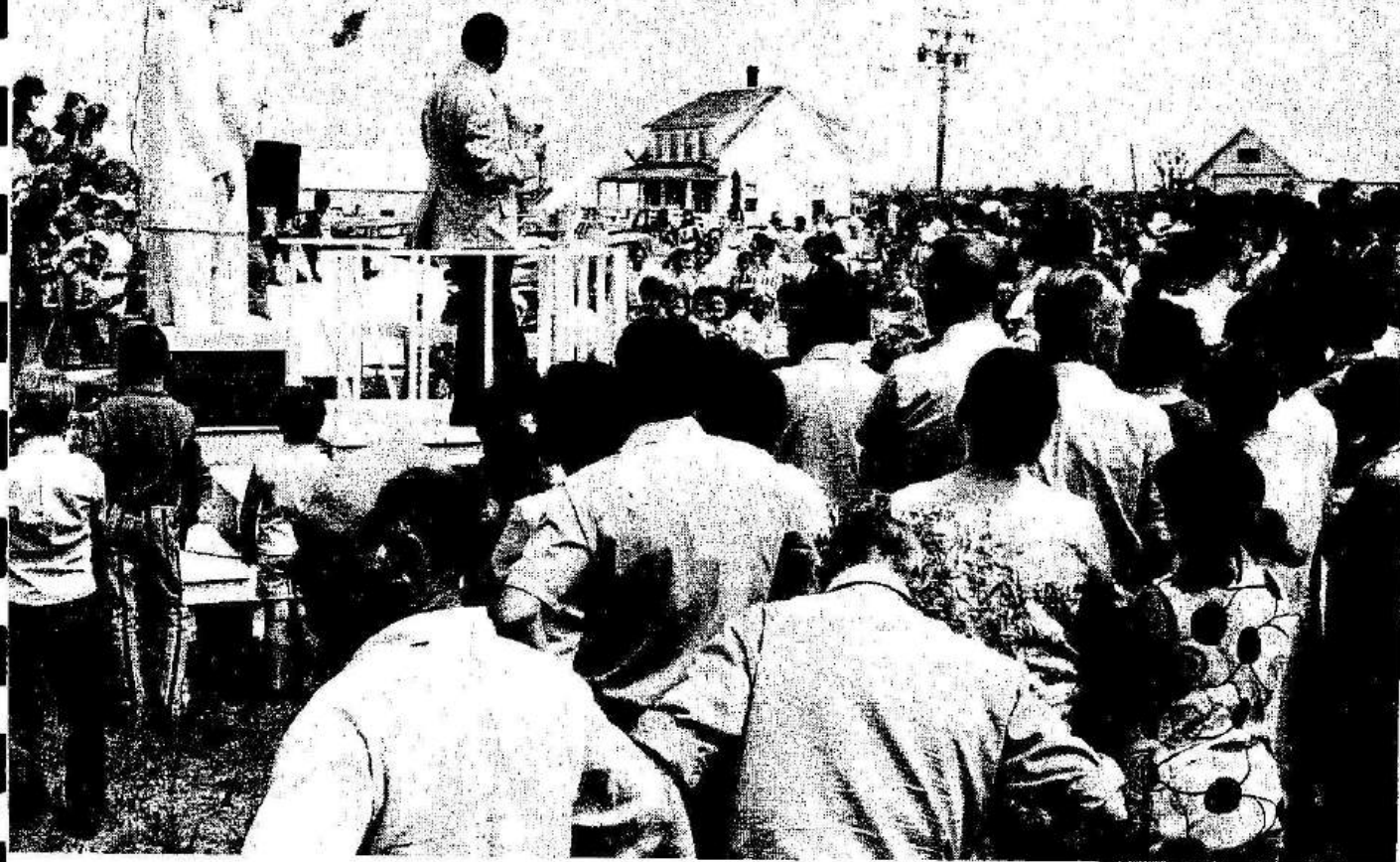
PIERRE DOIRON
ALPHONSE DOUCET
ALVIN DURELLE
BERNARD JENKINS
CYRIL JENKINS
CHLORIN JIMMO
LESLIE LEWIS
THOMAS LEWIS
BRIAN LLOYD
ROY LLOYD
AQUILA MANUEL
EDMOND MARTIN
HILARION MARTIN
JACK PRESTON
ROBERT SEARLE
THEODORE WILLISTON



1971

La cérémonie commémorative remporte un grand succès

June, 1971



BAIE SAINTE-ANNE — Une foule nombreuse était présente, hier après-midi, à Escuminac à l'occasion d'une cérémonie commémorative soulignant le 12e anniversaire du désastre survenu les 19 et 20 juin 1959, alors que 35 pêcheurs avaient perdu la vie par noyade à la suite d'une violente tempête.

La cérémonie organisée par la Chambre de Commerce de Baie Sainte-Anne s'est déroulée devant le monument commémoratif, oeuvre de l'artiste Claude Roussel, qui est situé à l'entrée du quai d'Escuminac.

Le brigadier Michael Wardell, un des premiers fondateurs du Nouveau-Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund est arrivé en hélicoptère au cours de la cérémonie, accompagné de M. K.C. Irving. M. Wardell qui a annoncé son retour prochain en Angleterre après avoir passé 21 ans au Canada, n'a pas manqué de faire appel à la loyauté britannique. Il a ajouté qu'il reviendrait visiter le Canada et le Nouveau-Brunswick si sa santé le lui permettait. Il a tenu à faire ressortir la valeur du révérend Prosperine, ancien pasteur à Baie du Vin, qui a presque donné sa vie pour les bénéfices des fonds des pêcheurs.

Le père Cyril D'Amour, originaire de Baie Sainte-Anne et travaillant auprès des malades mentaux à Campbellton, était le conférencier invité à l'occasion de cette cérémonie. Il a félicité les gens de la région pour le geste significatif qu'ils posaient. Il a rappelé ses souvenirs et ses origines à Baie Ste-Anne; "Une

patrie se compose de morts qui l'ont fondée et des vivants qui la continuent". Le père D'Amour a rappelé à tous le devoir de reconnaissance et il a rendu hommage aux pêcheurs en rappelant le dur métier de la pêche. Des lectures religieuses ont été faites par le révérend père Paul Arsenault, curé à Baie Ste-Anne et par le révérend père T. Barry, recteur anglican à Baie du Vin.

Parmi les invités on remarquait en plus des personnes déjà mentionnées: Mgr Désiré Allain de Bouctouche; M. Percy Smith, député de Northumberland; M. Paul Daigle, du bureau du ministère de la jeunesse à Chatham et les anciens curés de la paroisse.

La chorale de l'école de Baie Ste-Anne sous la direction de Sr Evelynne Babineau a interprété quelques chants. Des couronnes de fleurs à la mémoire des pêcheurs ont été déposées par deux femmes de la région au nom des veuves et mères des disparus et par M. Adé Thériault, président de la Chambre de Commerce de Baie Ste-Anne. Des messages ont été reçus de l'honorable G. W.N. Cockburn, ministre provincial des pêcheries et de l'honorable Wallace S. Bird, lieutenant-gouverneur du N.-B.

M. Norbert Thériault de Baie Ste-Anne, (notre photo) député de Northumberland et ancien ministre du bien-être et de la santé, était le maître de cérémonie à cette célébration qui a été suivie d'une tournée en bateau pour aller déposer une gerbe au large. Un souper au homard et au saumon a été ensuite servi dans la salle de la paroisse. (Photo Jean David).



1979

Il y a 20 ans... "Le désastre" de juin 1959

June, 1979



S.E. Mgr Norbert Robichaud, ancien archevêque de Moncton, avait présidé les obsèques de plusieurs pêcheurs noyés en l'église de Baie-Ste-Anne.

Depuis la tragédie, les témoins ont encore peur!

June, 1979

par Nelson Landry
ESCUMINAC — "Au moins 34 morts — Douze noyés retrouvés — 22 hommes manquent encore à l'appel — Huit morts et 19 disparus dans la seule région de Baie-Sainte-Anne où les pertes matérielles dépassent le quart de million."

Cette manchette, publiée dans l'EVANGELINE du lundi 22 juin 1959, faisait état du sinistre le plus important de l'histoire du Nouveau-Brunswick et de toute la côte est de la province.

Les habitants de Baie-Sainte-Anne, Escuminac et Baie-du-Vin n'ont pas encore oubliée aujourd'hui, 20 ans plus tard, la grande tragédie du 19 au 21 juin 1959.

Rares sont d'ailleurs ceux qui ne connaissent pas la signification de l'événement qui a été baptisé "Le Désastre".

Les pêcheurs de l'époque, tels Bernie Jenkins d'Escuminac, se souviennent "Trop bien" de cette tragique fin de semaine qui a coûté la vie à pas moins de 35 pêcheurs.

M. Jenkins, aujourd'hui âgé de 72 ans, ainsi que les 24 veuves et 83 enfants laissés sans pères, ne vont pas oublier cette "cruelle fin de semaine".

Le septagénaire, qui se retrouvait dans son bateau avec son neveu Cyril, se souvient fort bien des vagues "qui montaient comme des montagnes".

"Vous ne pouvez pas vous faire d'idée comme c'était effrayant", a indiqué M. Jenkins au cours d'une entrevue avec l'EVANGELINE.

Pourtant, la mer était si belle lorsque les quelque 50 bateaux ont quitté le port d'Escuminac et de Baie-Sainte-Anne vers 16h le vendredi 19 juin.

Attirés par une pêche qui "s'annonçait bien", les pêcheurs ont "pris le large tôt cette journée-là parce que le saumon voyageait mieux qu'en aucune autre occasion cette semaine là et nous voulions en profiter".

M. Jenkins et ses compagnons de travail n'avaient même pas pris le temps de manger "tellement nous avions hâte d'être en mer pour profiter de cette manne que nous n'avions pas connue depuis plus de dix ans".

Rapport météorologique

Encore aujourd'hui, M. Jenkins et un bon nombre de ses amis qui ont vécu "Le Désastre" n'a pas confiance aux rapports météorologiques "qui nous ont joué un méchant tour. Ils nous ont annoncé du vent de 15 milles à l'heure, mais six heures plus tard, les vents étaient quatre fois plus violents".

"Les pêcheurs "ont cru" ces rapports de vendredi après-midi et nous sommes partis en mer. Tout allait bien jusqu'à vers 11 heures du soir, lorsque le vent s'éleva."

M. Jenkins avait vu des tempêtes en mer avant celui-là et en a vu plusieurs depuis ce temps.

"Mais jamais comme celle-là. C'est la pire que j'ai vue. Je ne puis pas vous la décrire. Les vagues montaient comme des montagnes tout autour de nous. Vous ne pouvez vous faire d'idée comme c'était effrayant."

M. Jenkins, ainsi que son neveu Cyril et plusieurs autres pêcheurs qui ont réussi à échapper à la mort, sont demeurés plus de 40 heures dans la tempête.

M. Jenkins avoue ne connaître aucune amertume envers qui que ce soit du bureau de météorologie, mais il dit n'avoir pas "cru un autre rapport depuis ce temps".

Le directeur du bureau de Halifax à cette époque, M. Rube Hornstein, a indiqué le lendemain du désastre qu'un avertissement avait été donné le vendredi soir, mais que la flotte était déjà en mer.

"Ces tempêtes peuvent s'abattre très rapidement au large des côtes. Nous en avons beaucoup en hiver mais c'est plutôt extraordinaire en ce moment-ci de l'année," avait-il alors déclaré.

Certains pêcheurs, qui ont réussi à rentrer au port sains et saufs deux jours plus tard, ont admis avoir réalisé qu'une tempête se préparait avant qu'ils partent en mer, mais ils n'ont pas pensé qu'elle serait aussi violente.

Des vagues de 60 pieds

"Des montagnes ... des montagnes partout. Les vagues vous soulevaient et vous jetaient ici et là. On était réellement à la merci de Dieu."

Selon M. Jenkins, qui ne peut s'empêcher de verser des larmes en parlant de la disparition de plusieurs de ses amis et voisins, il a vu des corps projetés, "des centaines de pieds par les vagues. Une personne se sent tellement impuissante lorsque vous voyez un au-

tre qui fait face à la mort et vous n'y pouvez rien. J'ai éprouvé ce sentiment à plusieurs occasions pendant cette triste fin de semaine".

Quoique M. Jenkins n'y pouvait rien pour plusieurs pêcheurs, la providence lui a toutefois permis de porter secours à trois de ses compagnons.

En effet, n'eût été du courage et de la persévérance de M. Jenkins, le total des victimes aurait été plus important.

"Il était à peu près 11 heures samedi matin lorsque nous avons aperçu un bateau renversé et trois personnes s'y tenant cramponnées. C'était Jack Doucet et ses fils Alphonse et Evé. On les a ramassés les uns après les autres avec un câble. La première fois que nous avons tiré le câble, un des fils l'a passé à son frère qui à son tour l'a passé à son père."

M. Jenkins ne peut toujours pas croire comment ils ont réussi à secourir les Doucet puisque les vagues "hautes de 60 pieds berçaient notre bateau et c'est grâce à Dieu si les trois ont réussi à atteindre le câble qui leur était allongé".

Les cinq pêcheurs présents dans le bateau ont par la suite vécu des heures pénibles "car notre moteur était manqué et nous n'avions plus d'huile pour le poêle ni de nourriture".

"Il devait être six heures du soir lorsqu'on a réussi à faire marcher le moteur. Nous avions faim, mais l'espoir était revenu avec le fonctionnement du moteur."

Des familles entières ont été décimées...

BAIE-SAINTE-ANNE (NL) — M. Jacques Doucet a été l'un "des chanceux" de la tragédie du 19 juin 1959. Par contre, d'autres l'ont moins été comme M. Camille Chiasson qui a perdu cinq membres de sa famille.

M. Doucet a réussi à atteindre le port le dimanche matin pour célébrer la Fête des pères, mais M. Chiasson, alors âgé de 80 ans et aujourd'hui décédé, a connu une journée beaucoup plus triste comme un bon nombre d'autres d'ailleurs.

Les membres de la famille Chiasson qui ont connu la mort sont William et Albert, deux fils, ainsi que les petits-fils Adrien, Albert et Alphonse.

La région de Baie-Sainte-Anne a été la plus éprouvée avec pas moins de 27 morts.

Les victimes du désastre maritime du détroit de Northumberland sont: Edgar Daigle, Charles Gauvin, William Manuel, Rémi Martin, Geoffrey Richard, John L. Richard, Harold Taylor, Cunard Williston, Hugh Kelly, Hector Kelly, Fraser Cook, Haley Williston, Albert Chiasson, Clifford Kingston, Alonzo Martin, Andrew Martin, John Chapman, Adrien Chiasson, Alphonse Chiasson, Robert Chiasson, William Chiasson, Windsor Kingston, Alfred McLenaghan, George McLeod, Allen Mills, Andrew Mills, Armand Manuel, Lionel Richard, Raphaël Robichaud, Léo Roy, Eric Williston, Haynes Williston et Ossie Williston.

Les noms de ces 34 pêcheurs, en plus des personnes qui ont commis des actes de bravoure en portant secours à leurs compagnons, tels Bernie Jenkins, se retrouvent sur un monument qui a été érigé en leur honneur et à leur mémoire quelques années après "Le Désastre".

Le bateau Jenkins se trouvait alors à quelques milles du rivage, mais les occupants ont décidé d'attendre le lever du soleil afin de tenter une navigation vers le rivage.

"Nous voyions les lumières d'Escuminac, mais on a pas pris de chances parce que nous ne savions pas ce que nous aurions pu frapper. On est arrivé au port le dimanche matin."

Grande foule réunie

A son arrivée au port, M. Jenkins a été témoin, d'un événement qui "est demeuré dans mon coeur depuis ce temps et le sera toujours".

En plus des membres de sa famille réunis sur le quai, il y avait plus de 8,000 personnes venues accueillir les survivants et prier pour les disparus.

Tout au long de la journée de dimanche, quelque 2,000 personnes ont effectué la relève à la prière dans la petite église d'Escuminac et aux recherches parmi les débris rejetés sur le rivage par des vagues géantes.

M. Jenkins et la population de cette région touchée si durement n'auront plus "jamais rien vu de semblable".



C'est la page frontispice de L'EVANGELINE, édition du lundi 29 juin 1959.

A Survivor's Poem

Miramichi Disaster June 19, 1959

by Bernard Jenkins

The Miramichi Bay, on this Atlantic shore
Where the waves roll high and the billows roar,
Where fishermen work hard when the days are long,
To earn a living when fish swim strong.
But as courageous as we may be,
At certain times we should claim the lee.
At this time the salmon run was on,
We disobeyed our will, and carried on.
But when the terrific storm was o'er
We wished we had and many, many more,
In the sad awakening of our dread,
We learned we had 35 fishermen dead.
On the eve of June 19th, 1959,
Over a 100 salmon boats forged the foaming brine,
To take a berth at an uncertain place, or time,
To try their luck with salmon drift nets and Providence Divine.
The wind blew in lightly with fog from the Northeast,
Previous days before it did not cease.
We did not think it serious in the least,
For we were not previously warned, that behind there approached a terrific beast
That had no pity for friends, wives or children in the least,
And did quickly show, that our lives are not guided from here below.
We spent the night in silent prayer,
And, after, wondered if the heavens cared.
The wind whistled, the seas did roar.
Oh! how we wished we had stayed ashore!
From the terrible dark the day did dawn
It was only then we realized that many friends had gone.
Our Maker had called, we must obey.
Some had to go, some had to stay.
Debris, derelicts floating on the sea,
We wondered how many had answered.
Probably just those that were worthy.
Unknown heroes during this storm did go.
We will tell you the reason why we know,
For in the boats that came wrecked ashore,
In them, parts we found in one or more,
They tried to save their neighbour's life,
But gave their own in their strife.
Friends, let's not forget the departed of this storm,
But for them say a prayer, night and morn.
Many more would have received a watery grave
But due to fishermen's friends' courage were saved.
The Almighty's hand was raised on high,
Some were spared and some had to die.
Courage given us was not our own,
It must have come from our Master's throne.
At last the storm did abate
Silent tear-stained-faced did await,
At last one small white dot appeared out on the sea.

Five others that were spared came to join the mele.
Still, fathers, brothers, friends, searched shores and sea.
All were found except one and three.
These poor souls were never found.
Extra condolence to their families were abound.
News of the disaster was soon made known.
Hundreds of cars carrying thousand to our shore
To mourn with us our loss.
To them many of us before unknown.
Assistance came from far and wide
To help and cheer us by our ocean side.
Mounted Police, Red Cross, Air Force, medical assistance, members of the clergy and many more.
They remained with us till all was o'er.
One name we want to mention.
Who opened the world's wide gates,
And drew to their attention, the Disaster of Miramichi.
Where thirty-five lives were lost at sea,
When the gates closed, to our surprise,
Almost half a million was the prize.
Brigadier Michael Wardell's courageous campaign.
Was not meant nor could not sustain
The grief in the hearts of widows and orphans that remained,

But had given them courage to live again.
He and many more names will live in the memory, of we who live on the Miramichi.
Then the Honorable Hughie John did not stand aside nor was he furlong.
He organized that the widows and their children and many more,
Would meet our Queen and her husband on the Shediac shore.
They shook hands with all that were there.
Her Majesty's face was like a silent prayer.
Handkerchief's fluttered in the light breeze that did blow.
For from eyes of many, tears did flow.
This sad meeting was joyful yet sad,
Every one present was glad
To have the occasion to meet this Royal happy young couple.
That was lovingly understandable
Of the occasion.
And when this appreciated meeting was o'er
They twined, waved, smiled, and left our shore.
Her Majesty our Queen and her royal Highness were glad
That they did agree, to meet the folks of Miramichi
We will be called from anywhere
Land, sea, and in the air.
When God's right hand is raised on high
Some will live, and some will die
The seas roll high, the billows roar,
But we will always love our Miramichi
On the Atlantic shore.

Day of waiting

"Told me Bernie's boat was coming"

by Sharon Fraser

Many of the stories of the disaster have dealt with those who were lost, those who were widowed or lost fathers, those who survived.

Rightly so too.

I, for one, had not thought too much about the women waiting at home, not knowing for endless hour after hour, the fate of a fisherman husband. After I talked to Mrs. Bernard Jenkins, I realized that there is still another dimension to the Escuminac disaster.

The Jenkins home is situated almost directly across from the Escuminac breakwater. Mrs. Jenkins woke early on the morning of June 20, 1959, as a fisherman's wife will do when she hears the wind. Bernie and his nephew Cyril, who was like a son to the Jenkins, had gone out the day before, as had many of the other local fishermen.

Mrs. Jenkins had not lived long in Escuminac at that time but she had been there long enough to know that this storm was not like the others.

"I never saw anything like it," she says today. "The wind and the waves and that high tide..."

WORD SPREADS

The word was quickly spread that the storm was taking its deathly toll and as rescue crews, Red Cross, doctors, and journalists arrived on the scene, many of them made their headquarters at the Jenkins' house.

"I couldn't even tell you how many people were here. The house was full. I couldn't sit still. Every time someone came up from the breakwater, I braced myself to hear something about Bernie, but no one had anything to tell me."

There was coffee to be made, telephone calls to be

answered, so much to see to, and still Mrs. Jenkins waited.

OUT IN THE STORM

What she didn't know until later was that Bernie had been reasonably close to Escuminac when he passed Jack Doucette and his two young sons in their rapidly sinking boat. Bernie and Cyril in turbulent seas with waves 30 feet high, in hurricane force winds, in the dark, turned their boat around and went back for the Doucettes.

For several hours, the rescue attempts were made. They were successful, but hearing it described and trying to picture the conditions out there in the Bay, defies most people's imaginations. A 30 foot wave is higher than a house. For Bernie and Cyril, just to get close enough to throw a rope was a major task.

When the rope was caught by Alphonse Doucette, it was no easy task to get it tied around his younger brother Everett, in a sinking pitching boat. But that was accomplished, and when Everett was aboard the Jenkins boat, Bernie turned and another rescue was completed, this time of the father, Jack. Alphonse was alone then. It took Bernie another hour to make it back once more, and for Alphonse, it must have been a long, long hour.

The trials were not yet over. With the three Doucettes aboard and the boat heading out to sea to ride out the storm, an enormous wave crashed over the craft, knocking the engine out of its bedding and filling the boat with water. Even under those conditions, no one gave up and frantic bailing and repairing took place with all five men working for their lives.

BACK HOME

And Mrs. Jenkins was

still waiting.

"I was a nervous wreck," she recalls. "I was afraid even to ask if there was any news. The doctor who was at the house finally gave me a sleeping pill and sometime in the middle of the night, I went to sleep."

It was the telephone ringing that woke her.

"It was calm," she said. And the caller told her that someone down on the breakwater was watching through binoculars.

"They told me Bernie's boat was coming in."

Mrs. Jenkins paced the floor. She prepared herself for news which she knew would come and she was prepared for a fairly long wait because she knew all

about cocking the boat and getting it tied up to the wharf.

"But before very long, I heard someone at the door. I thought it was someone bringing news and I opened the door, and it was Bernie!"

Met by friends and neighbours as he docked, the men had said, "Go on home, Bernie. We'll tie 'er up for you." Bernie needed no second invitation.

It sounds like a happy ending and the Jenkins have never stopped being grateful for that part of it. But it remains in memory the most tragic of times when they remember the 35 men who died and the people they left behind.

Both of them recall that day with anguish.





1984

June 16 banquet marks fishing disaster

Ed Lahey

The New Brunswick Department of Fisheries will be sponsoring a June 16 banquet in memory of 35 fishermen who lost their lives in the Escuminac Disaster and 14 disaster survivors who have since died, at the Baie Ste. Anne Community Centre.

The banquet is being held to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the sea disaster which devastated fishing communities in the Bay Ste.-Anne/Bay du Vin area.

Banquet organizer Denise McIntyre says over 500 invitations to the 7:00 p.m. lobster dinner have been issued. Included in the guest list are widows and children of the disaster victims, survivors of the disaster, and families of the survivors who have since died.

People from as far away as Montreal have already accepted invitations to the memorial dinner. McIntyre says the organizers have had a difficult job trying to trace all the relatives, many of whom have since left the area, and she hopes that nobody has been overlooked.

Special guests expected to attend include Premier Richard Hatfield, Senator Norbert Theriault, provincial Fisheries Minister Jean Gauvin, Northumberland-Miramichi MP. Maurice Dionne, and Bay du Vin MLA Roger Wedge.

The banquet will be followed by a concert by the Point Sapin musical group, Jeanne-Mance and her Companions, and presentations to the widows or children of each of the disaster victims.

The following day, June 17, at 2:00 p.m., Rev. Alphonse Richard, of Baie Ste.-Anne, and Rev. David Dean, of Bay du Vin, will conduct an ecumenical memorial service at the Escuminac Monument. The service will be followed by the blessing of the fleet.

The 35 men who were killed in the disaster were John Chapman, Albert Chaisson, Alphonse Chaisson, Adrien Chaisson, Robert Chaisson, William Chaisson, Fraser Cook, Edgar Daigle, Charles Gauvin, Arthur Kelly, Hector Kelly, Hugh Kelly, Clifford Kingston, Windsor Kingston, Amon Manuel, William J. Manuel, Alonzo Martin, Andre Martin, Remi Martin, Alfred MacLenaghan, George McLeod, Allen Mills, Andrew Mills, Jean-Louis Richard, Jeffrey Richard, Lionel Richard, Raphael Robichaud, Victor Robichaud, Leo Roy, Harold Taylor, Cunard Williston, Eric Williston, Haley Williston, Haynes Williston, and Oswald Williston.

Survivors of the disaster who have since died were Tommy Gardiner, Leslie Lewis, Roy Lloyd, Bernard McIntyre, Herbert McIntyre, Hector Robichaud, Raymond Thebeault, Gerard Turbide, Fowlie Williston, John T. Williston, Leslie Williston, Milton Williston, Sterling Williston, and Tommy Nowlan.

In Baie Ste. Anne **Banquet Saturday marks disaster**

The community of Baie Ste. Anne will observe the 25th anniversary of the Excuminac disaster this weekend in a series of commemorative events.

The memorial weekend will begin with a lobster banquet on Saturday night at the Baie Ste. Anne Community Center. Approximately 500 invitations to the commemorative banquet have been issued.

The New Brunswick Department of Fisheries is sponsoring the dinner with special invitations going out to the survivors of the disaster, and their families, as well as the families of the victims.

Family members from across the Maritimes and other parts of Canada are expected to be in attendance.

Premier Hatfield has been invited to attend the commemorative banquet which is dedicated to the memory of the 35 fishermen who died in the June 19, 1959 fishing disaster.

Other invited guests include Senator Norbert Theriault, provincial fisheries minister Jean Gauvin, Northumberland Miramichi MP Maurice Dionne, and Bay du Vin MLA Roger Wedge. Presentations to the widows or children of the disaster vic-

tims will be made after the dinner.

The banquet will be followed by a concert by the Point Sapin singing group, Jeanne-Mance and her Companions.

On Sunday, the community is expected to turn out en force for a special ecumenical service at the Escuminac Monument at 2 p.m. The service will be conducted by Rev. Alphonse Richard and Rev. David Dean of Bay du Vin, and will be followed by the annual blessing of the fleet.

The 35 men who were killed in the disaster were: John Chapman, Albert Chaisson, Alphonse Chaisson, Adrien Chaisson, Robert Chaisson, William Chaisson, Fraser Cook, Edgar Daigle, Charles Gauvin, Arthur Kelly, Hector Kelly, Hugh Kelly, Clifford Kingston, Windsor Kingston, Amon Manuel, William J. Manuel, Alonzo Martin, Andre Martin, Remi Martin, Alfred MacLenaghan, George McLeod, Allen Mills, Andrew Mills, Jean-Louis Richard, Jeffrey Richard, Lionel Richard, Raphael Robichaud, Victor Robichaud, Leo Roy, Harold Taylor, Cunard Williston, Eric Williston, Haley Williston, Haynes Williston and Oswald Williston.



Doucette with medal for bravery.

Hang on boys, we've had it

June 13, 1984

Joanne Cadogan

Alphonse Doucette recites his account of events on Friday, June 19, 1959 with the tired tone of a man forced to retell time and again the story of the most terrifying few days of his life.

While the Escuminac disaster marks its 25th anniversary this year, it is clear the events of that horrible weekend at sea still stand sharply in the minds of the men who lived, and saw their friends and neighbours die, in the awesome storm.

"The storm had been brewing for about a week," Doucette says. "The wind was out of the North East and it was foggy, but nobody took much notice. The weather report didn't give any indication of what was to come."

"My father, brother, Willy Manuel and I went out that morning between 2 and 4 in the morning. We hadn't been out long when the wind started blowing harder. The sea was high, but not too bad, and we decided to stay with our nets."

Doucette says fishermen try to remain with their nets during storms since the weight of the nets in the water act as an added anchor in choppy seas.

"At about 5 a.m. the nets broke off, and we had to go out looking for them. There was debris floating around on the top of the water, and it was difficult to find them, but we did. We set them again, but at 7:30 they broke off again and this time we couldn't find them."

With the loss of the nets and the anchor they provided, the four men decided their best bet was to head for harbour. They did. On their way to Escuminac Point, the Doucettes, aboard the Francine D, met Placide MacIntyre pulling in his nets. The Francine D pulled up along side his boat so if they could help.

While navigating the giant waves was difficult, the Francine D eventually pulled up alongside the MacIntyre boat again. The wind and waves were crashing so loudly conversation could not be heard. Instead, the crew of the Francine D set about helping MacIntyre pump out his boat. When the job was done, they headed for shore again.

"As we were coming across Escuminac Point we passed Clifford Kingston hauling in his nets. We tried to get over to him to help but he was too close to shore, and the sea was too rough. We couldn't stay there."

The Kingston boat sank on the stormy shoals that morning. Clifford Kingston and his brother Windsor drowned.

As the Francine D continued its journey home, it met another boat with Bernie and Cyril Jenkins aboard. They appeared to be having trouble getting their motor started so, again, the Francine D halted, and pulled alongside to help.

"While we were there, we decided to put more gas in the tank. The storm was at its peak at this point and we didn't want to run out of gas in the shallows. My brother and I went below to get some gas as our father turned our head into the sea."

While the Francine D had managed to navigate the tall waves up to this point, it was then that her luck ran out. The boat climbed the tall wave as it rose but could not reach the peak. Instead, midway up the wave, the boat flipped over backward in the water.

"I heard my father shout, 'Hang on boys, we've had it'. The next thing I knew the cabin was under water and the sea was rushing in," Doucette says.

Alphonse and his brother, Everett, managed to control their panic, and waited for the cabin to fill before attempting their escape. It was just a matter of seconds. The two battled their way to the surface.

"Just as we got outside, the boat started turning over. I grabbed on to the side of her, but my brother, Evvy, was washed away."

When the waves subsided a bit, Alphonse sighted his brother several hundred feet away in the water.

"I coaxed him back. He said he couldn't make it, but I kept his attention and talked him in."

As his brother drew closer, Alphonse grabbed a rope handled crate floating by and shoved it in Everett's direction. The 14 year old boy grabbed the crate, and his 17 year old brother hauled him back to the sinking boat.

Father sinking

Soon after this exhaustive effort the two boys sighted their father dog paddling his way to the boat. While the two thought he would sink before reaching the battered Francine D, he eventually did reach the ship, grabbing the posts on the cabin where the windshield had once been.

The seas continued to roll and toss as these attempts at survival went on, the cabin rising and falling in the water with each wave.

"Every time the boat moved down we lost sight of our father. When the boat came up again, he was still hanging on to the posts. His teeth were up on the deck, and let the water spill out of his mouth and lungs. Then he'd put his teeth back in and the boat would go under again."

"As soon as I got in the boat Bernie took a big sea. I think he was too busy trying to get me out of the water to even see it coming. The boat was swamped," Doucette says.

The five men aboard started bailing the boat out, but just as the floor was almost free of water a second wave hit, smashing five timbers on her side, filling her with water again. The boat was almost completely full of water this time, so low in the water that two buoys in the back lifted up and floated away.

This wave knocked the motor off its bedding, dousing the wires, making it impossible to start. In a desperate battle to keep off the dangerous shoal reefs, the men bailed out the boat, at the same time attempting to head her out and toward Escuminac. This was difficult with the boat filling with water every 20 minutes or so.

By this time it was early afternoon. One of the soggy crew members spotted the Escuminac Roman Catholic church about a mile in the distance. It was the first sighting of land by any aboard that day.

With no motor, the men drifted at sea into the early evening. By 6 p.m. they had drifted down as far as the most distant buoy at Point Escuminac. By this time they had been able to set the motor back in its place, and dry off the points. When the shallower waters became "messy" again, the seven man ship headed into the calmer waters of the St. Lawrence Strait.

With all the wood aboard too wet to burn, the men set fire to their rubber tire bumpers for warmth. While the tires would be needed to cushion the boat from the dockside when she returned to harbor, their need to survive was greater.

Bernie and Cyril Jenkins pulled up along side the battered Francine D, their boat battling her way slowly through the storm tossed sea. "Bernie was at the wheel and Cyril had a rope in his hand. Cyril threw the rope once, but it went too far behind the boat and I had to wave him off. The sea was so big if you missed once you had to turn and come back again."

On the second run, Cyril tossed the rope directly into Alphonse's hands. He tied the rope around his brother, and

pulled him forward as the Jenkins brothers hauled on the other end.

With Everett safely aboard the Jenkins turned in the water and made another rescue attempt. Alphonse caught the rope again, and this time turned to his father.

Today I am boss

"My father wanted me to take it, but the way I saw it he had a family and I didn't. I turned to him and said, 'You are captain, but today, I am boss.' I put the rope around him, and he was too weak from taking in water to even help.

Evy and Cyril hauled him over."

The seas became more vicious, the waves higher and the wind sharper. The boat had to float some distance away before returning to pull Alphonse from the water.

"I didn't know if they were going to be able to make it back, I was thinking maybe they couldn't when I turned in the water and saw William."

William Manuel, 72, had been in the cabin when the boat flipped over, but in the anxious moments following, the Doucettes had temporarily forgotten their companion.

"As the cabin rose out of the water, I could see William bobbing there, his head slir from ear to ear. He never even knew what happened. He must have been dead before we hit the water," Doucette says.

"That got my attention for a bit."

Before Alphonse knew it, the Jenkins brothers were back, tossing him a rope and pulling him aboard. But their collective adventure was not over yet.

Battle the sea

The boat continued to fill with water every 20 minutes, and, exhausted, cold and hungry, the men continued their battle against the encroaching sea. They cooked some of the salmon which had not been swept away in the boat's many dips in the sea and tried to take turns sleeping and bailing. Their rest was fitful.

Using Jenkins nets, the men continued to fish, throwing the nets in the water more for stability than for the wealth of salmon swimming there.

By Sunday the water had calmed enough to head for home.

"The first boat we saw was Alvin Turbide's. He's my uncle," Doucette says. "First he asked if we were all there, if the family was accounted for. When we said yes, he said, 'Then Jack, go straight home, your wife is going crazy.'"

Alphonse says the memory of the disaster has haunted him, making every night spent at sea for the past 25 years a less comfortable one.

But he continues to fish for a living.

"I just remember the one thing I learned on those two nights -- to respect the sea. She has the power of life or death, and she uses it," he says.

June 14, 1984



MONUMENT REMAINS -As haunting a symbol today as it was when it was first unveiled June 19, 1969, as this file photo shows, the Three Fish-

ermen of Escuminac is a tribute to the 35 men who lost their lives in a freak storm which swamped their fishing boats.

June 14, 1984



TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY – The 25th anniversary of the Escuminac fishing disaster will be marked at a dinner June 16 at Baie Ste. Anne. Aphonse Doucet, who was 28 years-old at the time of the disaster, received a Queen's Commendation for Bravery for saving his father John and a brother aboard the 'Francine D' in 1959.

35 Fishermen Drowned In Sudden Storm

Anniversary Of Disaster Will Be Marked

*Stories were told of the
brave and bold.*

*How heroes were born
that day:*

*Men who braved the wind
and waves*

*Out on the Miramichi
Bay.*

*Oh, wicked waves! Oh,
wailing wind!*

(Bernadette Keating)

By **HEATHER
DUNSMUIR**

Staff Writer

Twenty-five years ago on June 19, 1959, the waves at the outer edge of the Miramichi Bay pounded the shoreline and the jetsam on the beach was not the usual bits of driftwood. Among its wreckage were the ruins of fishing boats hurled ashore by a cruel sea to shatter the peace of the fishing village of Escuminac.

Thirty-five men, members of a 54-boat fleet, set sail to fish the salmon-rich waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, drowned on that day in a tragedy still remembered by the community, located about 50 kilometres east of Chatham.

The 25th anniversary of the sea disaster will be marked Saturday, June 16 at 8 p.m. at a dinner in the recreation centre in nearby Baie Ste. Anne hosted by the local bicentennial committee of Escuminac and Fisheries Minister Jean Gauvin.

The dinner is not only a requiem for the dead, but a

tribute to the survivors of the disaster and inspirational legacy of public reaction it generated.

The Miramichi Bay had a cold, grey look, and there was a stiff breeze blowing when the men of Escuminac set sail about 3 p.m. on June 19. After supper in the early evening the wind picked up, although by 10 p.m. there was still no indication from weather officials of the squall to come. The boats, loaded with their salmon catches, were caught unawares during the early morning hours by a 70-mile-an-hour hurricane. The winds heaved the Gulf water and Miramichi Bay into 30 and 40-foot clouds of fog and spray.

The morning of June 20, anxious villagers ringed the wharf waiting for word of the disaster. The sea returned the battered boats and some of the bodies, but it was from the living that the tales of the night's horror and their attempts to battle the sea to reach their drowning friends and neighbors became known. "You have no idea in God's almighty world how terrifying it was," survivor Bernie Jenkins said in a statement which made headlines across the country.

Only one man among the 35-men had life insurance. None of the destroyed fishing boats was insured, nor was the fishing gear. Twen-

ty widows were left to support 83 children. For the parents of unmarried members of the fishermen, much of their income was lost.

The need for immediate relief prompted Fredericton Daily Gleaner Publisher Michael Wardell to establish the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund.

General Manager of The Daily Gleaner Des Sparling has administered the fund for the past 25 years. It was established, he explained, by contributions totalling \$438,000. That money, invested over the years, made relief payments to the victims of the disaster, helped replace nets and equipment, and provided for education of the children of the lost men of Escuminac.

Most of the fund, Mr. Sparling outlined, was set aside to provide a monthly pension of \$50 to the widows (even if they remarried). Today, he said, there are still 18 widows receiving payments from fund. Last year, Mr. Sparling explained, the fund generated enough revenue to increase the original \$50 payment to \$100 per month. At Christmas, the interest on the fund also allows for a \$100 bonus on the normal pension. Originally, the fund also paid \$10 a month to each child under the age of 18. The sons and daughters of the men of Escuminac, however, are adults and those contributions have ceased.

The remarkable aspect of the Fishermen's Disaster Fund was the international support it received. The first donation to the 1959 fund was \$5,000 from the late Lord Beaverbrook. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip broke with royal tradition to make a personal contribution to the fund. Roman Catholic and Protestant churches made donations. Pope John XXIII put up \$2,000 and industrialist K.C. Irving contributed \$5,000.

The Province of New Brunswick donated \$25,000 toward the relief and within six months the fund was nearly built up to its goal of \$440,000. It was an international response to a local disaster of bitter effect.

Ten years after the Escuminac tragedy a seven-foot high sculpture by artist Claude Roussel of Moncton was unveiled. The limestone sculpture depicting three fishermen has probably been the subject of more photographs than any other single thing on the Miramichi. It remains a haunting symbol today to the northeastern community of the triumph of courage over fear and the power of the sea.

June 14, 1984



SURVIVED STORM – Roland Williston, was of one the survivors of the 1959 Escuminac fishing disaster. Five other Williston relatives perished in the 1959 storm. The anniversary of the tragedy is being marked this month.

Fishing Disaster Recalled

— 25 Years Ago 35 Men Were Lost

By HEATHER DUNSMUIR
Staff Writer

BAIE-STE.-ANNE — Violet Kingston hugged the certificate with her husband's name upon it close to her breast and wept, remembering the morning 25 years ago when he left for work never to return again.

That June 19, 1959 day when her husband, Windsor, a Baie-Ste.-Anne fisherman set out to fish Gulf of St. Lawrence salmon, "my life ended," she says.

For 17 other women, the remaining widows of a total 35 fishermen who drowned in a freak storm in the early morning hours of June 20, a weekend of remembrance brought back some of the old hurt.

The drive from Chatham to Escuminac is 50 bleak kilometres of woods and water. There are few houses; moose and deer claim the right-of-way on the roads. Baie-

Ste.-Anne and Escuminac are neighbors, three kilometres apart, and it was from the barren harbor of Escuminac on the Miramichi Bay that 51 fishermen set forth about 3 p.m. June 19, 1959 to spend the evening and night drift-netting salmon. The weather reports were good, but through the night the winds squalled to 70-kilometres per hour. The boats in the Gulf were battered by 30 to 40-foot waves and by morning most had been smashed by the sea. Those that could, tried to save the others, but by morning only 16 men had lived.

More than 300 people streamed into the pallid light of the community centre in this Northumberland County community near Chatham for a cold plate dinner Saturday. The work-roughened came in old clothes, others shook the moths from ancient thin-lapelled suits, and the younger donned party clothes. It was a strange mixture of

generations brought together to honor the bravery of the survivors and courage of the dead.

Violet Kingston's last child, Windsor, is 24. He was born after his father's death and unlike his mother, there are no shadows of remembrance in his clear, youthful eyes. He never knew his father and even marking the anniversary of the sea disaster is not enough to give him a sense of his own past. Her eyes do not search his for tears she knows will not be there.

The decision by the local bicentennial committee of Escuminac to recall the sea disaster by a dinner and then a Sunday ceremony at a monument to the fishing tragedy was greeted with hesitation by Mrs. Kingston. She was not sure whether to attend. Still cradling the framed commendation to her lost husband, she said Saturday she was pleased she had come. "It's kind of sad, but it's a nice gesture."

She said she will "never forget" the kindness of Daily Gleaner Publisher Michael Wardell in establishing the Fishermen's Disaster Fund, a fund which provided neede assistance to the families of the dead. Brig. Wardell took Mrs. Kingston and her family of eight to Ontario to publicize the tragedy and solicit donations to establish the fund. "He was a kind man," she said softly.

Established by \$438,000 worth of donations, including a \$5,000 start given it by

Lord Beaverbrook, plus personal donations from Queen Elizabeth II, Pope John XXIII and industrialist K.C. Irving, the fund continues to support the widows of the Escuminac fishermen.

At the dinner Saturday, Premier Richard Hatfield praised Brig. Wardell's contribution. Premier Hatfield said the newspaper publisher told him prior to his death that he considered the establishment of the fund his most important contribution to New Brunswick.

Speaking directly of the disaster, Premier Hatfield said it "was a tragedy, but it is also an example of what it means to be a New Brunswicker. We have, as New Brunswickers, to be proud of the men who went out to sea and in the course of doing what they had been doing to make a living, did not survive."

"Fishermen are survivors, I think they will always survive," Bay du Vin MLA Roger Wedge (PC) said. Nature, he said, is responsible for the livelihood of the community and both gives and takes away.

Roger Pichette, fisheries minister in Hugh John Flemmings Tory cabinet in 1959, reflected on the events of the disaster. "My friends, it is right to remember, lest we forget the story...and that story is an epic which should warm the ears of New Brunswickers and make them proud of the hardy race who are New Brunswick's fishermen."

June 22, 1984



Emma Martin accepts a certificate from Premier Richard Hatfield marking the death of her son Remi in the 1959 Escuminac disaster. The premier presented cer-

tificates to families of the victims at a dinner held in Baie Ste. Anne Saturday night. (Elizabeth Hanton photo)

Premier picks Escuminac over Liberal convention

At least one major politician was not glued to his television set on Saturday night waiting for the results of the federal Liberal leadership convention.

Instead, Premier Richard Hatfield (a Progressive Conservative) was in the community of Baie Ste. Anne, helping to commemorate the Escuminac fishermen's disaster of 1959.

There, Hatfield presented framed certificates to families of the disaster victims. They were inscribed in memory of the brave fishermen who lost their lives, in the hope future generations would remember their cour-

age and determination.

The distance from the Ottawa Civic Centre seemed more than geographic on Saturday night.

For the time being at least, those gathered at the Baie Ste. Anne community centre had put aside thoughts of the leadership match going on in Ottawa.

Most arrived soon after the announcement of the first ballot results although there was little talk of it.

There were no radios in evidence at the dinner and no-one appeared to duck out to check the latest word from the convention floor.

No-one seemed in any real

hurry to discover what was happening in Ottawa, what alliances had been formed, which political careers had been made or destroyed.

By Sunday morning, Escuminac was probably buzzing with talk about Turner's quick victory, his possible cabinet and the prospects for an early election.

Premier Hatfield was probably trying to assess the impact of a new Liberal leader on New Brunswick's fortunes.

But at least for Saturday night, they looked instead to the past, to remember that stormy night in 1959.



Premier Richard Hatfield presents Maureen Chaisson with a certificate commemorating her father's death in the Escuminac disaster 25 years ago. Families of the


disaster victims received the certificates at a dinner held Saturday night in Baie Ste. Anne. (Elizabeth Hanton photo)

June 18, 1984

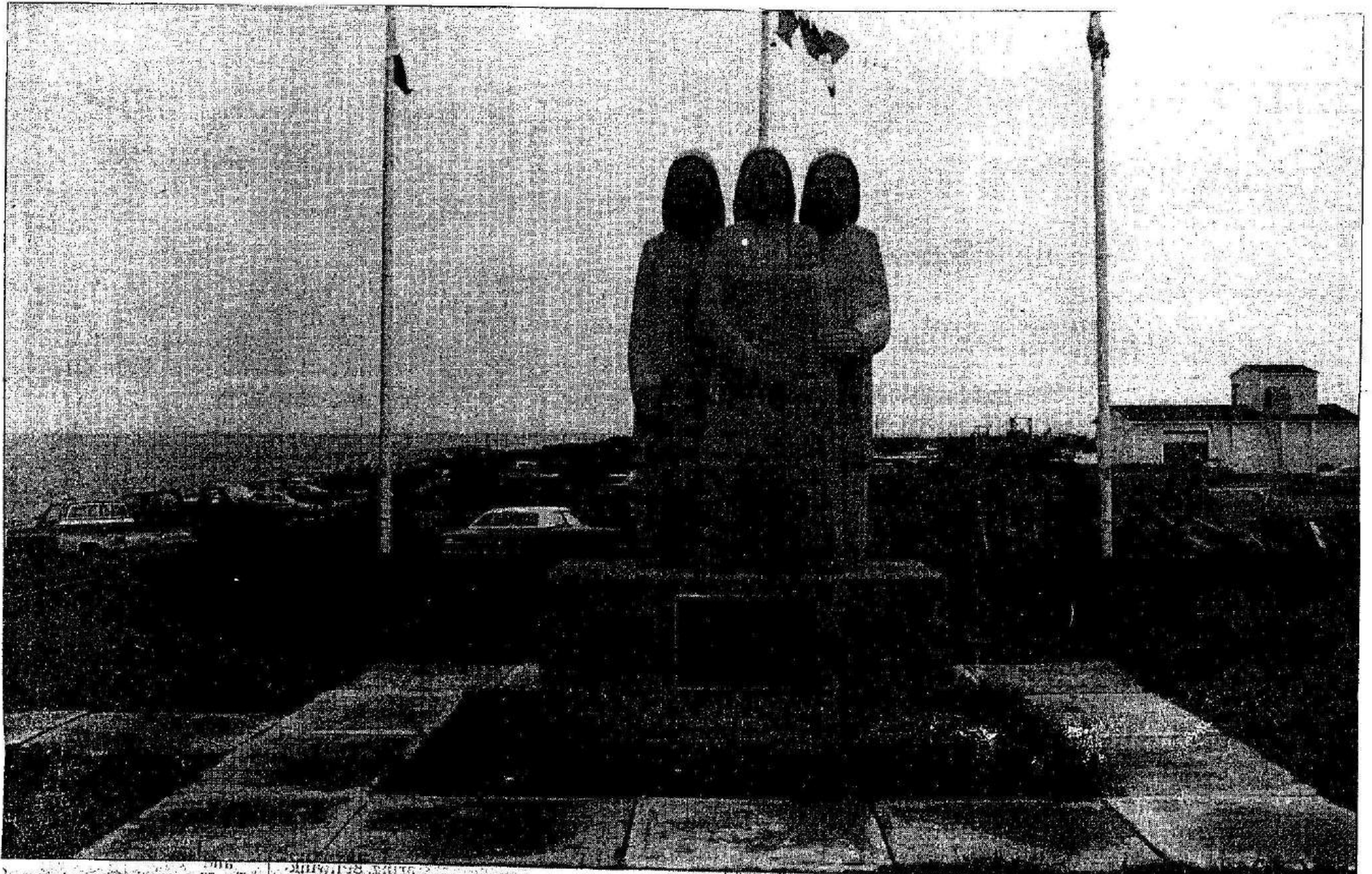


SHY LADY - A shy Dorcas Martin ducked behind this certificate honoring her husband Andre. Mrs. Martin was one of 18 widows of fishermen killed in a sudden storm June 19, 1959. The 25th anniversary of her husband's death and the Escuminac sea disaster was marked at a dinner in Baie-Ste.-Anne Saturday.

(Dewey Photo, Chatham)



1985



Monument at Escuminac pays tribute to victims of 1959 disaster

Disaster inspired writer to pen verse

Dear editor:

In the early 60s whilst serving as a 20 year old third mate on the Donaldson Line cargo vessel m/v "Sontona," I chanced to make a voyage to Newcastle.

On that occasion I and a few other crew members had the good fortune to be taken by the ship's agent on a car tour of the surrounding area.

I regret that I have long since forgotten the name of the young man who was our

host but I do recall the trip vividly and for this I thank him sincerely.

Although we saw several interesting sights, my most impressive memory of that bright Sunday afternoon was the village of Baie Ste-Anne.

Our visit occurred about one year after the disaster and our guide explained the painful details of that fateful night.

Last year I had occasion to attend a function in the port

died, but also to those who survived to grieve.

The memory of that beautiful but hauntingly sad village (not at all unlike the small fishing villages of the remote areas of my native home, Scotland) will remain with me forever.

As you will perhaps remember I also visited your office when I was in Newcastle last year and I thank you for allowing me the use of your archives to do research on

of Newcastle and took advantage of the opportunity to re-visit Baie Ste-Anne.

Although the village had changed a little in the intervening years, it brought back instant memories of my previous visit and I stopped at the monument erected to the memory of those who were lost, to pay my respects.

I, though not a native of New Brunswick, was moved to pen these few words as a tribute, not only to those who

the subject. As promised I have enclosed my verse.

Yours sincerely,
Francis C. Nicol
Brossard, Quebec

The Baie Ste-Anne Disaster (Jun. 19, 1959)

On the Gulf of the lower St.
Lawrence

there are tales which sel-
dom are told
of rivers which run down in
torrents
to a sea that's eternally
cold.

Just South of the Baie of
Miramichi
lies a village which knows
deep despair
where the crash of the ever
restless sea
calls the old folks to re-
quiem prayer.

Now the seamen and
fishers who live there
are a breed that differ by
far
not for them the warmth of
your armchair
but rather the chill of the
har.

On that fateful June day
they set sail
to the fishing grounds swift-
ly they sped
ignoring the wind's streng-
th'ning wail
on the morrow so many'd
be dead.

From the Nor'east the tem-
pest approached

unheeded by those in her
path
thus many the small boat
was broached
and sunk in the tail of her
wrath.

When grey dawn at last
threw cold light
on those who had weath-
ered the storm
it revealed the results of its
might
thirty-five from their fami-
lies were torn.

Now those who had stood
out to sea
were all that were saved of
the fleet
most others who'd sought
the land's lee
were consigned to a grave
fathom's deep.

On the bleak Southern
coast of the river
lies a village called Baie
Ste-Anne
where the women wear
black forever
as horizons they fruitlessly
scan.

On the Gulf of the lower St.
Lawrence

there are tales which sel-
dom are told
and this one of nature's
malevolence
tells of young men who nev-
er grew old.

Francis C. Nicol



1986

The Escuminac Disaster

June 20, 1959 — a day when nature vent her fury

By Yvon Gauvin
Staff Reporter

ESCUMINAC (Special) — The sea, as any sailor can tell you, is an unforgiving mistress never to be taken for granted — one moment she's gentle and serene; the next a wild tempest tossing men and boats about like so many playthings in an angry child's hands.

No one, least of all those who live by the sea, can allow themselves to be lulled by her gentle side for, every so often, she will exact her price for this complacency. And it can be a terrible price.

This is a story of just such a tragedy and the heavy toll exacted on a small New Brunswick fishing community 27 years ago yesterday.

Thirty-five salmon fishermen, most of them from Baie Ste. Anne and Escuminac, perished June 20, 1959 when caught up in the unrelenting fury of a sea unleashed in what has since come to be known as the Escuminac Disaster.

Many more could have died out for their determination, the bravery of compatriots and sheer luck, say survivors.

A monument to the memory of the dead today maintains a lonely vigil — a symbol of the prayer that never again must the community know such tragedy.

Out of the chaos rose stories of bravery and devotion, of a man passing a lifeline to his father, knowing that he could be swept away at any moment, and of a captain forsaking his own safety to reach fellow fishermen in imminent danger of drowning.

"There were an awful lot of brave boys through that disaster," 79-year-old Bernie Jenkins of Escuminac recalled this week. Many of them were just as deserving of bravery awards as he was, he says.

Jenkins and nephew Cyril Jenkins were awarded the British Empire Medal in recognition for saving the lives of Baie Ste. Anne fisherman Jack Doucet and his teenage sons Alphonse and Everett from certain death.

Jack Doucet today readily admits that had Jenkins' boat not been in the vicinity to rescue them, he and his sons would surely have perished as did William Manuel, the fourth man aboard the Doucet boat. Manuel was trapped inside the cabin when a huge wave capsized the small craft.

Doucet and sons managed to swim back to the overturned boat to cling tenaciously to its hull against the torrent and frigid waters of Northumberland Strait.

Jenkins says he saw the Doucet boat swamped by gigantic waves. The boats were trying

to ride out the storm. There was danger in moving — not only from the 20 to 30-foot waves crashing over their heads, but also from the extensive debris and fishing nets already littering the area. Some nets reached three-quarters of a mile long, he says.

A jammed propeller would only worsen an already dire situation, he says.

It literally took hours to reach and rescue those stranded fishermen, Jenkins says.

"I lost a lot of friends, friends I went to school with, fought with, fished with."

Only a few of the missing were never found.

"It was a dreary affair for some weeks. We didn't know when we were going to run across a body floating in the sea or caught up in the nets," he says.

"I think that you can get scared enough that you can't get scared anymore. It seemed like there was always something to give you strength. It just wasn't our time, I suppose," he muses.

Jenkins says he fought the seas to manoeuvre his boat near the capsized Doucet boat. Cyril Jenkins then threw Alphonse Doucet a lifeline. The 17-year-old instead passed the line to his 14-year-old brother, Everett. The next time he unselfishly gave the line to his 43-year-old father.

Jenkins says the violent sea then separated the two boats and it was a good half-hour before he could turn his boat around and approach Alphonse for another try. Alphonse was one very courageous lad, says Jenkins.

It was late morning by this time and the five got to work trying to bail out Jenkins' own boat.

He says it took about six hours to finish the job and begin the task of restarting the boat engine. A fire was kept burning to keep everyone warm, but there was no food.

When the engine was finally started, the decision to head out to open sea to ride out the rest of the storm was taken, and remaining nets were cast in the hopes of getting salmon. The end result was two salmon to divide among five people, he says.

The storm finally calmed by early evening. The crew remained at sea looking for lost gear and nets before returning to port late on the morning of June 21.

That was the worst part, says Jack Doucet. There once saw the death and destruction — the tragedy in its fullness, he says. The sea "can give you life and can take your life," says Doucet.

"When we were young, we

weren't afraid. We didn't know better."

Doucet retired five years ago after 50 years of fishing. Only one of his nine sons has taken up the profession.

However, such that is not a reflection on the profession or love of sea but of the limitations imposed on the fishery, he says. Doucet has 13 children.

"I was born 50 years too early," he says of today's modern equipment and boats. It was quite different 27 years ago when fishermen set out to fish the Strait in the open boats, some as small as 32 feet. "It's only a picnic today," he says.

There was no hint of the fury that lay ahead when fishermen left port, just fog that had settled on the area three days earlier and slight easterly winds, he says. No one expected a storm, confirms Jenkins.

"It was like a small hurricane. By the time we realized (the strength of the approaching storm), it was too late," he says. The roar of the wind and sea was like that of a train rushing interminably past you, he says.

He remembers watching another fishing boat steam away from him in the midst of the storm and losing sight of the boat's 15-foot mast in the trough of a huge wave less than 50 yards away before it finally emerged again.

"It's a good friend and a bad enemy, like fire," he says. "There's an awful lot to learn about the ocean."

And yet, after 37 years of fishing, including several other similar "predicaments," he says he wouldn't hesitate to do it all over again.

"Everyone takes a chance" in whatever they do, he says.

No one gave up fishing after the disaster. It was a way of life — the only way of life for many, he says.

The June 20, 1959 edition of *The Moncton Transcript* reported 65 mile-an-hour winds overnight had smashed lobster traps piled up on the Point du Chene wharf, tossed about and beached several fishing boats in the immediate area and dropped 1½-inches of rain overnight over the southeastern region. Nowhere was there any hint of the tragedy unfolding in the small but picturesque fishing villages further north.

The next editions, however, spilled over with accounts of bodies washing ashore and searches for others; stories of the families waiting, hoping loved ones had survived; and stories of the storm's destructive force.

The June 22 edition of *The Moncton Transcript* told of the 13th body washing ashore and efforts to pinpoint just how many fishing boats had left on that fateful night.

An Escuminac boat, its superstructure ripped apart, was found floating off Pointe Sapin, 40 miles away, with no sign of the owner and his nephew.

Boats were brought in to

drag the Miramichi Bay area while RCMP and RCAF from nearby CFB Chatham helped with aerial reconnaissance and foot patrols along area beaches.

Twenty-two boats were spotted floating or sunk in shallow waters skirting the shores between Escuminac and Richibucto by the next night.

"Some were washed ashore, others lay sunken in shallow in-shore waters. Some drifted aimlessly upside down," said one newspaper account. Waves estimated at 50 to 60 feet in height were seen crashing against breakwaters.

The fleet was lured into the storm by one of the best salmon catches of the decade, says one retired fisherman. It was the worst disaster he had ever witnessed.

The "nor'easter" wiped out a third of the Miramichi area salmon fleet of 66 licenced boats when it struck.

The 5 p.m. ADT June 19 weather report from Halifax gave no hint of the approaching storm. The first real warnings were received by private radio stations in a 10 p.m. forecast, long after fishermen had set out for their grounds. None of the boats carried any kind of radio, including marine receivers.

Listed as dead or missing were fishermen from Baie Ste. Anne, Bay du Vin, Manuels, Kouchibouguac, Black River, St. Margarets and as far as Lamèque and Howard's Cove, P.E.I.

Heavy survivors told of heroism and terror.

One account in the June 22 edition told of Edward Cook of Howard's Cove, P.E.I., then 28 and already a seasoned fisherman, fishing off Escuminac with his 60-year-old father, Fraser Cook.

Several waves swamped the boat, knocking out sails and en-

gine, then capsizing and righting it. It was then, said the younger Cook, that he pitched himself to the boat's mast.

"I swung out two or three times for him (his father) to tie himself to the mast. But he kept working at the engine."

"A big wave came over and washed the old man overboard. I never saw him again," he told reporters.

A few minutes in the frigid waters of the Northumberland Strait would have been sufficient, claimed veteran fishermen.

Marie Chiasson, then 22, was among those to mourn. Her father, William Chiasson, 47, and brothers, Adrien, 19, and Alphonse, 16, were missing and presumed drowned. Her father had launched into this new career two months previously, buoyed by the claims of his brother, Albert, she said.

Albert Chiasson was also among the missing.

The communities were laid bare by the weight of the tragedy.

A disaster relief fund was started with several hundred thousands of dollars collected. Then New Brunswick premier, Hugh John Flemming, and Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien personally visited the region to hear first hand of the disaster.

Messages of condolence, including from Buckingham Palace, Governor-General Vincent Massey and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker poured into the region.

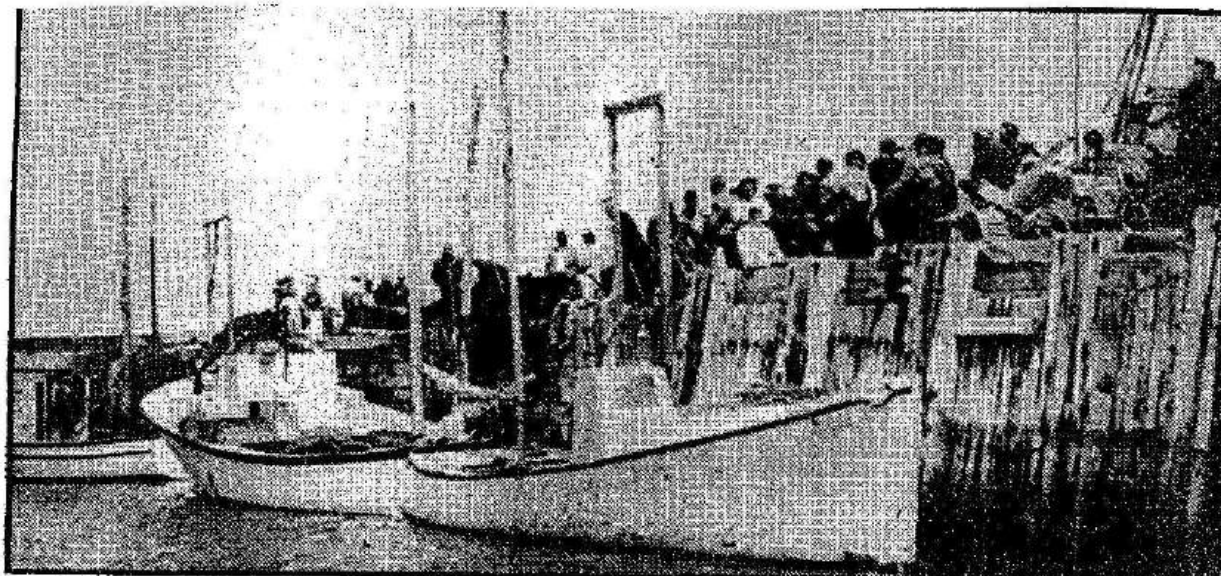
Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip met with the widows and children at Point du Chene late in July, 1959, during the last leg of a cross-Canada tour, to offer their condolences personally.

Jenkins was one of those to meet the Queen and Prince just before they boarded the HMV Britannia anchored in Shediac Bay.



Robichaud photo

Bernie Jenkins reads newspaper accounts of the day that chronicled the storm's destruction. At bottom of photo is the British Empire Medal Jenkins received.



Robichaud photo

Residents gather at a wharf to survey the wreckage of what boats survived the storm.



1987

Bernard L. Jenkins

Medal of honor recipient dead

ESCUMINAC (Special) — Bernard L. Jenkins, who received a medal of honor for bravery during the Escuminac Disaster of 1959, died Wednesday on arrival at Hotel Dieu Hospital, Chatham. He was 80.

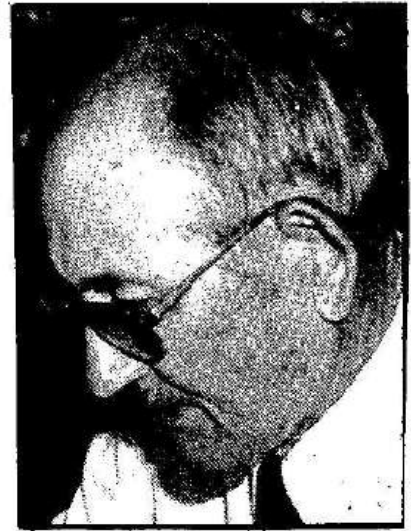
On June 20, 1959, 35 salmon fishermen lost their lives to a furious storm which has come to be known as the Escuminac Disaster. Jenkins was among those area fishermen awarded a British Empire Medal in recognition of his efforts that helped save other fishermen.

Born in Eel River Bridge, he was a son of the late Alexander and Mary Margaret (McDonald) Jenkins. He was a fisherman and a pioneer of the co-operative movement in Baie Ste Anne.

He is survived by his wife, Alda Arseneault; a son Orville of Saint John; a brother, Ethelbert of Eel River Bridge; two sisters, Mary Jenkins and Grace Jenkins, both

of Eel River Bridge; four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

The body is at the Baie Ste Anne Roman Catholic Church, where funeral mass will be celebrated Saturday at a time to be announced. Arrangements are in care of Maher's Funeral Home, Chatham.



Jenkins



1994

Life turned upside down

The women who waited

By Cathy Carnahan
Correspondent

BAIE STE. ANNE (Special) — Thirty-five years ago Leocade Daigle was a 32-year-old wife and mother of five lively children. About 3 p.m. on the afternoon of June 19, 1959, her husband, Edgar, left the house with their oldest child and only son, Rheel, to go fishing.

Rheel always wanted to go on the boat with his dad, she recalled in a recent interview, but when the two got to the Escuminac wharf that afternoon and Edgar saw how stormy the sea looked, he brought the 10-year-old boy back home.

It was a decision that Leocade was to thank God for in her prayers for many years after. Because by the next day, her husband's dead body had been brought back to shore for her to identify, and she knows she came close to losing both of them.

As it was, within 24 hours her whole life turned upside down.

"I was to become both father and mother to my children," she says now, struggling slowly and tearfully to articulate the memories. "I struggled and I was lonely. It was an awful tragedy, but I was good to my children. I knew my first duty was to them."

Leocade's story is not unlike many of the women who waited in vain that night for their men to come home. In all, 54 boats had left Escuminac wharf that afternoon to go salmon drifting. By nightfall a vicious windstorm blew in over the Gulf of St. Lawrence, smashing boats to bits and snuffing the lives out of the fishermen.

When the horror stopped, 35 men and boys had died, leaving 26 grieving widows and 83 fatherless children. Some of the victims were washed ashore; others were never found.

(See LIFE Page 5)

(Continued from Page 1)

The effects of the disaster can still be seen, even though life appears on the surface to have returned to normal. Nothing was ever the same afterwards, women

interviewed for this series said.

"I had the pain of losing my husband and the pain of seeing my children with no dad, because he was awfully good to the kids," Leocade said. "It took me two years to start rebuilding my life

without my husband, so I could say I was living my life alone.

"It wasn't easy. I couldn't sleep here with my five children at night. We went next door and stayed with my parents. I had good parents. Without them, I

don't know what I would have done.

"I slept at my parents for a long time, and when the children got older, I stayed there," she said.

She remembers the day and night of the disaster, and the moments leading up to it vividly, even though the memories are painful. She said the salmon had been scarce that spring, but on June 18, there had been a good run and Edgar brought in 35 salmon that night.

The promise of a good catch and some extra cash lured many a fisherman to the sea the next night despite the storm, she said. Some, in fact, had left the wharf before any storm warning was issued.

There were others like Edgar who had no fear.

"It was his trade, fishing, and it didn't bother him to go if it was storming or not," Leocade said.

"He had his own boat that night. I think it was the Rheel, and he had one of my cousins fishing with him. They were the first ones to come ashore, but he was dead when he arrived at the shore."

So was her cousin, Remi Martin.

"When they told me a lot came in alive, but my husband was dead, that was hard for me to accept," Leocade said, breaking down.

"His boat came to shore, but it was all broke up. He and Remi tied themselves to the motor. Maybe they thought they'd be safer and come ashore, but it didn't happen like that."

With watery eyes and shaking voice, Leocade confessed she also wonders, like many of her girlfriends in the village, what life would have been like had their husbands survived.

"Financially it was hard, but they made a trust fund for us and that helped a lot," she said. The fund was established after people throughout the world became so touched by the tragedy of this tiny fishing village that they wanted to help. Newspaper baron Lord Beaverbrook, who had Miramichi ties, was the first person to give money to the fishermen's fund to support the surviving families.

"We were on social insurance after the disaster, and then I got a job filing application forms for unemployment," Leocade said. She was an unemployment insurance agent for Baie Ste. Anne and surrounding areas.

"I remember I got 50 cents an

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thirty-five years ago this month, the worst fishing disaster New Brunswick has ever known occurred. In the aftermath of a vicious storm that hit the Gulf of St. Lawrence off Escuminac, there were 35 men and boys dead, leaving 26 widows, 83 fatherless children, and more than 30 mothers grieving on the shore. The close-knit community has been forever scarred by this tragedy, and all these years later, the families who endured the pain can barely talk about it. In this first of a four-part series, correspondent Cathy Carnahan visited with some people whose lives were changed forever by the devil sea that night. She focuses on "the women who waited."

application at first for filing, but I filed for 20 years, and at the end I got \$4.50 an application."

Then, at 60, she retired.

"My children were never hungry and they were well clothed," she added proudly. There are photos of them throughout the house, but none of Edgar.

"I don't have one picture of my husband. He was not the type of man to be pictured and those days there wasn't much money for pictures," she added.

"We'll never understand how they died and how much they suffered. We will never know that part, but God was there for me. That's why I pulled through it," she added.

And though she once enjoyed sailing, she has not gone out since the tragedy.

"I don't like the sea," she says.

As for Rheel, he has long since grown up and now has a son of his own. The boy's name is Edgar.

June 16, 1994



Leocade Daigle with replica of the Escuminac wharf monument

Carnahan photo

Young fisherman was buried in his new black suit

By Cathy Carnahan
Correspondent

BAIE STE. ANNE (Special) — Rémi Martin always wanted a black suit, and the day before the Escuminac Disaster he told his mother he was going to town to buy one.

That was 35 years ago, but Emma Martin has never forgotten the last conversation she had with her 18-year-old son.

He was one of 35 men and boys who set sail from the Escuminac wharf on June 19, 1959, to go salmon drifting, unaware devil seas would claim them in the dark of a storm.

Emma remembers Rémi came home from fishing the night before, slept five hours, then went to the store and bought two bags of doughnuts and two cans of sardines for his next trip out.

"When he came to the door that day I said, 'Why don't you stay home tonight?' And he said 'No, Mom, there is lots of salmon, and we're going to Chatham tomorrow to buy a black suit.'

"That was on Friday. Saturday morning, we got word they were all drowned, and on Sunday night he had on his black suit," Emma said in an interview at her Baie Ste. Anne home.

She bit her lip and tried to hold back the tears. She's 76. Her hair is snowy white and her eyes are gentle blue. Her life has been filled with trouble and hardship.

Eleven months before Rémi died in the fishing disaster, her husband, Stanley, was killed when hit by a car. She was left a widow with nine children.

Rémi was the fourth oldest and the eldest son so he became the breadwinner for his mother and five siblings at home. They ranged in age from 21 months to 17 years.

(See BROTHER Page 6)

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Brother was under canvas

(Continued from Page 1)

"When he took over from his father, he kind of thought he was the boss. He was good to the kids and to me, too," Emma said.

Rémi was her pride and joy. He was about six feet tall, weighed about 150, had light colored hair and blue eyes like his mama. He didn't drink or smoke and had not much time for play.

"He was a good worker," said Emma. "He had two big dogs and he would get up at four o'clock in the morning and go back in the woods. He had to haul more than anybody else."

"He used to work in the woods with his father, but I think he'd rather fish. He was going to be a fisherman," she said.

At least, that had been his dream.

One June 20, 1959, he and Edgar Daigle, with whom he'd gone fishing the night before, were the first bodies to come ashore. Both were dead.

Joan Martin remembers her brother was "under a canvas" when she went to the wharf that morning. Her sister, Elva, wanted to see Rémi one last time, but Joan wouldn't let her.

"There was a huge crowd there, and everybody was crying. It was awful," Joan said as she stood near her mother with tears in her eyes.

Emma's eyes were also sad and empty as she gazed out the win-

dow. "He was still warm when they came to shore," she said.

"And on Sunday, the sea was so calm we couldn't believe it."

"It was hard. The worst was we were so poor. Two weeks after it was all over, I had to go to work at the (co-op fish) factory."

"When my husband died, he had no money, and my son was the same." Again Emma bit her lip and tried to hold back the tears. She doesn't cry easy anymore, but the hurt is still there.

She remembers it was three months before she got a widow's allowance, and the pit of poverty seemed endless.

"Then they helped us with money from the disaster fund to fix up the house a bit and things like that. The disaster fund paid for all the funerals," she said.

The now-defunct *Atlantic Advocate* magazine, together with Fredericton's *Daily Gleaner* newspaper, launched the New Brunswick Fishermen's Disaster Fund and invited the Red Cross and media outlets across the province to join as co-sponsors of the appeal.

Within six months, \$440,000 had been reached through generous donations from across the world.

"We received \$50 a month for a long time. Then it went up to \$100, and now it's \$139.31," said Emma. "They used to give us \$100 extra

at Christmas in later years too, but they don't do that anymore."

It was all a help, and for that Emma is grateful. The year after the disaster she had to take Elva to Montreal for open heart surgery, and there always seemed to be one crisis after another.

She had 13 children and now only seven are living. The youngest, Henry, his wife Jocelyn and the two children stay with her.

Emma recently had several major operations, but her philosophy is not to complain. "God is good and always provides. I've always been thankful for my family," she said as she visited Rémi's grave.

"I always had them to think about, and I had no time to feel sorry for myself."

June 18, 1994

The women who waited



Larnahan photo

Emma Martin visits grave of son Rémi who died in Escuminac disaster at age 18



Rémi Martin

Escuminac won't forget disaster victims

June 20, 1994

Tragedy was 35 years ago

ESCUMINAC (Special) — Thirty-five special flower seeds are to be planted at Escuminac wharf on July 3 at 10:30 a.m. in memory of the victims of New Brunswick's greatest marine disaster.

Each seed represents a flower called a "forget-me-not."

They're being planted by family members of the 35 men and boys who lost their lives in the Escuminac Disaster of June 19-20, 1959.

Thirty-five years ago today was one of New Brunswick's saddest days.

As wrecked boats and bodies floated to shore, those waiting at Escuminac wharf knew the sudden storm on June 19 had taken its toll. The salmon drifters had gone out into Miramichi Bay where they were smashed by a devil sea with a 70-mile-an-hour gale spawning monstrous waves 40 to 50 feet high, tossing the small fishing boats, many of them Cape Islanders, around like corks.

Husbands, sons and sweet-hearts would not return. Twenty-six grieving widows would be left behind with 83 fatherless children.

The community's tribute to the victims will be held at the wharf on July 3, to coincide with the Festival des Fruits de Mer, Baie Ste. Anne parish priest Rev. Yvon Arsenault said in a recent interview.

If it rains the event will be held at St. Anne's church, he said, explaining the commemorative service is also being held after the conclusion of the local lobster season.

Children and grandchildren of the lost fishermen are expected to take part in the anniversary mass and presentations, all of which are centered around the family during this International Year of the Family.

"I think the main thrust of the disaster is that we never forget. This is a reminder of the price fishermen pay," said Arsenault.

Memories of the disaster still bring tears to the women who waited 35 years ago for their stolen loved ones. Many were left with no resources in situations the Red Cross described at the time as "desperate."

A national fund was established almost immediately by the former *Atlantic Advocate* magazine and *Fredericton's Daily Chronicle*

newspaper, which invited the Red Cross and media outlets to join as co-sponsors.

The first contribution was from newspaper baron Lord Beaverbrook in England who had spent his boyhood days on the Miramichi. He telephoned Michael Wardell at the *Gleaner* and offered \$5,000.

His message was simple: "In this disaster without parallel in the Miramichi Bay that holds for me life-long memories, I send my deepest sympathy to the bereaved, my sorrow for the loss of

(See BEAVERBROOK Page 20)

Beaverbrook, Irving led off disaster fund with \$5,000 each

(Continued from Page 1)
so many splendid lives, and my admiration for those who faced the dangers of the storm and survived."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thirty-five years ago, the worst fishing disaster New Brunswick has ever known occurred. In the aftermath of a vicious storm that hit the Gulf of St. Lawrence off Escuminac, there were 35 men and boys dead, leaving 26 widows, 83 fatherless children, and more than 30 mothers grieving on the shore. The close-knit community has been forever scarred by this tragedy, and all these years later, the families who endured the pain can barely talk about it. In this last of a four-part series, correspondent Cathy Carnahan visited with some people whose lives were changed forever by the devil sea that night. She focuses on "the women who waited."

Beaverbrook, owner of the *Daily Express* in London with its circulation of four million, also gave most of its front page that morning to coverage of the disaster.

The late K.C. Irving, the province's leading industrialist, contributed another \$5,000 and the fund continued to climb.

Some gave large donations while others gave small, but everyone touched by the tragedy gave from the heart.

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip, on a Canadian tour aboard the *Britannia*, also gave to the fund.

Lt.-Gov. J. Leonard O'Brien was patron of the fund and premier Hugh John Flemming was chairman of the administrative committee. Wardell became honorary secretary.

The target of \$440,000 was reached within six months. At the time, widows were given \$50 a month while each dependent child received \$10. Children were also helped to receive an education and some assistance was also provided for some home repairs.

As women like Leocade Daigle,

Julia Williston and Emma Martin share memories of the Escuminac Disaster, there is one event which makes them smile.

On July 29 at 6 p.m. at Pointe du Chene wharf, they met Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. The widows and children of the disaster were taken by bus from their homes to Shediac where they received a royal tribute.

The heroes of the storm who risked their lives to save fellowmen were also invited.

At a memorial service 10 years later, the names of the 16 heroes would be unveiled on a monument at the Escuminac wharf.

They were: Pierre Doiron, Alphonse Doucet, Alvin Durelle, Bernard Jenkins, Cyril Jenkins, Chloern Jimmo, Leslie Lewis, Thomas Lewis, Brian Lloyd, Roy Lloyd, Aquila Manuel, Edmond Martin, Hilarion Martin, Jack Preston, Robert Searle and Theodore Williston.

The seven-foot monument, also inscribed with the names of the 35 fishermen who died, is a sculpture of three fishermen situated just above the Escuminac wharf.



It was designed by Claude Roussel, then director of visual arts at Moncton University, and unveiled on June 19, 1969, by Lieutenant-Governor Wallace S. Bird.

At the ceremony, he read a message from the Queen, which said: "I am very glad to know that a memorial has been set up in Escuminac in memory of the fishermen who lost their lives in the great storm of 1959 and in honor of those whose courage prevented further losses of life.

"My husband and I remember meeting members of the bereaved families on the wharf at Shediac in July of that year.

"We are sending our greetings to all who are taking part in the unveiling ceremony, and congratulations to those whose imagination and generosity made possible the erection of the monument."

For the women who waited on for the return of their loved ones, the Queen had made them feel regal. It's something they've never forgotten.



Alphonse Doucet was one of many cited for heroism

ESCUMINAC (Special) — Alphonse Doucet was one of 18 men who were cited for acts of heroism in the aftermath of the June 19, 1959 killer sea.

His courage was chronicled in a 1969 article in *The Atlantic Advocate*.

The article related the story of how Doucet, 17 at the time, was a member of the crew of the *Francine D.*, his father's 45-foot, 16-ton vessel. Also on board was Doucet's father, Jack, his brother, Everett, 14, and William Manuel, 72, who was just along for the ride.

When a monstrous wave bore down on the *Francine D.*, horrified captains Theodore Williston, Raymond Thibeau and Bernard Jenkins saw the craft lifted up a sheer 50 feet and, just as swiftly, smashed down, then shoot several feet clear of the wave and fall back upside down. It seemed impossible for anyone to live.

All but Jenkins was sure the *Francine D.* was lost with all hands.

William Manuel was killed instantly, but, the *Advocate* story said, a miracle occurred to save the other three. They surfaced in time to see the boat right itself. Jack couldn't swim. Everett could and Alphonse found himself clinging to the side of the boat. All three managed to haul themselves on board but water was coming in fast and it was apparent the craft would sink.

What happened then was referred to in the *Advocate* story as commonplace of the bravery judged by the standards of that day.

Jenkins brought his boat, at great risk, to within 25 feet of the sinking *Francine D.* Cyril Jenkins, Bernie's nephew, and the only other member of his crew, threw the lifeline and it was caught by Alphonse, who tied it under his brother's armpits.

"Jump for it Evé," he yelled, "Bernie'll pull you aboard." And so young Everett plunged into the waves and was hauled aboard the *Aida Marie*. Bernie Jenkins took another sweep through the storm and came round again to within throwing distance.

Cyril threw the line a second time and Alphonse caught it. This time he tied it around his exhausted father, who was rescued. Almost an hour passed before Jenkins could manoeuvre his boat through raging seas close enough for Cyril to throw the line a third time.

After an hour of suspense on the sinking *Francine D.* Alphonse tied it around himself and was saved.

About midday another killer wave broke over the *Aida Marie*, washing the engine off its mountings and swamping the boat. All aboard went to work with buckets to bail out the craft. Bernie Jenkins said later that if the Doucets had not been aboard to help bail, his craft would have gone down.



Memories of the Escuminac disaster still bring a tear to the eye of Julia (Roy) Williston, who was left a widow at age 22

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thirty-five years ago this month, the worst fishing disaster New Brunswick has ever known occurred. In the aftermath of a vicious storm that hit the Gulf of St. Lawrence off Escuminac, there were 35 men and boys dead, leaving 26 widows, 83 fatherless children, and more than 30 mothers grieving on the shore. The close-knit community has been forever scarred by this tragedy, and all these years later, the families who endured the pain can barely talk about it. In this second of a four-part series, correspondent Cathy Carnahan visited with some people whose lives were changed forever by the devil sea that night. She focuses on "the women who waited."

Cyril Jenkins recalls disaster

June 1994

June 1994

Cyril Jenkins of Dalhousie will be among those taking part in a very special outdoor church service on Escuminac wharf this Sunday morning, but he will have a hard time keeping his mind on the priest's words.

Instead, he will be reliving those fearful days, 35 years ago, which have come to be known as the "Escuminac Disaster."

Cyril, then only 21, played a central role when the sea claimed the lives of 35 fishermen that he had known and fished with for years.

Last weekend, Jenkins, now a river pilot on the Restigouche, sat in his living room and told the story of that freak storm.

He sailed as second hand aboard the "Alda Marie", captained by his uncle, Bernie Jenkinns. They left shore about 4:30 on Friday, June 19, 1959, a date that lives in the memory of the entire community.

As Jenkins recalls, there was heavy mist at that time, and the winds were blowing at only 15-20 miles per hour, but from the north-east, considered the worst direction.

By 9 they had set their nets - nearly a mile long - and started what should have been a night of waiting.

About 10:30, the winds began to increase.

"We were one of the outside boats, as we had passed most of the fleet," Jenkins recalled. "It was too dangerous to pick up and come in."

By midnight, it was blowing about 50, and later 65 to 70. There were reported gusts of 100 miles an hour.

By daylight on the 20th, with winds still hitting the 60 mark,

they began hauling in their nets, then started for shore.

As they neared land, they passed another fishing vessel, the "Francine D." with four occupants.

Besides Jack Doucette and his two sons, Alphonse, 17 and Everett, 14, there was an elderly passenger, William Manuel.

"When we were about 500 feet from them, the Francine D. Capsized," Jenkins said.

"I called to my uncle. At that time she was keel up. Our next move was to try to save the crew members.

"On our first approach, we could not get near enough due to nets and debris in the water to get a life line on board."

On the second try, however, with seas running at 50 feet, Cyril Jenkins managed to throw the life line to the older Doucette boy, who in turn passed it to his younger brother.

"When you get to shore, tell mother what happened," he said as Everett was hauled to the Jenkins boat.

"With good luck and good management, my uncle got the boat swung around once more for the third attempt.

"Alphonse caught the life line which I threw him once more. His father was clinging to the anchors that were made fast to the foredeck. Alphonse gave him the life line and he clung to it with a death grip.

"He was 80 to 90 per cent drowned. It was a miracle that we got Jack aboard."

It was about 45 minutes before the Jenkins could make another attempt - an eternity for the young man on the upturned boat. Finally, however, they managed

to make another pass and plucked Alphonse from certain death.

William Manuel had been killed instantly when the boat capsized.

"We started for shore again, but about 15 minutes later we took a very heavy sea on the port side. It tore the engine off its bed and half filled the 37 foot boat.

"Thank God for a good sail which held the boat bows-to the sea in the heavy wind.

"We began bailing with pumps and pails. Jack Doucet did not have the strength to handle a pail of water.

"By 8:30 that evening, we had the engine mounted on its bed and had caulked the broken boards on the starboard side. We were mobile once more."

After a discussion between Bernie Jenkins and Jack Doucette, they decided to head for deeper water, rather than risk being driven ashore.

They had 12 salmon nets remaining in the boat - about half the rig and used that as a sea anchor, allowing them to rid out another net on the storm-tossed Miramichi Bay.

"The winds had lulled to about 20 miles an hour. Jack Doucette and I bailed 15 minutes out of every half hour.

"Next morning - Sunday - at daylight, it was flat calm. We gave the wake-up call to Bernie and the two boys, 'Get up, we're going home.'"

An experience like that would be enough to keep most people on dry land for the rest of their lives, but Cyril was back fishing almost immediately. In fact, the second largest catch of his life was made the next night.

In fact he was unable to go to Ottawa on May 3 of the next year to receive a British Empire Medal, to be presented by the Governor-General on behalf of the Queen.

Lobster season had started on the first, and fishing took priority over decorations.

"There were a lot of heroes that night," Jenkins said. A lot of good men were lost and a lot of good work done.

It is those "good skippers and good net makers" who will be remembered in the ceremonies in Escuminac this Sunday. As part of the observations children of those lost will plant flowers at a monument erected in memory of those claimed by the sea.

And Jenkins will soon go back to Escuminac. This fall, he will retire after 31 years as a pilot, bringing ships into ports on the Miramichi and the Restigouche. For the past 15 of those years, he has been in Dalhousie.

His retirement will be in a home overlooking the bay where the drama was played out 35 years ago.



CYRIL JENKINS, of Dalhousie was cited as a hero for his role in the Escuminac Disaster 35 years ago.

Sea still inspires bad memories

June, 1994

The women who waited

By Cathy Carnahan
Correspondent

BAY DU VIN (Special) — Julia Williston doesn't care much for the sight of the sea. For awhile, she even hated it. Thirty-five years ago it claimed her husband and left her a widow. She was 22, six months pregnant, and had a 2½-year-old son.

Her husband, Leo Roy, was only 27, but the Escuminac Disaster was merciless claiming the young and old alike.

On Friday, June 19, 1959, when 54 boats set sail from Escuminac wharf nobody dreamed more than a third of the salmon drift-net fleet would be gone by Sunday morning.

Thirty-five men and boys were lost to the mighty sea. Roy was originally from Bathurst, but had made his home in Lower Derby for several years. At the time of the disaster, he and Julia were living with her mother in St. Margarets.

They had been married four years and had dreams of raising a happy, healthy family.

"He used to say if he had a little girl as beautiful as his mother he'd be some happy," Julia said smiling during a recent interview at her Bay du Vin home.

"Sometimes I think his mother must have called him home because he really loved her so much. He was only five when she died. He used to talk about her a lot. She was only 27 or 28, but I think she had TB (tuberculosis).

Photos on Page 2

"He had pictures of her, but I don't know where they went. See, his wallet went down with him," she said. "Nobody could live that night in that storm. And they were in an old boat," she added.

Roy was a crew member on a boat skippered by Oswald (Ossie) Williston, who also perished in the storm.

Julia is a soft-spoken, shy woman. "I only have a Grade 8 education," she said apologetically. "I've only been a housewife all my life."

Williston's life has been filled with twists, turns and peculiar happenings.

Looking back, she thinks Leo may have known he was going to die at sea.

"The Sunday before the disaster, he said he was pretty nervous that he wasn't going to get home again. There had been stormy weather, kind of like we're having now with on and off bad days. He was scared of the water because he nearly drowned when he was little.

"The last day we were together, we went to town and he bought a car which he wanted to fix up. And he said he didn't think he'd be around to see his little girl being born so he went in and bought her an outfit, pink and white, at the Five and Ten (store)," she said.

June 19, 1959 was described as foggy and cold with a forecast of winds at 25 miles per hour. Few of the boats had radios so a later weather report that winds would reach 35 mph went mostly unheard.

As the bizarre storm swept through the Gulf of St. Lawrence the seas turned vicious. Winds reached 70 mph and waves climbed some 30 feet.

At home, like other fishermen's wives, Julie wondered and waited for Leo to return.

"The reason he went was that I was expecting a new baby, money was kind of scarce and there were no jobs. He took his chances, and although he was scared I supposed he didn't really expect to go that way," she said.

"I didn't want him to go, but there was not much I could do. I remember crying when he left. I told him not to go. I had that queer feeling that I might not see him again."

Julia's soft hazel eyes glistened over . . . her gentle voice broke.

On Sunday, June 21, 1959, she heard two children talking and they said Leo was dead. Although she feared the

worst, she couldn't believe it, nor would she believe it.

"Then that evening a friend of my husband's now, Ian Williston, came and told me. Things don't look very good. Ossie's boat has not come in and they found pieces."

"I still didn't give up until Wendell came in and told me. Because Ossie was Wendell's brother, I had to believe him," she said.

Wendell Williston would become Julia's husband six months later, but that night when he drove in the yard she thought Leo had returned.

"I remember running out to the car to give Leo a hug, and I remember my little boy running out calling, 'Daddy! Daddy!', but when he saw it wasn't daddy, he just turned and howled."

Their lives would never be the same. The memories still bring tears to Julie 35 years later.

"They have a memorial every year, but I can't take it," Julia said. "People might think I'm funny, but I'm married again and it seems funny I got married six months later."

"I had two children and Wendell came and asked me to housekeep for him because I didn't have any place to go and he felt bad for me on account of Ossie being his brother. But back then you didn't stay with a man unless you were married."

"And I liked him and he liked me I guess so we're married. He gave me a home and he's been very good to my two children. They couldn't ask for a better step-father," she said.

"I also owe a lot of thanks to Leo's foster mother. She came and took me to stay with them right after the disaster," she added.

Hilda and the late Ciancy O'Donnell of Lower Derby made a home for her and her children.

"I just felt nobody wanted me around. When you're 22, you don't know what life is about, but Hilda said I had to make a home for myself and my family," recalled Julia.

"It was her idea that I keep house for Wendell," she said.

Wendell was also out the night of the disaster and almost drowned along with two other brothers but they returned safely. Their sibling, Ossie, was found late in August and buried beside Leo, who's body washed ashore on Aug. 7.

"That was Wendell's idea," said Julia. "He thought they died together and should be buried together."

As she glanced at a photo of Leo a smile formed on her lips.

"I think of him often, but you have to go on with your life. I think God had plans for me, and I think Leo would be happy for me," she said.

She and Wendell had nine children, but three died. One was killed at 2½ when hit by a car in 1968. Another was stillborn 13 months later and one miscarried in 1972.

Julia's own father died when she was seven and she lost both her mother and brother in 1978.

Strangely enough, despite the tragedies in Julia's life, she still finds optimism and courage.

"Sometimes I think I had it hard, and then I look around and think there are people having it worse."

"I think I took my spite out on the Lord for awhile, but I guess I must have a lot of faith or I wouldn't be able to go through what I did," she said.

"I know I have a lot to be thankful for — a good husband and eight good children."

Among them is a son named Ossie. There is also Leo's son, Everett, and the little daughter he dreamed about dressed in pink and white, Frances Ann.



1999

June 12, 1999



Wendell Williston, one of the survivors of the Escuminac Disaster, still fishes today. (Karen Ruet photo)

Escuminac's Ill Wind

On the afternoon and evening of Friday, June 19, 1959, about 54 boats set out from the breakwater at Escuminac to fish all night for salmon.

Because it was Friday, many boys came home from school and went fishing with their fathers, brothers or cousins. None of the boats had ship-to-shore communications, radar or other navigational aids.

A fierce gale struck that night and by Sunday afternoon - Father's Day, 1959 - there were 11 bodies accounted for and another 24 missing and presumed drowned. Search and rescue aircraft counted 22 derelict fishing boats - some washed ashore, others sunk in the shoals or floating upside down in deeper water.

In all, 35 lives were lost in the Escuminac Disaster. Or, as some reports say, it left 26 widows and 83 orphans.

This weekend and next, people from Hardwicke, Bay du Vin, Eel River Bridge, Manuels Post Office, Baie-Ste-Anne, Escuminac and other communities will mark the 40th anniversary of the tragedy.

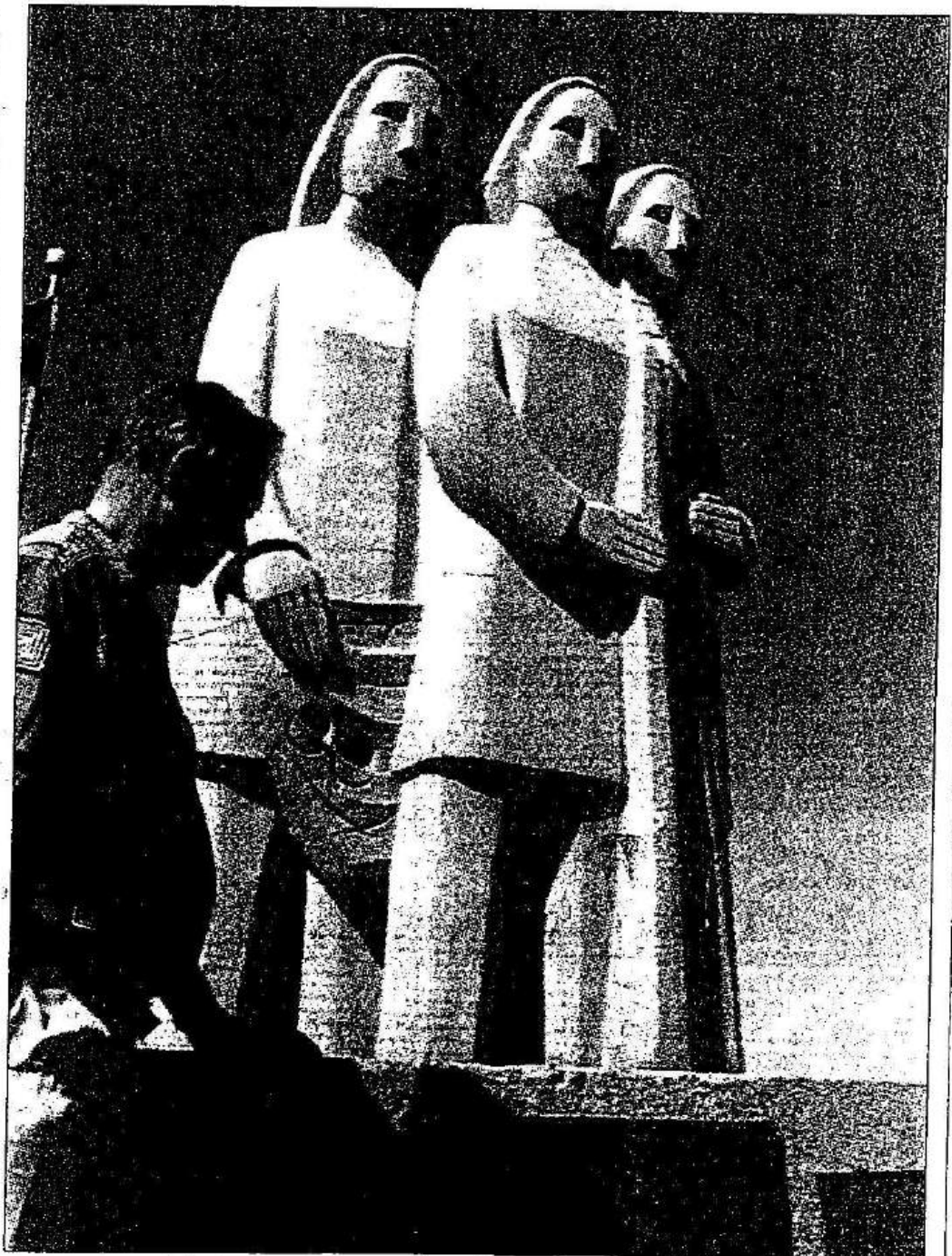
Tomorrow, the faithful will gather for a large outdoor service at the home of Theodore and Jean Williston at Hardwicke, with a view across the bay to Fox Island.

They will dedicate a plaque with the 35 names of the victims to be placed in Myers United Church at 2 p.m.

Next weekend, a larger event will take place at Escuminac itself, with both the Anglican Bishop of Fredericton George Lemmon and Roman Catholic Archbishop of Moncton George Leger taking part.

Historians, poets and songwriters along the Miramichi, recall the disaster, but nowhere nearly as vividly as the fishermen who made it safely back - nor the families waiting fearfully at the breakwater.

Reporter Derwin Gowan talked to the survivors and tells their story in this week's New Brunswick Reader.



Karen Ruet/Special to the Telegraph Journal
Escuminac survivor Cyril Jenkins reads names on the monument, erected to mark the 1959 fishing disaster, on the Baie Ste-Anne wharf.

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The old men and the sea

After 40 years the memories of the Escuminac Disaster still surface from the depths

By Derwin Gowan

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up thereof.

They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

— Psalm 107:23-29

OLD FISHERMEN – the wise ones who did not go out on Friday night – knew by Saturday morning there was trouble out on Miramichi Bay.

So did the wives and mothers of fishermen. Some of them only boys, others fathers and grandfathers were still out on the water.

Josie Thériault, the telephone operator at Baie-Ste-Anne, had to get up at around 1:30 a.m. on June 20, 1959, to put a call through.

The mother of 10 children at this point in her life (later she had one more), she had the switchboard in a small room in her home and was on call 24 hours a day. Back then, nice people did not make telephone calls late at night without good reason when they knew it meant getting the operator out of bed. There was a car accident at Bay du Vin and she had to put the call through to the RCMP.

Josie Thériault grew up and lived her whole life around

Baie-Ste-Anne and the wind alarmed her that night. She knew that 50-some boats had gone out from Escuminac wharf the night before to drift for salmon, most with a crew of two or three.

"My golly, the wind, the wind, what is happening? I went upstairs to wake my husband and said, 'Nobody is going to come in,'" she recalls.

"I said, 'Wake up, Norbert, wake up. Nobody is going to come home who is out this morning.'"

Norbert Thériault, who grew up at Eel River Bridge, made his living as a fish-buyer. In those days, fish-buyers like Thériault outfitted the fishermen, advancing the money for boats, gear, fuel, whatever they needed. Some of those fishermen went out from the Escuminac wharf on that cold, foggy and stormy night against their better judgment, because they owed the fish-buyers money.

There was the best run of salmon on in 10 years or more and a salmon would fetch \$5. Some fishermen made \$200 a night drifting, a lot of money in 1959 – enough to risk their lives for, enough to die for.

The night of Friday, June 19, and morning of Saturday, June 20, 1959, went down in history as the Escuminac Disaster.

The storm destroyed 22 of the 54 wooden boats reported to have been out drifting that night on Miramichi Bay and the Northumberland Strait – out of a total fleet of 66 licenced drifters at Escuminac.

Worse, the storm claimed the lives of 35 men and boys out of the 100 and some crew on the boats. Some reports say the storm left 26 widows and 83 orphans. Some survivors say the waves reached 40 and 50 feet high. Others say a 20-foot wave would look like 50 feet to someone out on a 40-foot fishing boat. Nobody had time to do precise measurements.

The outside world soon heard of the unfolding disaster, and both the RCMP and Red Cross headed to Escuminac from Newcastle. Press, radio and television reporters came, too. The New Brunswick media, wire services, and the CBC were on the scene. Lord Beaverbrook – who grew up in Newcastle – made sure that his London *Daily Express* newspaper covered the disaster in full. Lieutenant-Governor J. Leonard O'Brien, another Miramichier, went to Escuminac and Premier Hugh John Flemming came a day or two later. Brigadier Michael Wardell, publisher of the *Daily Gleaner* in Fredericton, led a fundraising campaign for the survivors, securing \$440,000.



Fishermen prepare a boat in case survivors are sighted. (CP wire photo)

Things got hectic for Josie Thériault trying to keep up with the telephone calls. She worked 24 hours without a break.

"Around 8:30 . . . they were calling for the RCMP, for the priest," Thériault says.

There were calls from news reporters, from family, calls for the clergy, calls from people who just wanted to know what was going on.

"They were even calling from France . . . they were not even related . . . just to know the story."

THE WEATHER had been miserable all week with the seas choppy, visibility near zero and the temperature unseasonably cold for late June.

But the fishing families along Miramichi Bay had neither welfare nor unemployment insurance to fall back on and few other economic choices, except the wealth they could wrest from the sea. There was a run of salmon on, the likes of which had not been seen in years. Ian Williston and Walter Williston had gone out drifting on Thursday night and Ian had returned Friday morning with 107 salmon, Walter with 85 – the best catches anyone could remember since the 1940s.

Yvon Durelle, 32, training for his second fight with Archie Moore for the world light heavyweight boxing title, came home from Moncton that week to

go fishing.

Durelle, who owned four boats, began fishing around six years old with his father Ernest and his uncle Joe Durelle.

He and his brother Ernie intended to go drifting on that stormy Friday night. Yvon took his six-year-old son Yvon Jr., and Ernest went along too.

"I've never seen the sea like that before . . . The water just seems to be jumping at you," Yvon recalls 40 years later. "You seem to be in a hole 40 to 50 feet high."

They stayed out for about two hours when Ernest told Yvon to head back to the breakwater – about 6 or 7 o'clock.

"My old man knew more about the forecast than the forecast would be . . . The fishing was good, but my old man said we'd better go in," Yvon says.

"My father was an old fisherman. He knew the tides. He knew the winds. When he told you to get in, you got in.

Durelle says that his father likely saved the lives of the entire crew by telling them to head for the wharf early.

"When Dad says something, don't argue with it. Don't ask why, because he knows."

"My son was aboard . . . and my old man was old, so why give him trouble?"

"The ocean was blowing like drifting snow – the ocean was alive."

A crew of two good fishermen could normally handle the boat and nets, so a person could wonder why Ernest decided to go out with his boys on

Friday night.

Yvon does not say this but, just maybe, Ernest did not quite trust his sons' judgment and decided to go along – especially with his six-year-old grandson aboard.

Others were not so wise. The news of Ian and Walter Williston's catches had spread and everybody was determined to go out that Friday.

Theresa Durelle was a young mother of four children in 1959 when her husband's boxing career was at its peak. She paints a vivid picture of the fishermen at the wharf debating whether or not to go out on June 19.

One fisherman would ask another if he was going out; the other fisherman would say he did not know. Some boats would leave the wharf, but return a short time later. Some came back in after a couple of hours. Others, without an Ernest Durelle on board, stayed out until it was too late to go in.

"It was the run of the salmon . . . they had to go out; if they didn't, they would miss the run of the salmon," says Theresa Durelle.

"They risked their lives to be out there to get the salmon."

The forecast called for light winds on Friday night increasing to 25 knots and shifting to the northeast by morning. Northeasterly winds caused fishermen the most trouble because they would drive their boats into the shoals off the south side of the bay, but 25 knots did not worry them.

Some of the fishermen rigged up their boats with car radios so they could get the weather forecasts, but nearly all of them missed the revised forecast after 8 p.m. calling for northeasterlies increasing to 35 knots – and the full gale warning at 10 p.m.

Not that it would have done them much good. Finding the gap in the breakwater at Escuminac at night in the fog with heavy seas was risky and they did not want to end up in the breakers near the shore.

Besides that, they had to find their way home through the gauntlet of drift nets, stretching out a kilometre or so from the bow of each boat, up and down the bay. Or they could run afoul of lobster gear.

Old fishermen still drill it into their sons' heads: if you get into trouble, head out to sea where the water is calmer. Stay out of the breaking waves near shore.

The floating nets attached to the bow of the boat act as a sea anchor as long as the headline holds fast. The drifters hoist riding sails at the stern of their boats to keep the bow pointed into the wind. Their drift nets are composed of

about 24 nets strung together, each 28 fathoms long and reaching two fathoms down into the water. Buoys keep them floating and a 200-foot headline holds them to the boat.

The salmon run into this wall of death and get caught by the gills in the hemp mesh. The fish drown in the night and the fishermen pull them aboard in the morning.

In 1959 the nets were worth about \$1,500; the boat, \$2,200. Once they set the nets in the evening, the fishermen shut the engines down and drifted all night. The nets, boat and sail moved together, working much like a giant floating weather vane - always pointing into the wind.

If the night was calm, the fishermen cooked supper after setting the nets, then turned in to the bunks in the cabin until morning.

The fishermen would cook breakfast on the small woodstoves in the cuddy, then haul the nets in at daybreak. They would remove the salmon, then head for the breakwater at Escuminac where the buyers would be waiting.

The evening of June 19 was anything but calm as the northeasterly gale increased all night.

Theodore Williston of Hardwicke survived that night. Forty years later he recalls that before it blew down, the windgauge at Escuminac Point recorded 100 knots - about 195 kilometres an hour.

June 19 fell on a Friday, which made it all the worse, because the boys would rush home from school then head for the wharf to spend the night out with their fathers.

"And if you missed the boat you cried. It was quite a thrill to go fishing," Theodore Williston recalls.

Eric Williston, 13, went fishing with his first cousin, Haynes Williston, 29, and Haynes' helper Windsor J. Kingston, 34.

Eric's brother Haley Williston, 19, went out with Haynes' brother Cunard Williston, 49.

Eric and Haley were brothers to Ian, Harry, John and Herbie, who all went out drifting on June 19. There were 19 Willistons from Bay du Vin and Bay du Vin Beach out there, all related one way or another.

Brian Lloyd, 13, went out with his father, Roy, 48, on the Sharon Lloyd, the largest boat in the fleet at 48 feet, six inches. Chlorin Jimmo and Les Lewis, Roy Lloyd's regular crew, went too.

Jack Doucet of Manuels Post Office, near Baie-Ste-Anne, went out in his boat the Francine D, 45 feet and only two years old, with his sons Alphonse, 17, and Everett, 14, and his old friend



Yvon Durelle (standing on boat in white sweater) tows the sunken boat of William Chiasson after the disaster. Chiasson's body was not recovered.

William George Manuel, 72.

Albert Chiasson of Baie-Ste-Anne, a father of 14 children, went out with his 16-year-old son Alphonse. Albert's brother William, 47, father of five children, went out with his sons Adrien, 19, and Robert, 16.

And others . . .

THE LAST boat to come back Friday night came through the breakwater at about 10 o'clock. People on the wharf heard what sounded like a boat engine and could not believe it. To this day, nobody knows how Albert McIntyre, the captain, did it.

For the rest of the fleet, out there five, 10 or 15 miles, all they could do was set their nets and hoist their sails to keep into the wind as the darkness settled - and pray for better weather in the morning.

If the headline holding the nets to the bow parted, or if the wind ripped the sail to shreds, you were in trouble.

You could use the engine to hold the bow into the wind and keep offshore. If you did not have enough fuel to do this until daylight, you would have to make a very dangerous run in to the breakwater or, possibly, to a safe anchorage in the lee of an island or inlet.

Six-cylinder gasoline engines, nearly

all of them salvaged from old cars, powered the Escuminac fishing fleet. As any back-yard mechanic knows, water will short the ignition and stop a gasoline engine dead.

Without nets, sail or power, you drifted helplessly until a big wave broached you or the boat smashed to kindling wood in the shoals - or the crew of another boat saw you and risked their own lives to bring you in tow or take you on board.

If the boat takes a big sea and the engine comes off its bed, it becomes worse than useless - pitching against the sides of an old plank boat with the force of a gigantic hammer.

The fishermen used spikes to hold the engines and shafts in place. With the sea tossing the boats about the way it did on that Friday night and Saturday morning 40 years ago, engines did come off their beds.

You had to get them remounted before they stove in the boat, and hope it did not crush you in the process. Then, get it dried out and running again before you drifted into the shoals or took a big wave over the side.

Not one of these boats had ship-to-shore communication or radar, depth sounders, GPS satellites and other gadgets fishermen depend on today.

Fishermen navigated with a ship's compass and their own heads.

THEODORE WILLISTON, captain on his uncle Charles' boat since age 21, took the Gulf Prowler out at five or six o'clock Friday evening. He was 28 and he and his wife Jean had two children at the time: Jane, 17 months, and Ted, three months.

Aquila Manuel and Larry Martin, both in their 20s, formed his crew.

"A crew makes a skipper look good and I had a good crew," Theodore says today.

He recalls the weather forecast: "15-20 northeast . . . it wasn't bad."

Unlike the other captains out that night, he decided to drift for mackerel instead of salmon and went further out than the others. The Gulf Prowler sailed for two to two-and-a-half hours going out about 25 miles - closer to Prince Edward Island than New Brunswick - when Theodore decided it was time to set the nets.

They soon realized they were in for a rough night.

"Just after dark we knew, because we were up most of the night - you couldn't rest," Theodore says. They had to keep the boat pumped out and keep an eye for objects in the water.

They hauled in their nets at 5:30 or 6 Saturday morning and headed for home.

It was foggy, the wind was blowing and the tide was against them. Theodore

steered to the north of the route he would normally take – heeding the lessons from his father Sandy and uncle Charles, he decided to keep lots of water between himself and the shoals.

“You see, this is what was drilled in to me since I was a young fellow: if you’re having trouble you don’t come in, you go to sea, as long as you’ve got lots of sea room.”

He almost went in too far and the Gulf Prowler nearly came to grief on the Miramichi Bar – the shoals just east of the islands which form a barrier across the mouth of the Miramichi River.

The Gulf Prowler was suddenly in the breakers and the crew sounded with a leaded line and realized they were in two fathoms of water – that is, 12 feet.

The alarmed crew swung the Gulf Prowler around and headed east – back out. They saw three other boats headed for where the Gulf Prowler had just been – captained by Bernie Jenkins, Jack Doucet and Placide McIntyre.

The trio on the Gulf Prowler waved to the other boats to follow and led the pack away from the bar.

Theodore knew he was on the north side of Miramichi Bay because of the fishing gear – he recognized it as the type that fishermen from Neguac used. Next, he spied a buoy on the “salmon line,” the line of buoys across Miramichi Bay above which the salmon drifters could not legally fish.

Garth Williston, another fishermen having trouble of his own elsewhere on the bay, likens this bit of luck on Theodore’s part – finding a buoy on the salmon line in that fog and pitching sea – to finding a needle in a haystack.

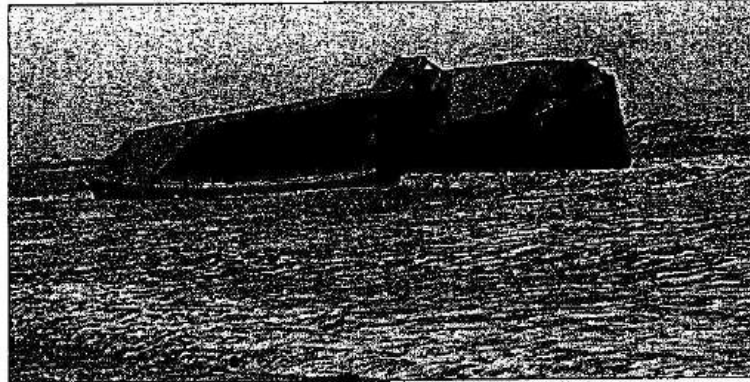
The salmon line and the Neguac fishing gear gave the crew of the Gulf Prowler co-ordinates to tell where they were just as sure as a Loran C (radar system) or GPS (Ground Positioning Satellite) would today, so they could all make the run in to the Escuminac breakwater.

However, things soon became more dangerous for the little armada.

First, they came upon Valaire Robichaud and Raymond Thibeau on a boat with a stalled engine and in grave danger of drifting into the breakers or broaching.

The Gulf Prowler got close enough to Thibeau and Robichaud to throw a tow line. While the Gulf Prowler had the other boat in tow, the other fishermen watched in horror as a huge sea lifted Jack Doucet’s boat – the Francine D – completely out of the water and landed it upside down.

The Francine D righted herself, but filled with water and sunk to the



When the Francine D, above, washed to shore there was only one body aboard. The ship’s captain, Jack Doucet, and his two sons were presumed to be drowned. It wasn’t until hours later that Doucet’s waiting wife found out that Bernie Jenkins, below, had rescued the Doucets with his boat.



washboards. Jack Doucet clung to the bow, his sons Alphonse and Everett to the cabin. Nobody saw William Manuel.

Theodore Williston, Aquila Manuel and Larry Martin on the Gulf Prowler had a ringside seat to heroism.

Bernie Jenkins and his nephew Cyril took Bernie’s boat, the 37-foot Alda Marie, in dangerously close to the Francine D to make the rescue. The first attempt to throw a line failed and Bernie Jenkins circled to make a second pass.

This time, Alphonse caught the line. Both Cyril Jenkins and Theodore Williston still remember the 17-year-old Alphonse tying the line around his 14-year-old brother Everett whom the Jenkinses hauled to the relative safety of the Alda Marie – safer than the Francine D, at least, at that particular point.

The Alda Marie made a third pass at the Francine D. Alphonse caught the line again and crawled to the bow where his father, Jack, was already half-drowned. Jack went under water every time the bow went down.

Cyril Jenkins and his uncle Bernie managed to haul Jack aboard by some

miracle.

The sea carried the Alda Marie away from the Francine D with Alphonse still clinging for dear life and it took some time for Bernie to swing her around again for a fourth pass. This time, Alphonse kept the rope himself, so Bernie and Cyril hauled him on board.

The people on the rest of the flotilla did not have much time to gape. Theodore Williston recalls that the Gulf Prowler was about the length of his kitchen from Thibeau and Robichaud.

“A big sea came and threw his boat and almost set it on top of mine,” Williston recalls.

Thibeau and Robichaud’s boat broke clear of her nets and everything on board went flying, including a can of engine oil they didn’t know they had.

Using an old mechanic’s trick, Thibeau and Robichaud poured the oil over the sodden wires, spark plugs and distributor cap. They had a spare battery and the old six-cylinder engine came to life.

By this time, the Gulf Prowler was following Placide McIntyre towards Escuminac, and Thibeau and Robichaud were on their way.

But, Aquila Manuel, on the Gulf Prowler, thought he saw a man in the water. Theodore circled around and sure enough, there was Walter Williston in his swamped boat.

The Gulf Prowler came in close enough to throw a line, which Walter tied to the body of his crew member Harold Taylor, 20, who had died of exposure after four hours in the cold water.

Walter would not leave his companion to either wash ashore or sink and not be found. The crew hauled Harold Taylor’s body on board, then got a line back to Walter – in danger of

dying himself by now – and hauled him on board.

Theodore says he began to realize how serious the whole thing was when he saw Harold Taylor’s body.

The Gulf Prowler followed Placide McIntyre and Thibeau and Robichaud in to Escuminac and finally came through the gap in the breakwater – home free – around 1 p.m.

Jean Williston recalls that nobody could get through to her on the party line, and someone eventually came from the W. S. Loggie Store to tell her that her husband Theodore was safe at the wharf.

People crowded the wharf by this time. The Francine D had already drifted in with only William Manuel’s body aboard. Raymond Thibeau saw the Francine D turn upside down and did not think anybody survived.

When Theodore came in he told everyone that Bernie Jenkins took the three Doucets aboard – but where was Bernie Jenkins?

JACK DOUCET – father of 13 children – left the wharf with his sons Alphonse and Everett, and his friend William Manuel, on the Francine D at 3:40 p.m. They headed northeast – “Right into the wind, nice and easy,” says Alphonse – hoping to get outside the main fleet where they could get a better sleep.

“And we set our nets, had our supper, jiggered a few cod and went to bed.”

The wind started picking up at about 10 p.m. and there was a gale blowing by midnight. The nets broke free of the Francine D at 5 or 5:30 a.m. on Saturday. They found them three-quarters of an hour later and had breakfast.

The nets broke free again and they could not find them. Without the nets as a sea anchor, they had to use the engine to keep into the wind. They did not have enough fuel to do this all day, so Jack decided to head for Escuminac.

They came upon Placide McIntyre and his son Dickie hauling their nets. Jack hoped to ask Placide for directions to get to shore “because the visibility was nil at that point.”

A heavy sea broke the windshield in the McIntyre boat, but Placide, who heard the foghorn at Point Escuminac earlier, pointed the direction – and the Francine D went on her way.

The Doucets waved at Clifford Kingston hauling in his nets – and never saw him again.

Then, the Doucets saw both Bernie Jenkins and Theodore Williston head to

assist Raymond Thibeau, but Theodore Williston got there first and took the distressed boat in tow. The Francine D stood by to render assistance.

Jack Doucet told his boys to refill the fuel tank and decided to turn the Francine D back into the wind before a wave over the stern washed anybody overboard.

Alphonse and Everett went to the cabin to look for a funnel. William Manuel and Jack Doucet stayed by the wheel.

"All of a sudden the captain hollered, 'Watch out boys, we've got it.' Heard a crash - everything went black, the stove tumbled, sparks coming from the stovepipe and then the water started coming in."

The force of the water prevented Alphonse and Everett from getting out of the cabin. The pressure finally equalized and the brothers, both under water, headed for the door.

The Francine D, now upside down, began to right herself as the boys reached the cabin door. Alphonse grabbed the boat's washboard and hung on, but Everett ended up 10 feet from the boat.

Alphonse pushed a wooden crate into the sea and Everett grabbed the other end - and made it back to the boat.

The brothers climbed to the top of the wheel house where the broken windows provided places to hang on. Alphonse saw his father - who never swam a stroke in his life - climb on to the bow and grab the headline.

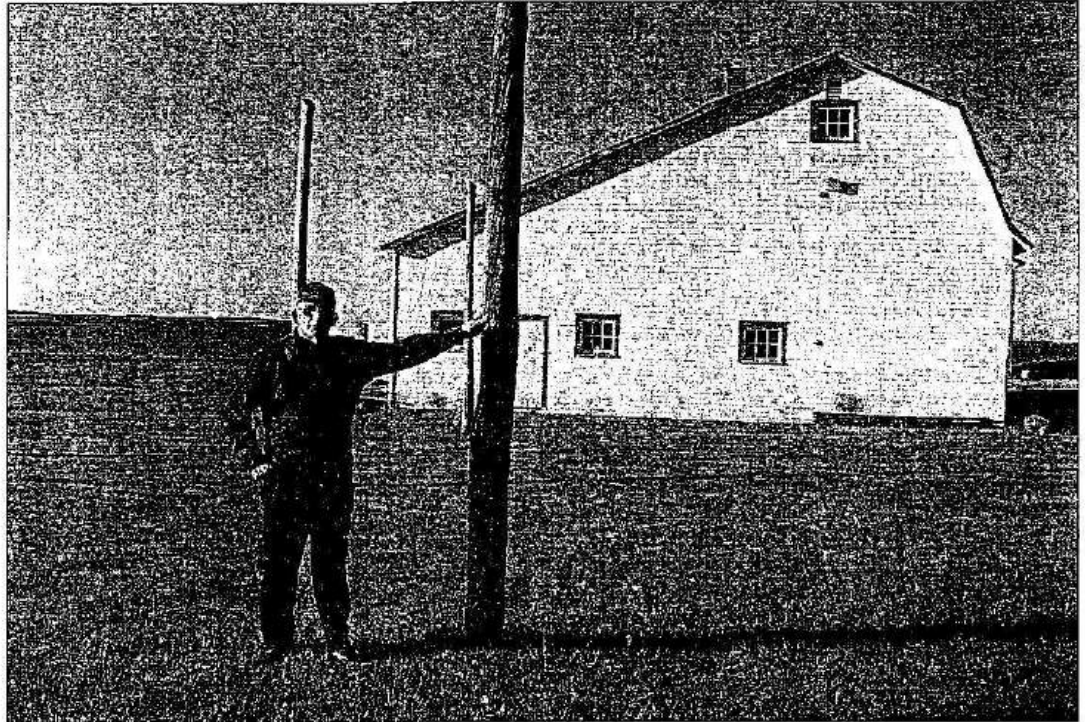
Alphonse saw Bernie and Cyril Jenkins swing around, but the first attempt to throw a lifeline went wild.

The rescuers came around a second time and Cyril tossed the rope practically into Alphonse's hand. Alphonse made a noose which he put under his brother's arms "and he was gone aboard Bernie's boat."

Jack Doucet was drowning, going under water every time the bow of the Francine D went down - but he hung on. Alphonse still remembers his father's false teeth coming out every time he came up. They landed on the deck and he put them back in his mouth each time.

When Alphonse caught the rope again, he went forward. "I said, 'John [his father], you're the captain, but today I'm the boss,' and he didn't want to let go of the bow of the boat."

Jack was a heavy man and too weak to help himself and Alphonse could not get the rope properly around him because he would not let go of the boat. To this day, both Alphonse Doucet and Cyril Jenkins wonder how Jack Doucet managed to hang on to that rope - and



Theodore Williston stands in front of his boat shed in Hardwicke, Baie Ste.-Anne. At 28, he was the youngest captain on the water the night of the disaster. (Karen Ruot photo)

how Bernie and Cyril ever pulled him aboard.

"Now it was my turn, but the seas were too rough to turn around - the seas were too big," Alphonse says.

He figures it took Bernie Jenkins 10 or 15 minutes to bring the Alda Marie around again, but it seemed like an hour. Theodore Williston, who watched this rescue from the Gulf Prowler, says it only took a few minutes to rescue all three Doucets.

In the commotion Alphonse forgot about William Manuel until he saw the top of his head and mitts sticking from the water - "and his head was split from ear to ear." Alphonse closed the cabin door so that Manuel's body would come ashore with the boat.

The Alda Marie came back around. "The rope hit its target on its final attempt and it didn't take me long to get out of there . . . I was a good swimmer and I think maybe I was scared shitless."

Alphonse Doucet's troubles were only half over when they hauled him on to the Alda Marie.

"The salmon was on the run, and people were poor, and we didn't look for safety; we looked for money."

Alphonse Doucet recalls 40 years later.

"And no sooner than I was in Bernie's boat than we took a heavy sea and swamped her, filled her right up to the washboards," Alphonse recalls.

Theodore Williston did not see Bernie Jenkins get into trouble and did not know what to tell the people waiting at the wharf.

"We grabbed anything that went by that you could bail with . . . anything that could hold water," Alphonse says. Even Jack Doucet did the best he could on his hands and knees.

Alphonse figures it took five to 10 minutes to bail out Bernie Jenkins' boat, but an even bigger sea swamped her completely. The engine broke free from its bedding - and broke five timbers and sprung two planks, although they did not realize this immediately.

They hoisted the sail to bring the bow into the seas and bailed like mad. Bernie feared that the engine went right through the bottom of the boat until they finally bailed her dry and inspected the damage.

They found the damage on the starboard side and caulked it as best they could with rags. They tried to remount the engine, but they were just

too weak. They were drifting toward Point Escuminac in a nine-year-old leaking boat with no power. They were wet, cold and hungry, and had barely the energy they needed to bail every 15 or 20 minutes.

Alphonse recalls seeing the spire of Stella Maris Roman Catholic Church at Escuminac to the south-southwest at 20 to 11 that morning.

Their firewood was soaked, but they used pieces of rubber tire nailed to the side of the Alda Marie fenders for fuel in the stove. Bernie Jenkins smoked so he had dry matches in a glass bottle.

Their food got soaked. Alphonse says they used their dinner pails to bail. But, they had salmon! They boiled it in seawater.

That meal would have cost a pretty penny in a fine restaurant.

Jack Doucet was coming around by now.

Cyril thinks they got the engine back on its bed around 8 p.m. They dried the spark-plug wires and distributor cap over the stove and got the engine going by 8:30 or nine o'clock Saturday night.

The three youngsters - Cyril, Alphonse, Everett - wanted to head home, but the two captains would not

risk it. The wind had let up quite a bit by then, but it was after dark and they were in an old and injured boat quite a bit smaller than the Francine D. They heeded the advice from the old fishermen and stayed at sea.

Bernie still had 12 of his 24 nets. They set these for a sea anchor, hoisted the sail and drifted all night. Tired as they were, they still had to bail every 15 minutes or so.

"The next morning at 4:30 we began to haul our nets in. It was oily calm and no swell," Bernie recalls.

"We finished hauling at approximately 6:30, proceeded towards Escuminac."

They met Albin Turbide with a crowd on his boat out looking for survivors. Turbide saw Bernie and Cyril Jenkins and Alphonse and Everett Doucet – and demanded that Jack Doucet show himself to prove that he was alive.

Jack poked his head from the cabin door.

Alphonse remembers Turbide's reaction: "When he seen him he said to go straight to shore, your wife is half crazy, she thinks you all drowned."

The Doucets and the Jenkinsons only knew of one fatality – William Manuel – at this time, although they had seen three sunken boats.

They got the grim news at the wharf, where the Red Cross took Cyril and Bernie home. They stayed for two hours, then went back to sea to look for their lost nets, with no luck.

Jack Doucet and his two sons went home long enough to clean up and get into their Sunday clothes. They made it in time for 10 o'clock mass at Ste-Anne's Church.

"We did go to church but it was a sad day in Baie-Ste-Anne and Escuminac and Bay du Vin because there were 35 fishermen and neighbours and friends gone," Alphonse says.

THE FIRST bodies to come ashore on Saturday morning were those of Edgar Daigle and his 18-year-old helper, Rémi Martin, both of Baie-Ste-Anne. The smashed boat came in with Edgar in the boat and Rémi tied to it and dragging along in the water.

Daigle was married and the father of five children. His only son, 10-year-old Rhéal, wanted to go out drifting, but Edgar decided on Friday afternoon it was too choppy, so he took the disappointed youngster back home. Edgar went fishing with Remi Martin, 18, a cousin to his wife, instead.

Rémi was sole breadwinner for his mother, Emma Martin, and five of his brothers and sisters ranging in age from

21 months to 17 years, all still living at home. Rémi's father Stanley had died in a car accident 11 months before.

Joint funerals were held for Edgar Daigle, William Manuel and Rémi Martin at Baie-Ste-Anne, and Harold Taylor, Haley Williston and Cunard Williston at Bay du Vin, on Tuesday, June 23.

The funeral for Jeffrey Richard and his son Jean-Louis was at Baie-Ste-Anne the next day. They did not find the body of Jean-Louis' brother Lionel. Victor Robichaud's funeral followed on Thursday, June 25.

Yvon Durelle and his father towed William Chiasson's boat ashore. William, Adrien and Robert drowned, as did Albert and Alphonse; also Victor Robichaud's brother Raphael, André Martin and his nephew Alonzo Martin.

They found George McLeod of Bay du Vin and John Chapman, 16, in a boat.

Charles Gauvin, 53, of Lamèque, father of 13 children, washed on to the shore three miles from Shippagan Gully. His boat capsized at the mouth of the Gully, but his nephew Hilaire Gauvin managed to escape.

They found Éric Williston, Haley Williston's brother, on the shore near Escuminac in July. Thirteen years old, Eric was the youngest to die.

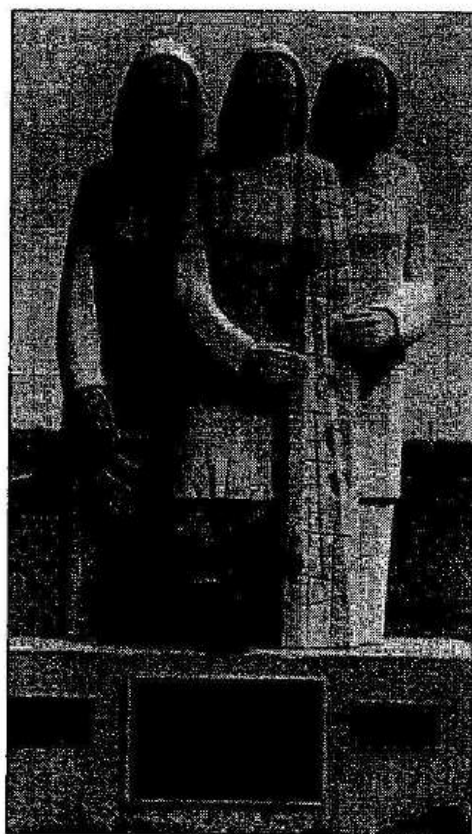
Wendell Williston identified the body of his brother, Oswald, six weeks after the storm – in August. Leo Roy of St. Margarets, 27, washed ashore, also in August.

The others were Amon Manuel, Andrew Mills and his son Allan from Black River Bridge, Hugh Kelly and his son Hector and their cousin Arthur from Kouchibouguac, Cunard Williston's brother Haynes, Windsor J. Kingston and his brother Clifford from Bay du Vin, Alfred McLenaghan from Bay du Vin and Fraser Cooke from Prince Edward Island.

A year later, a newspaper reported five bodies still missing. The people organizing the 40th anniversary commemoration at Escuminac next weekend say two bodies were never found.

THE QUEEN and Prince Philip rerouted their 1959 royal tour to meet with survivors of the disaster at Point du Chêne in July.

Governor-General Georges Vanier presented British Empire Medals for gallantry to Bernie Jenkins and Cyril Jenkins in Fredericton in 1961. They were to get these medals from the Queen in Ottawa, but it would have meant missing the opening day of



Fishermen's memorial at Escuminac at the entrance to Miramichi Bay.

lobster season. A fisherman does not miss the opening day of lobster season – even for the Queen.

Alphonse Doucet received the Queen's Commendation for Bravery – two tiny silver wings for his lapels. He only has one of these wings today because he gave the other to his brother Everett.

Cyril Jenkins says Alphonse deserves the same British Empire Medal he received. Both of these survivors say Theodore Williston, among others, deserves a medal.

But, what does a medal mean?

"All I wanted was my family back. I got what I wanted and that's all the thanks I wanted," Alphonse says.

Lieutenant-Governor Wallace S. Bird unveiled a seven-foot limestone statue depicting three fishermen crafted by Claude Roussel at Escuminac wharf on the 10th anniversary – June 19, 1969.

One bronze tablet lists the names of the 35 fishermen who died. Another lists 16 names of boat captains and crew who did brave things on June 20, 1959: Pierre Doiron, Alphonse Doucet, Alvin Durelle, Bernard Jenkins, Cyril Jenkins, Chlorin Jimmo, Leslie Lewis, Thomas Lewis, Brian Lloyd, Roy Lloyd, Aquila Manuel, Edmond Martin, Hilarion Martin, Jack Preston, Robert Searle, Theodore Williston.

"There was a lot of untold heroism," Theodore Williston says – untold

because they did not make it in.

The fishermen know that some of those 35 people drowned trying to make exactly the type of rescues which the 16 people listed on the plaque pulled off.

How else do you explain stories of one fisherman's gear coming to shore in another fisherman's boat – with nobody aboard?

A fisherman cannot leave another fisherman to drown and their widows understand.

TOMORROW Myers United Church at Hardwicke will hold a special service to dedicate a plaque inscribed with all 35 names along with two verses from Psalm 107:

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

These see the works of the Lord, and the wonders in the deep.

St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church at Bay du Vin has an old salmon net which the congregation hangs in the church on every anniversary of the disaster – with the 35 names written on paper boats.

The committee organizing the 40th anniversary commemoration next weekend meets regularly at the Roman Catholic rectory at Baie-Ste-Anne. Both the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Moncton and the Anglican Bishop of Fredericton will attend.

Theresa Durelle remarked that there were no United, Anglicans or Roman Catholics on the water on that Friday and Saturday 40 years ago – just fishermen in trouble.

She says that after it was over, people could not believe it – especially when that beautiful blue sky dawned on Sunday.

"It was like you couldn't believe it because after it was over, it was like you were missing people, and you expect them to come back, but you knew you were never going to see them again . . . you look at it, but you couldn't believe that it happened."

The five Chiassons – Albert, William and the three boys – lived across the road from the Durelles.

The fishermen along Miramichi Bay know all the cuss words and how to use them, in English and French. They might not make it to church every Sunday, but do not let it fool you. You will look long and hard to find an atheist on a fishing boat.

They had no "critical incident stress management teams" in those days, but they did have their churches and clergy – and their faith.

Forty years after the disaster Cyril

Jenkins, at his kitchen table while his wife Zelia works at bottling lobster, calls the rescue of the Doucets "just a miracle," especially Jack.

"He couldn't hold on to that rope at all, so how did he hang on to that rope?" he asks.

He answers his own question by pointing his right index finger into the air.

Alphonse Doucet has a crucifix and a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* on his kitchen wall. Sitting at his kitchen table, he recalls the sea calming on Saturday night.

"I can't forget that I thanked the Lord before we went to bed for saving our measly souls which he saved that day."

Miramichiers have another way of dealing with grief — they compose folksongs, or poems which they set to music.

Jerry Hébert of Lagacéville composed a French song about the disaster in 1959. It ends:

*Tout un grand océan,
Chaque jour sur une barque légère
Nous allons vers l'éternité.*

In English:

*Life itself is a great ocean,
In which every day in our fragile barque
We move toward eternity.*

Derwin Gowan is a reporter with the *Telegraph Journal* based in Miramichi.

EPILOGUE

Cyril Jenkins fished until 1961, then worked as a marine pilot guiding ships into Miramichi and Dalhousie for 32 years. He retired four years ago, then fished with Jimmy Gregan for two years. He has since returned to piloting.

Alphonse Doucet still fishes the spring lobster season every year. Everett works as a diamond driller in the Northwest Territories.

Harry and Ian Williston, who lost two brothers in the disaster, still fish.

Theodore Williston still fishes as do his sons — Ted, 40, and Mark, 39. Theodore's fiberglass fishing boat sank off Prince Edward Island seven or eight years ago and he spent 15 minutes floating in a survival suit before another boat came to rescue him.

Aquila Manuel still fishes and buys and sells lobster. As chairman of the wharf committee at Escuminac, he recently led a successful campaign to stop the Canada Coast Guard from removing the foghorn from Point Escuminac.

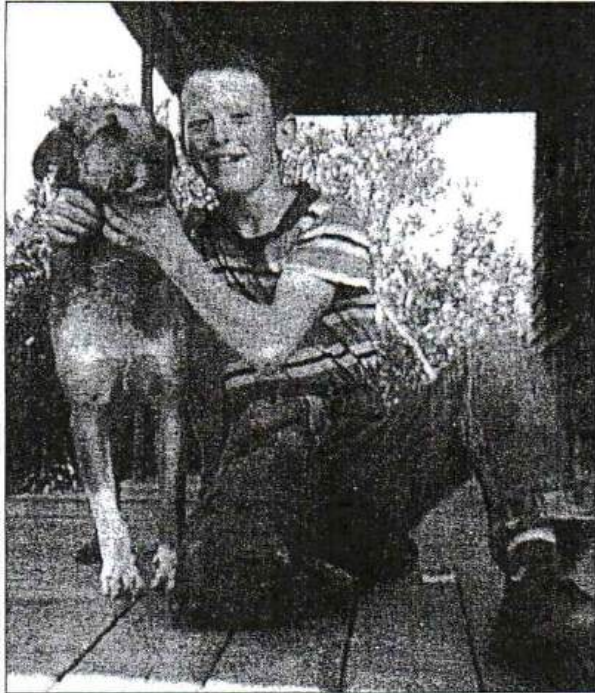
Theodore went to the VHF radio in his kitchen to talk to a fisherman out on the water — just to show how things have changed since 1959.

Theodore is the last surviving captain of a boat which rescued survivors and brought them in. Roy Lloyd, Bernie Jenkins, Alvin Durelle and, most recently, Tom Lewis are gone.

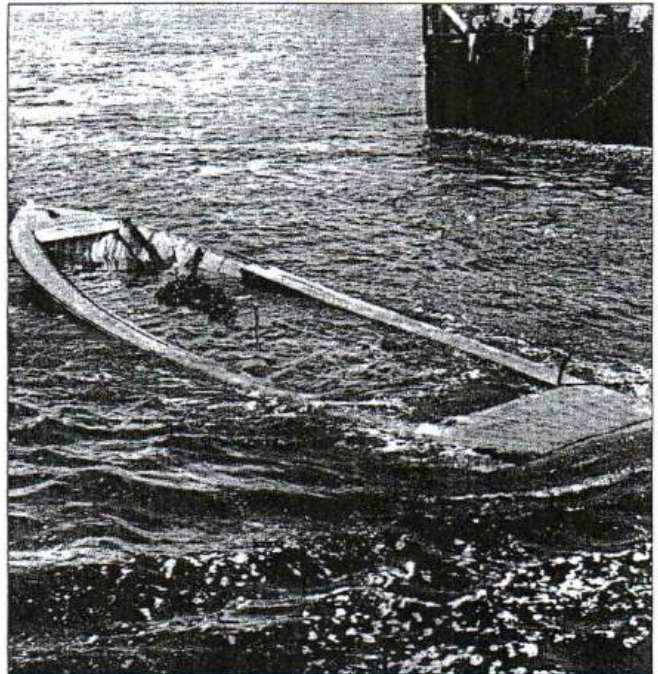
"They're all gone . . . I was the youngest captain, I suppose, that rescued people — maybe that's why I'm still alive," Theodore says.



Cyril Jenkins, left, and Alphonse Doucet, right, saved each other the night of the disaster. (Karen Ruet photo)



Eric Williston drowned at the age of 13. He was the youngest to die in the disaster.



Many submerged boats eventually washed ashore at Escuminac.



Theodore Williston stands in front of his boat shed in Hardwicke, Baie Ste.-Anne. At 28, he was the youngest captain on the water the night of the disaster. (Karen Ruet photo)

Daring rescue done in teeth of killer storm, giant waves

The people of the bay have spent the past few days remembering the men who died in the Escuminac Disaster.

Here is a story told to Sharon Fraser and printed in this newspaper on June 16, 1979 on the 20th anniversary of the freak storm that killed 35 men fishing in the bay.

MIRAMICHI - Many of the stories of the disaster have dealt with those who were lost, those who were widowed or lost fathers, those who survived.

Rightly so too.

I, for one, had not thought too much about the women waiting at home, not knowing for endless hour after hour, the fate of a fisherman husband. After I talked to Mrs. Bernard Jenkins. I realized that there is still another dimension to the Escuminac disaster.

The Jenkins home is situated almost directly across from the Escuminac breakwater.

Mrs. Jenkins woke early on the morning of June 20, 1959, as a fisherman's wife will do when she hears the wind. Bernie and his nephew, Cyril, who was like a son to the Jenkins', had gone out the day before, as had many of the other local fishermen.

Mrs. Jenkins had not lived long in Escuminac at that time, but she had been there long enough to know that this storm was not like the others.

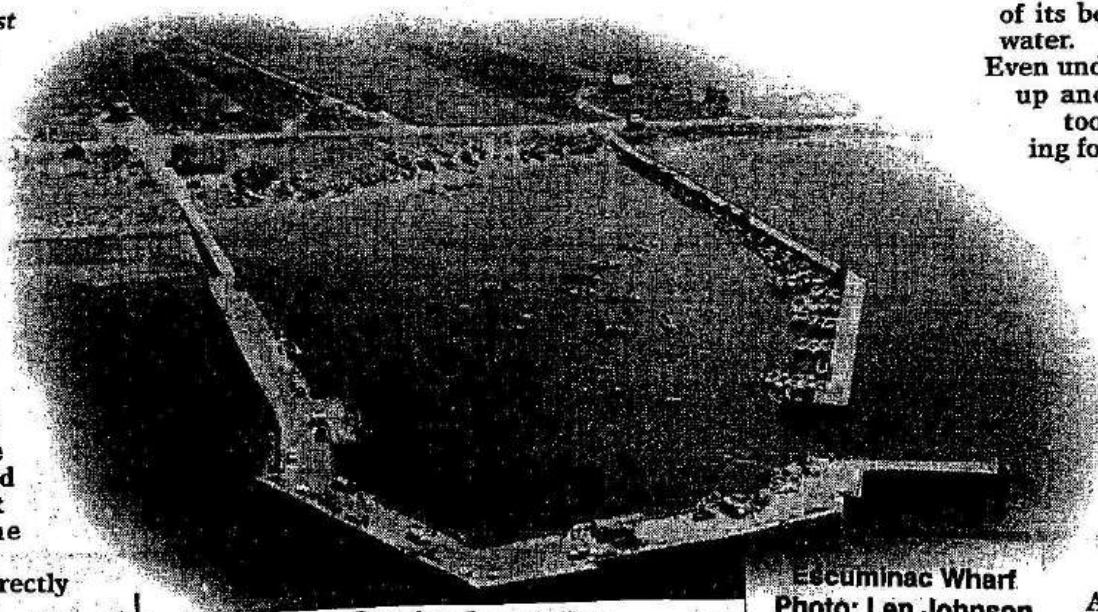
"I never saw anything like it," she says today. "The wind and the waves and that high tide..."

Word spreads

The word was quickly spread that the storm was taking its deadly toll and rescue crews, Red Cross, doctors, and journalists arrived on the scene, many of them made their headquarters at the Jenkins' house.

"I couldn't even tell you how many people were here. The house was full. I couldn't sit still. Every time someone came up from the breakwater, I braced myself to hear something about Bernie, but no one had anything to tell me."

There was coffee to be made, telephone calls to be answered, so much to see to, and still Mrs. Jenkins waited.



Escuminac Wharf
Photo: Len Johnson

Out in the storm

What she didn't know until later was that Bernie had been reasonably close to Escuminac when he passed Jack Doucette and his two young sons in their rapidly sinking boat.

Bernie and Cyril, in turbulent seas with waves 30 feet high, in hurricane force winds, in the dark, turned their boat around and went back for the Doucettes.

For several hours, the rescue attempts were made. They were successful, but hearing it described and trying to picture the conditions out there in the Bay, defies most people's imaginations.

A 30 foot wave is higher than a house. For Bernie and Cyril, just to get close enough to throw a rope was a major task.

When the rope was caught by Alphonse Doucette, it was no easy task to get it tied around his younger brother Everett, in a sinking pitching boat. But that was accomplished, and when Everett was aboard the Jenkins' boat, Bernie turned and another rescue was completed, this time of the father, Jack.

Alphonse was alone then. It took Bernie another hour to make it back once more, and for Alphonse, it must have been a long long hour.

The trials were not yet over. With the three Doucettes aboard and the boat heading out to sea to ride out to storm, an enormous wave crashed over the craft, knocking the engine out

of its bedding and filling the boat with water.

Even under those conditions, no one gave up and frantic bailing and repairing took place with all five men working for their lives.

Back home

And Mrs. Jenkins was still waiting.

"I was a nervous wreck," she recalls. "I was afraid even to ask if there was any news. The doctor who was at the house finally gave me a sleeping pill and sometime in the middle of the night, I went to sleep."

It was the telephone ringing that woke her.

"It was calm," she said.

And the caller told her that someone down on the breakwater was watching through binoculars.

"They told me Bernie's boat was coming in."

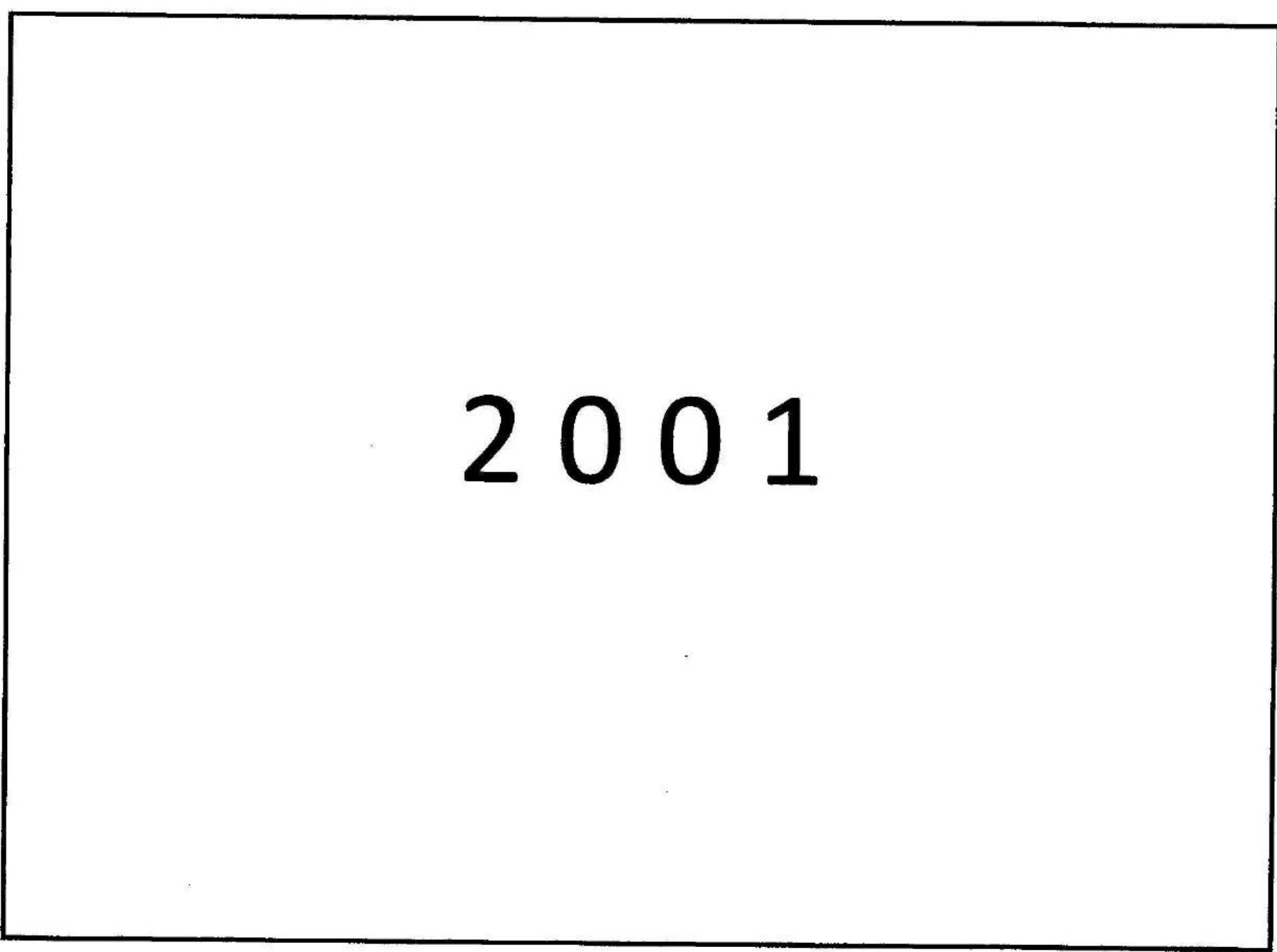
Mrs. Jenkins paced the floor. She prepared herself for news which she knew would come and she was prepared for a fairly long wait because she knew all about docking the boat and getting it tied up to the wharf.

"But before very long, I heard someone at the door. I thought it was someone bringing news, and I opened the door...and it was Bernie!

Met by friends and neighbours as he docked, the men had said, "Go on home, Bernie. We'll tie 'er up for you." Bernie needed no second invitation.

It sounds like a happy ending and the Jenkins have never stopped being grateful for that part of it. But it remains in memory the most tragic of times when they remember the 35 men who died and the people they left behind.

Both of them recall that day with anguish.



2001

Telling Escuminac's tragic tale

On Sunday, the Escuminac disaster monument will be designated a provincial and millennial historic site

Unknown heroes during this storm did go.

We will tell you the reason why we know.

For in the boats that came wrecked ashore,

In them, parts we found in one or more,

They tried to save their neighbour's life,

But gave their own in their strife.

Friends, let's not forget the departed of this

storm,

But for them say a prayer, night and morn.

Many more would have received a watery grave

But due to fishermen, friends and courage were

saved.

— Taken from A Survivor's Poem by Bernard Jenkins

BY JANNA MACGREGOR
Telegraph-Journal

Those words capture the memories of a sudden spring storm that took the lives of 35 New Brunswick fishermen along Escuminac Bay more than 40 years ago.

For those who lived to tell the tale of two nights when thick fog, turbulent seas and gale force winds swallowed boats and claimed the lives of fishermen as young as 13, the Escuminac Disaster is never far from their mind.

The tragedy will be revisited at noon on Sunday when the New Brunswick Department of Culture and Sport designates the Escuminac Disaster Monument, erected in 1969, as a provincial and millennial



The Escuminac monument

historic site.

Located about 55 kilometres east of Miramichi, the limestone sculpture, by New Brunswick artist Claude Roussel, bears a silent reminder of what happened between June 19 and 20, 1959 — days that still haunt Walter Williston of Bay du Vin, not far from Escuminac.

It was a routine fishing excursion on the Northumberland Strait. The trip was all too familiar for Mr. Williston, then 35, and one he and crewmates had made countless times before.

Looking back, he said, no one

aboard the vessel seemed particularly concerned by the poor weather conditions that afternoon.

"It was something of a freak storm," remembered Mr. Williston, now 77. "We sure didn't realize how bad it was, or how bad it was going to get. The tide was high, but we started out anyway and it really just blew up out of nowhere.

"By then, it was so bad, there wasn't much anybody could do."

The boat capsized in waves that split it across the middle.

"She opened up like a potato basket. Before long there was nothing left. . . .

"I was in the water for four and a half hours," Mr. Williston said.

Despite the fact he had grown up in a fishing community and had harvested the seas since childhood, he had never learned to swim.

"Half the fishermen I know can't swim a stroke," he said. "I tried enough but I never did learn."

Gripping debris, Mr. Williston managed to stay afloat in the churning waves. "I don't know how, but I did. . . .

"I'll never forget it. There was a young fellow in there with me. He was just 20. The whole time he kept saying that he didn't know what he was going to do if he died — that he didn't know what would happen to his mother. I just kept telling him 'I go ashore, you will too.'"

But the young man wore only a T-shirt, he said, and he was overcome by hypothermia.

"He perished right there in front of me. I tied him to the stern post so that he wouldn't be lost at sea."

Mr. Williston attributes his own

survival to the heavy clothing he wore that day.

"It was very, very cold but I wore lots of clothes. I always did."

Eventually, local fisherman and disaster relief crews took to the Strait in hopes of plucking survivors from its murky waters. They rescued 85.

"I waved and they saw me," Mr. Williston said. "I was lucky; it was quite an experience."

Each summer, hundreds of tourists visit Escuminac to learn more about the event that has scared his memory.

"Strangers here tell of it, and come back and forth from the monument a lot," said Mr. Williston, who has continued to fish the same unpredictable waters ever since the tragedy.

While he admitted the site doesn't mean much to him personally, he thinks it important that younger generations remember the disaster and keep history alive.

Bill Hicks, manager of planning and commemoration for New Brunswick Heritage, said unveiling the new commemorative plaque at the monument will help tell the story of Escuminac.

"This is a way for us to recognize an event that's an important part of New Brunswick history," he said.

Sunday's ceremony will make the Escuminac Monument one of 100 provincially designated historic sites, and one of 14 millennium historic sites.

"It's a way of acknowledging that we will continue to remember this disaster," Mr. Hicks said.

...

Reach our reporter
macgregor.janna@nbpub.com

Escuminac, 1959

"Remembering the Perils of the Sea", 2001

Dale McIntyre knows the benevolence of the sea. Because of his decades of hard work, the Escuminac fisherman has pulled enough from its depths to make a comfortable living for his wife and three daughters. But he also knows of the sea's dangers. Dale's father came back in from fishing just hours before the Escuminac Disaster of June 20, 1959- a vicious squall that killed 35 of his fellow fishermen. He drowned at sea just two years later.

The harsh reality of the dangers of fishing is etched on the collective memory of the entire community of Escuminac. The disaster has become epic, "a legend that affects everybody", Dale says. "There are still widows and children, relatives of the men who died".

The same reality is carved in stone at the monument to their memory, located at a high point just in front of the wharf. Conceived and constructed by artist Claude Roussel, the austere, warning, yet compassionate and heroic sculpture was designated a provincial historic site just two weeks ago. The monument's designation as an historic site is special. Most historic sites in the province are buildings or sacred sites, not works of art.

"In recognizing the monument, the province is as well commemorating the event in which 35 fishermen lost their lives", says Richard Phillips, with the province's Inventory and Commemorations Heritage Project Executive.

"It was conceived out of pure human compassion and the feeling of sorrow for them," Claude says. "At the same time, it came out of admiration for the people who risk their lives every day for survival." The actual vision of the sculpture came to Claude when, a few weeks after the disaster, he felt compelled to visit the site. Near St. Louis, the road became impassable for his Volkswagon (sic) and he had to turn around. In his frustration, the idea emerged.

The faces of the sculptures - with heads tilted in both sorrow and pride - are simply and almost identically lined, with brow bones and noses jutting out from a smooth background. "The sculpture doesn't represent any person in particular, but it represents everybody", Claude says, the fishermen who both lived and died, "and everybody can identify with it". Inscribed on the base are the names of the dead, as well as the survivors who risked their lives to save another one.

Two stone fishermen stand just behind another, who has a net slung over his shoulder. The fisherman on the right places a supportive hand on his fellow fisher's arm, while the other one on the left grasps a piece of the net. "When I put together the Escuminac monument it was meant to be almost a meditation", Claude says. "It was meant to help those who lost their loved ones to contemplate their great loss, and to help encourage and strengthen spiritually and inwardly, those who suffered their loss".

Just out of art school, Claude had developed a method of production that was free and experimental. "This way of working simplified stylized shapes," he says, "and it was useful to me to make a work that would be destined to garnish a public space". Indeed, simple would describe the small, modern-looking sculpture, which preceded the larger by 10 years. Few straight lines portray the three fishermen. Only minimal details were used, so the statue could concentrate on the expression of power, determination, pride and courage of the fishermen in the face of nature's uncontrollable elements. In its simplicity, the monument speaks volume to the memory of the Escuminac Disaster, and reflects the character of the community itself. "I was aware of the modernity of it", Claude says. "At the time, in my own community of Edmundston, I had negative comments about it that disturbed me".

But Brigadier Michael Wardell - who led the effort to financially help families of those who died in the disaster - could comprehend the message of the maquette, and understood Claude's intention that the 24-inch wood carving eventually be enlarged. It seems that besides Brigadier Wardell, the community of Escuminac understood the message portrayed by Claude's vision as well. "The reaction was very positive", he says. "I've never had any negative comments about it from any of the people in the community. Even though the style of work was not the kind they were used to seeing, they were open to my sensitivity to the event and the caring I have for it".

Nine years after the disaster, Claude received a call from Brigadier Wardell, who told him they had found the funds from Sir Max Aitken for the enlargement of the small statue. But for Claude, the order was daunting. The six-month deadline loomed seemingly too close for the full-time founder of l'Université de Moncton's fine arts program and art gallery, but he travelled to Smith Cut Stone in Shediac many nights a week to work on the huge sculpture with the help of some workers. In the finishing stages, his brother Maurice lent him a hand while finishing up his degree at the university.

Still, Claude says, "to be confronted with sculpting a 14,000 pound block of limestone was physically and mentally a heavy task". Although he still regrets that he didn't have more time to refine the statue further, the valiant people of the Baie Ste-Anne region, the support of his family and the university gave him the motivation he needed to finish the task.


For 32 years, the monument has stood at the head of the Escuminac wharf, whispering remembrance to local people and to tourists who stop at the site. And it seems the community has responded. "People around me revere that monument", says Fernand Gibbs, who was born, brought up, and drifted salmon in the community before moving to Ontario. Though he visited each year to fish, Fernand returned for good after he retired and now sits on a board that is working toward a Fishermen's Museum of New Brunswick for the Baie Ste-Anne and Escuminac region.

"It means a lot to the older fishermen who were in the disaster". Indeed, for Cyril Jones - one of the few remaining survivors of the Escuminac disaster - "it's a good thing to have. It's a good remembrance for the younger generation". Cyril was just 20 when he was caught out in the squall, with his late uncle, Captain Bernie Jenkins. Together, while Bernie made passes along another boat in distress, and Cyril sent out a line, they rescued three men : Captain John "Jack" Doucet and his sons, Alphonse and Evé. Cyril's boat was swamped and nearly capsized after the rescue, and the men spent hours bailing water from their boat before they were able to repair the motor.

For their bravery, Cyril and Bernie were awarded the Order of the British Empire. Alphonse, who saved both his brother and father, was given the Queen's commendation. Cyril - who believes it's a miracle he made it through that fated night - remembers the first time he saw the monument. "I thought it was a great piece of art, that's for sure", he says. "I thought, Somebody must have done a lot of thinking before they thought of that".

The monument's recent designation as an historic site is also special to him. "It means people are still thinking of us", Cyril says. For their families, children, friends, and the next generation of community members, the monument also carries meaning. "For me, it means the danger of the sea", McIntyre says, "to fish safely and respect the sea every time I go out. I think about it every time; I always have the disaster in the back of my head".

Source : Ellen Creighton, "Remembering the Perils of the Sea. Escuminac Monument Commemorating Lost Fishermen Declared a Provincial Historic Site", *Times & Transcript*, 21 July 2001, pp. F-1, F-2.



2007

Jenkins' Family Remembers *Escuminac Disaster*

Photos and story by David Walsh

The morning of June 19, 1959 was another working day for the fishermen who inhabited the series of small fishing villages slung lazily along the banks of the Miramichi Bay. Men rose early and went to the wharf to check their nets. They wanted to be ready to depart that evening to drift their nets on the bay in search of the Atlantic salmon returning to their native river to breed. The salmon run this year had been steady. Homes up and down the coast were filled with men, young and old, who ventured out on the Bay to seek their living each day of their lives. Even as the young men were apprenticed into the rugged seaman's life, young girls were given practical advice on how they might be an asset to their husbands, brothers and beaux. They became the support staff of those who regularly sailed small boats in search of salmon or lobsters or any other fish that might supplement their livings. They chose this life and learned early on that death could sneak up over the horizon and snatch one of their own in the prime of their lives. Death was a silent partner in the fishing business.

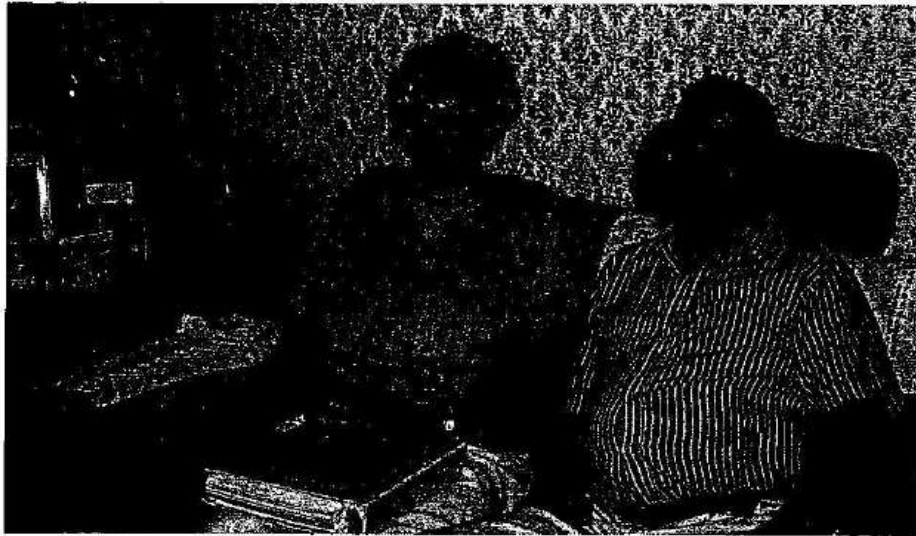
Bernard Jenkins and his wife Alda were veterans of the fishing life. They purchased a small home in 1945 straight up from the Escuminac Wharf. If you looked out the window you could see the fishing activity. Set back about 100 metres from the main road, their house was a common fisherman's dwelling—neat and clean with a well kept yard. Alda was typical of many fishermen's wives. She tackled her chores with determination and a sense of duty born from her long association with this hard life. She kept the bed linens clean and Bernie's clothing was always presentable. She cooked substantial and tasty meals on the iron stove in the large kitchen. At the kitchen table she prepared vegetables from their own garden. This was where they would talk many evenings under the light of a kerosene lamp, weighing their lives and fortunes as part of God's plan. They were religious people and made every effort to participate in the spiritual life of their small parish. Alda was essential support for

Bernie and his nephew Cyril. Her love and care allowed the men to tend to the chores of fishing. Nets needed mending, buoy markers needed painting, and wood for the cuddy stove was loaded aboard daily. The engines of many of these vessels were car engines adapted to run the single shaft propeller. They were not complex. Each boat had a regular car gas tank for its fuel supply.

Bernie and Cyril always ensured they had enough fuel to carry out a night's drifting. The extra gas was kept in a series of five-gallon jerry cans. Refuelling was not only common but necessary. As Cyril noted, "You sure didn't want that engine to run out of gas and quit. Who knows if you could get it started again?" But these men were as rugged and adaptable as the seas they rode

The haunting memorial in honour of the fishermen who lost their lives in the Escuminac disaster, June 20, 1959.





A quiet afternoon with Alda and Cyril Jenkins. The honesty of their words and the raw humanity of their experience was a most moving experience.

in search of their living. The women stayed behind, quietly maintaining the family home.

All of those skills were tested severely on the night of June 19, 1959. As the Jenkins' family went through their summer day in preparation for another night of fishing, a weather anomaly was gathering just off shore, invisible to the veteran eyes that looked out constantly from the Escuminac Wharf. It concealed its strength just over the horizon and in mid-afternoon Bernie

"Boats swamped and then recovered. Water and waves toyed with the boats smashing and tossing them again and again."

and Cyril Jenkins sailed out of Escuminac Harbour onto Miramichi Bay in search of the salmon run. Weather stations had no serious inkling of the storm about to devastate this small community. At that time the fleet had no radio to be warned as the weather deteriorated slowly over suppertime. The men were busy. The women were at home. Alda glanced toward the Bay occasionally as she continued about her working day.

After supper the storm raised its demonic head and began to toss the fishing fleet. Bernie and Cyril had gone out a bit further than the rest of the men as all the good drifting spots had been taken. Slowly it became obvious this was no passing squall. The skies blackened even more as the sun set and the winds started swinging the vessel. Even with nets overboard, the Alda was soon in difficulty as the waves

mounted. Bernie and Cyril realized they could easily be swamped as they bobbed on the massive surges of water. Cyril cut away the drift nets fearing they would run over their own gear and be left without any power. The net could become snagged on the lobster rigs along the bottom of the ocean and was irretrievable in these conditions.

Lack of radios isolated the boats and crews on the swollen shattered surface of Miramichi Bay. The men caught glimpses of their neighbours trying to cope with high wind and crashing waves. Boats swamped and then recovered. Water and waves toyed with the boats smashing and tossing them again and again. Some simply split in half and drifted on the raging seas back to the Escuminac shores, their occupants dispersed on the water. Those on shore understood a deadly storm had surrounded their fleet. The men and equipment were in mortal danger. The word went out—first to those standing by on the wharf, then by telephone to Baie Ste. Anne and Hardwicke and small assemblies of fishermen's homes clinging to the coastal waterway.

Word of death and impending death are not new to sailors or their families, but this time it just felt different to Alda as she peered into the darkness. She prayed for the men on the sea. She prayed for Bernie and Cyril. And then she prayed for the families of her village. She prayed they all would be spared the slaps and slashes of sorrow that only the sea could deliver. She prayed for the safe return of all the men and boys at sea that night. But as she gazed through the driving rain toward the wharf she also pre-

pared herself for that certain knowledge that it would take a miracle for every family to escape the sea's sting of death on that dark night. As the storm grew and fears escalated, Alda's home became a cheery respite for families waiting to hear any news. Men anxious to get on the water and attempt to aid their fellow fishermen paced the kitchen. The house vibrated with whispered talk and silent fears. Alda gradually began to fashion her own understanding as the night and the storm raged along. As she peered toward the water she readied herself for the hurt she could feel building. She did not give up on her family but steeled herself for what she feared might be inevitable. There was no sleep that night for Alda.

Neither was there any rest for Bernie and Cyril as they tried their hardest to keep their boat beneath them. They lost two sets of nets to the raging waters and no longer had the advantage of using the heavy nets as a sea anchor in the lashing waves. They encountered a number of other boats and in sign language were told the men in those boats still felt in good shape. Some of those boats and men would turn up later but not in a manner one would care to see.

Perhaps one of the most amazing set of circumstances was the series of events that surrounded Alphonse Doucette, a young man of 17, and his younger brother Everett, aged 14, who along with their father, Jack, and a hand, William George Manual, worked their boat the *Francine D.* As their vessel and the *Alda* came in sight of each other through the slashing seas and mountainous waves, the Doucette boat rode up a wave so high it literally caused the boat, to flip end over end and then down into the

water. The two boys were in the cuddy looking for a funnel to refuel when they heard their father's yell, "Lookout boys, we've had 'er!" The boys, trapped in the cabin, had to hold their terror in check until the water filled the space and they could

"The boys, trapped in the cabin, had to hold their terror in check until the water filled the space and they could exit. The boat rolled again and Everett was washed overboard."

exit. The boat rolled again and Everett was washed overboard. A floating lobster crate and a piece of rope aided Alphonse in rescuing his younger brother from the huge waves. With Everett back on board the badly swamped ship, they looked for their father Jack. As the boat rose from a deep dip under the waves they spotted the old man clinging to the cabin post. As each monster wave broke he would disappear and then resurface with his boat, spitting salt water and gasping for air. Meanwhile, Cyril and Bernie had swung about and were attempting to get into position to try and rescue their friends on the *Francine D.* Cyril and Alphonse would practice tossing lines to each other in quiet times at the wharf. On this night that practice would save lives. In a series of breathtaking turns Bernie brought the *Alda* within throwing range. On the first attempt Alphonse grabbed the tossed rope and tied it round his brother's waist. In an instant the youngster was dragged overboard through the water to a bucking surging *Alda*. With Everett

aboard, Bernie and Cyril made another turn to try and get within range for further rescues. The winds and water worked overtime to make the job near impossible. Sometimes perseverance combines fortuitously with good luck. It did that night in the lives of these fishermen clutching to each other in the dark hours of their greatest need, working with unspoken trust.

On the second attempt the rope was not close but soon Bernie manoeuvred around to give Cyril another attempt. This time he was accurate and Alphonse tied his father onto the rope. Even though Jack was the Captain, Alphonse reasoned his father had a family and his life needed to be saved first. His nearly drowned father did not argue. As the rope was tied to his waist he took a death grip on the line. His rescuers shared an unspoken fear that he might not be able to hold on but Jack Doucette proved them wrong. Then it was Alphonse's turn. He clung tenaciously to the *Francine D* for more than 20 minutes as Bernie manoeuvred to get in place. As the young man clawed to save his life, he saw the body of William Manual washing about in the cuddy. His head had been split open and he was obviously dead. Alphonse, in a surreal moment, shut the cabin door to ensure the body would be taken ashore with the wreck of the *Francine D.* In the swirling water and howling wind Alphonse estimated his chances. But soon enough his friend Cyril made a deft toss of the line as Bernie inched the boat through the waves. Then he was in the sea and shortly aboard the *Alda*. The storm raged on around them and the danger was far from over.

On shore the crowds grew to huge num-

bers. The Red Cross, RCMP, newspaper reporters and the general public stood shoulder to shoulder on the sea lashed wharf and along the roads. Alda did not go to the wharf. She received all the news she needed as friends and relatives worked their way through her kitchen to get a hot cup of coffee or a quick bite to eat before returning to the sombre crowd on the beach. She peered deeply into each fisherman's eye as they related what they had seen and heard. Broken boats and broken men were coming ashore on the tidal surge. Some men made brave attempts to go out and search for their friends but the weather showed no sign of stopping. Mostly it was sitting and waiting. Pacing and watching. Hoping and accepting. It was a blinding fog of pain that provided no answers.

When one fisherman sat at her table, she questioned him closely, "Did you see Bernie?" He looked her in the eye and said, "No, Alda." He had seen others and already some of them were among the recovered bodies. His eyes clouded and large tears washed his weathered face.

Alda sensed she was not being told all the facts. "You know something and you are not telling me," said Alda through rising fear. "No, no Alda, I did not see Bernie, but it is such a mess out there . . ." His voice trailed off and Alda then began to prepare her mind for the worst. She continued to busy herself with the large numbers of friends passing through her kitchen in search of warm food and shared concerns. With each visitor and each phone call the news got worse. More bodies found. More boats demolished. No sign of any survivors. No one had seen Bernie or Cyril or the *Alda*.

Unknown to Alda, her husband and nephew were busy all that night just staying one wave ahead of death. With the Doucettes on board they fiercely bailed to keep the *Alda* afloat. One wave was so strong it tossed the engine from its mounts and sent it crashing against the timber sides of the vessel. Although a number of planks splintered, no hole formed in the hull. Without a motor, they would soon be swamped. Cyril wrapped a rope about his shoulders and under the dislodged engine. He somehow managed to heave the engine upright and Bernie was able to get it lined up with its bolts. Once in place they realized that by some grace the driveshaft, which had never let go, was as true as the day it was installed. The Doucettes helped as they tore

down the engine and using old tires that hung from the sides of the *Alda* they started a fire in the cuddy to dry out the wires, plugs and other assorted parts. As the night wore on they rebuilt the engine. To their surprise it responded and started. Upon consulting with the senior Doucette, Bernie decided to go further out to sea to try and escape the storm. It proved to be a wise decision. They bailed and ate salmon all through the night. Many prayers were uttered that night by and for all the men at sea. And a few were answered.

By daybreak the news ashore went from bad to worse. Some of the dead were being retrieved and as the Bay fell onto a dead



A view of the Jenkins' home from the monument honouring the 35 men lost in the Escuminac Disaster.

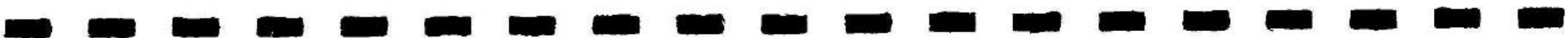
calm men could venture out in search of lost comrades. Alda stared over the eerie calm. No one had seen Bernie as the storm lifted. No one had seen any survivors. There was no good news. She busied herself with her neighbours and friends who gathered at her house, mentally preparing herself for the bad news she now understood must come. Suddenly, the phone rang. Someone had spotted a boat moving steadily toward the harbour! It was too far away to identify. The beautiful June morning was edged with expectation. Who was it? How many? Questions bloomed about the kitchen and into the front room. Furtive

glances out the windows; men pacing to the front of the house in growing expectation and fear. The phone clanged again. Someone had identified the boat through a telescope. They were quite certain it was the *Alda*. Expectations rose as quickly as the waves had settled. The boat became visible and word came back that a number of men were on board. Someone identified Cyril but there was no sign of Bernie. Alda's body coiled for the crushing news. She was ecstatic over the sighting of Cyril but on the other her husband was not sighted. Her mind raced in competing circles of hope and despair.

The Jenkins' house buzzed. People speculated and prayed. They paced and prayed. Some just stood, frozen by the tension of the moment. Alda composed herself for the bad news that seemed so imminent. A half-ton truck drove up their long lane. As it neared someone shouted that they saw Bernie! Alive! Alda's mind crashed as she raced to the kitchen door. In the mental chaos of the news she locked the door as her harried husband tried to get in. Soon they were in each other's arms. The whole village shouted at the return of these five men from the bowels of the demonic storm. After getting some food and warm clothing the men went to church. Then they went down to the shore to see how they might assist in the cleanup and recovery.

These men were part of a community of strong souls. No one could ever doubt their tenacity on that day. Thirty-five died. Some survived. Families lost their entire male population. A number of the men received awards for bravery in the months that followed, Bernie and Cyril among them. Many brave men were never singled out, which in no way diminished their deeds. And in the horror of the storm, it is easy to forget the fortitude and strength of the wives and families at home, who exhibited a bravery none can diminish. Their stories, like that of Alda Jenkins, are sometimes forgotten by the magnitude of their men's ordeal. The women of Escuminac, Baie Ste. Anne and Hardwicke are no less heroes and should be honoured as such. Theirs is the most crushing of trials—they had to wait.

David Walsh is a writer living on the main South West Miramichi at Renous. He continues to write about and enjoy the history, culture and characters of the Miramichi.



2008

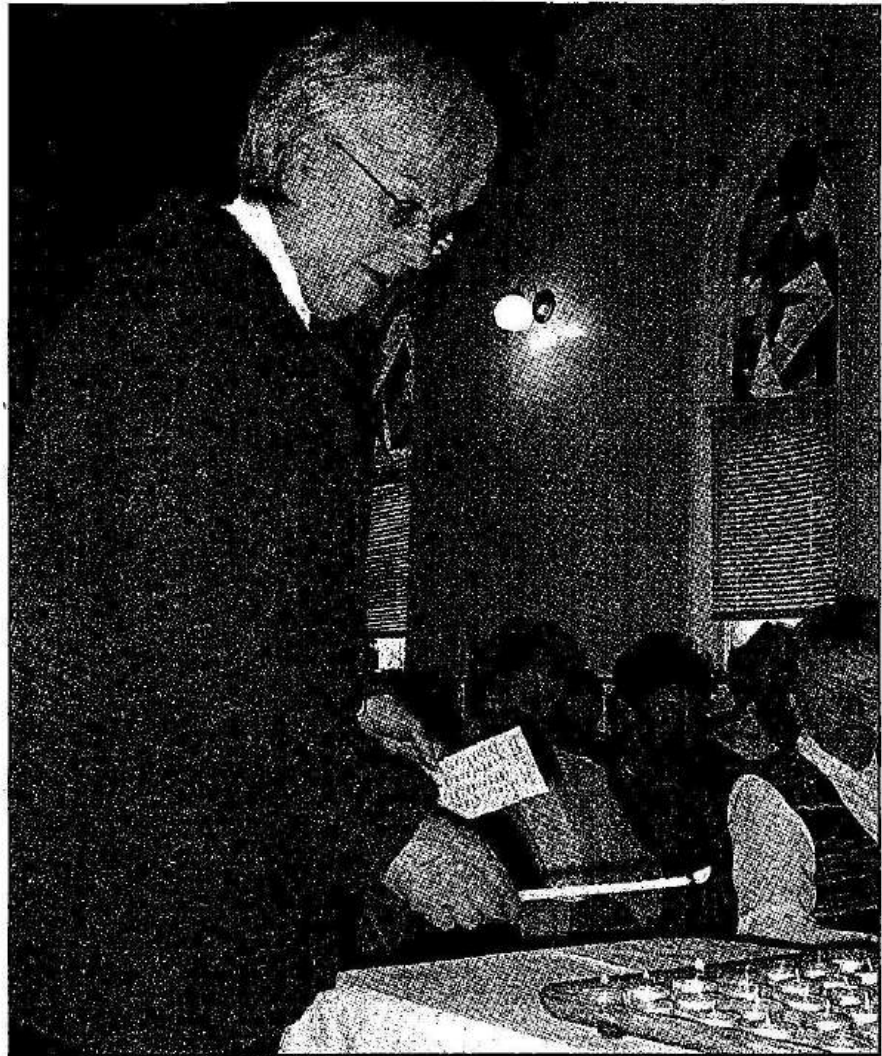
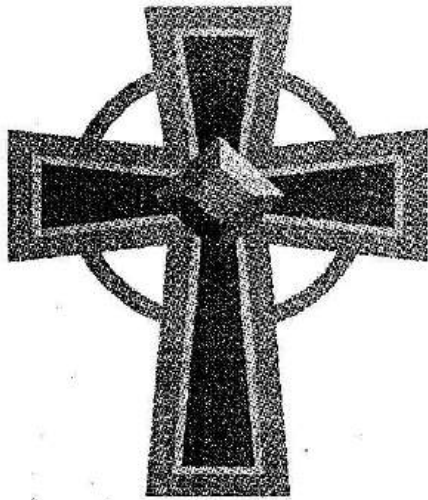
Special church service honours memory of disaster victims

A special Fishermen's Memorial church service took place on Sunday, June 15, at the Myer's United Church in Hardwicke, which stands next to the Miramichi Bay.

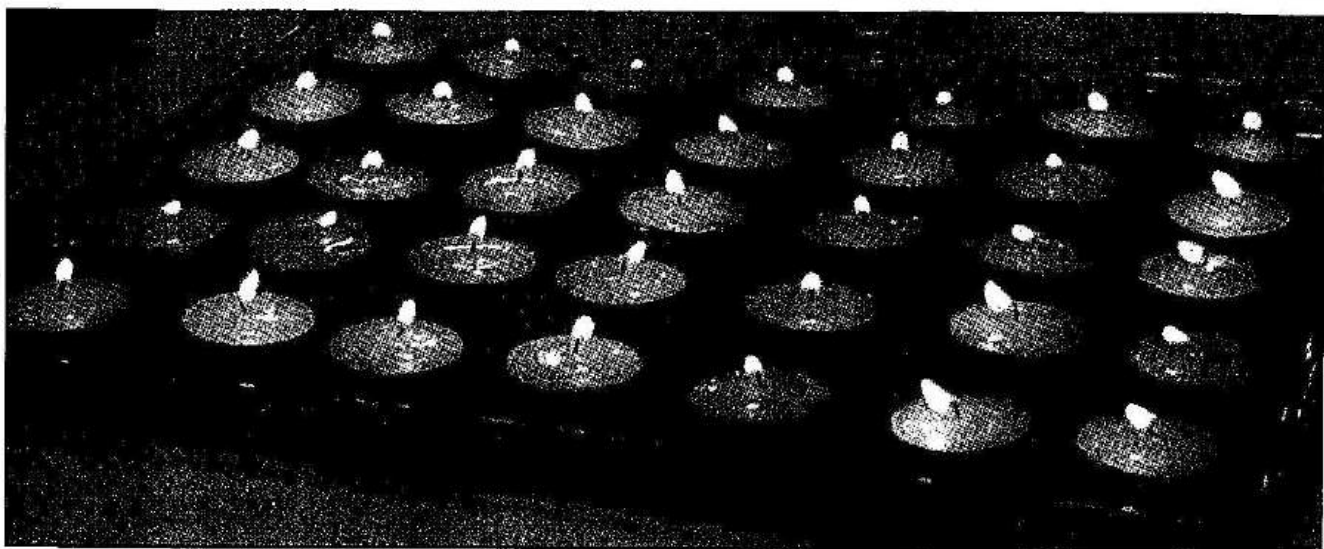
The service honoured the 35 men who lost their lives in the Escuminac Disaster on June 19, 1959.

The church was filled with family members and people from the community. This year marks the 49th anniversary of one of the most devastating fishing disasters in the history of the area.

As part of the service, Alphonse Doucet and Cyril Jenkins read the names of the victims as family and friends lit a memorial candle for each one.



Velma Chaisson-Durelle lights a candle for her father, Albert Chiasson, and brother, Alphonse.

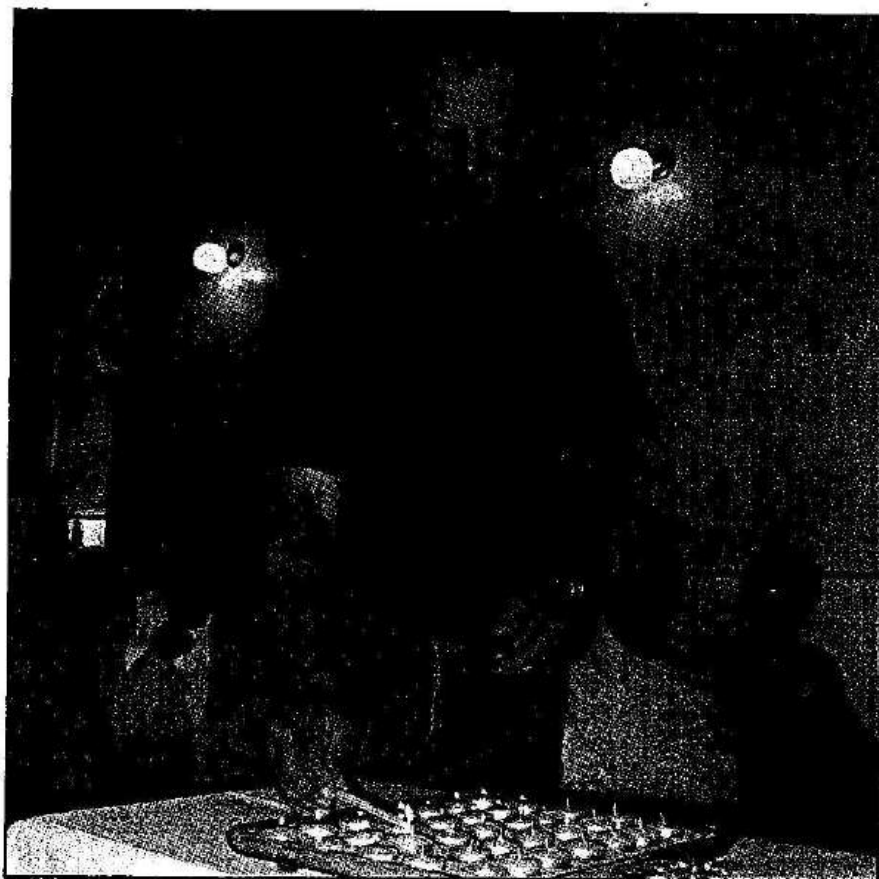


In a tray of sand, 35 candles burn in memory of the victims.



Grace Trowbridge photo

Cyril Jenkins reads of names of the fisherman who lost their lives on June 19, 1959.



George Manual lights candle in memory of his grandfather, William George Manual.

Summary of Facts/Data

Escuminac Disaster

June 20, 1959

Prepared by Terry Power, Wade Hallihan

TAP-Miramichi

January, 2008

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Abstract

The following document is a brief summary of information compiled on the Escuminac Disaster of June 19, 1959.

Information was collected from interviews conducted with survivors and from the publication "*Trouble at Sea*" published by the Special Projects Team, Cadogan Publishing Ltd. (1999).

Vessels Involved

Listed below are the names of the boats involved in the disaster. A brief description of each vessel and its crew members are also included.

- *Mary Cecilia*
 - Captain John Edward Meuse, 38
 - Second Hand – Joseph Raymond Leblanc
 - Both survived

- 36' V-stern Fishing Boat (name n/a)
 - Captain George E.W. MacLeod (body never recovered)
 - Second Hand- John Burton Chapman
 - Both died in disaster
 - George MacLeod was the only man of the 35 who had life insurance

- 40' Flat stern Fishing Boat – Round full wheel house (name n/a)
 - Captain John Joseph McIntyre, 50
 - Second Hand – Joseph Aldore McIntyre (son) 17
 - Second Hand- Joseph Urbain McIntyre (son) 16
 - All survived

- *Annie D* - 32' Lobster Boat
 - Captain Allan Douglas Mills, 49
 - Second Hand – Andrew Allan Mills , 22
 - Both died in disaster

- Vessel info n/a
 - Captain Edgar Joseph Daigle,33
 - Second Hand - Remi Joseph Martin, 20
 - Both died in disaster

- *Theo S* – Neguac Wharf – 40' x 12' Square stern
 - Captain Joseph Theodore Savoie, 31
 - Second Hand – Joseph Alexandre Savoie,33
 - Came home early the evening of the storm and survived

- *Dorcus' Boat*
 - Captain Andre A.J. Martin,33
 - Second Hand – Alonzo Joseph Martin,23 (body never found)
 - Both died in disaster as a result of a collision trying to rescue Captain Albert Chiasson

- ***Joan Ashley* – 38'**
 - **Captain Henry Garnet Cunard Williston, 49**
 - **Second Hand – Haley Alexander Rich Williston ,20**
 - **Both died in disaster**

- ***Rena K***
 - **Captain Arthur Joseph Kelly, 27**
 - **Second Hand - Hugh Edmond Kelly**
 - **Second Hand – Hector Hebert Kelly (Hugh's son)**
 - **All drowned**

- ***Kenneth Blaine* – V-stern w/flat deck**
 - **Captain Thomas Edward Nowlan, 62**
 - **Second Hand – Henry Joseph Jimmo, 27**
 - **Both survived**

- ***Kelsie Ann* – 45' V-stern**
 - **Captain Walter Archibald Williston,35**
 - **Second Hand – Harold Goodfellow “Hab” Taylor,20**
 - **Taylor was drowned, but the captain was saved by Theodore Williston's boat and crew**

- ***Gulf Prowler* – 40' x 12'**
 - **Captain Theodore Bell Williston,28**
 - **Second Hand – Hilarion Joseph Martin,25**
 - **Second Hand – Aquila Joseph Manuel,21**
 - **All survived**

- ***The Henry Stymiest***
 - **Captain Henry “Harry” Stymiest Williston,28**
 - **Second Hand – Alexander Perley “Sandy” Taylor,23**
 - **“Guest” – Air Force Officer Edgar Lewis Babcock,35 – out for the day with crew**
 - **All survived the disaster**

- **Captain Roy Lloyd's Lobster Boat**
 - **Borrowed by Captain Valaire Joseph Robichaud**
 - **Second Hand – Raymond Alexander Thebo**
 - **Both survived**
 - **Was towed in By Theodore Williston on the *Gulf Prowler***

- **42' Salmon Fishing Boat (name n/a "The Perley...?")**
 - **Captain James Perley Chapman ,54**
 - **Second Hand – George Wesley Chapman (son) 17**
 - **Herbert Fenety Williston (friend of son) 19**
 - **All three survived**

- **PEI Vessel with license to fish in NB**
 - **Captain Fraser Charles Cooke, 61**
 - **Second Hand – Edward Carroll Cooke (son) 28**
 - **The captain died but the son survived after being saved by Roy Lloyd's boat**

- ***Sharon L* – 49.8' x 13' – large boat**
 - **Captain Roy John Lloyd, 49**
 - **Joseph Brian Roy Lloyd (son) 13**
 - **Second Hand – James Leslie Galloway Lewis, 63**
 - **Second Hand – Chlorn Myrlyn Jimmo,23**
 - **All survived**

- **Vessel name n/a**
 - **Captain Lloyd James Clifford Kingston,33**
 - **Second Hand – Vernon Moise Jimmo, 30**
 - **Both survived**

- ***Francine D* – 45' x 13.5' square stern**
 - **Captain John "Jack" Archibald Doucet,43**
 - **Second Hand – Alphonse Joseph Doucet (son) 18**
 - **Second Hand – Eve "Everett" Joseph Doucet(son) 14**
 - **Friend on Board – William Georges Manuel, 70**
 - **All but William Manuel survived**

- ***Alda Marie II***
 - **Captain Bernard Lawson Jenkins,52**
 - **Second Hand – Cyril Galvin Jenkins,22**
 - **Both survived**

- **38' Vessel (name n/a)**
 - **Captain Joseph Oran Martin, 30**
 - **Second Hand – Joseph Alfred "Jack" Mazerolle, 38**
 - **Both survived**

- ***“La Reine de Coeurs – The Queen of Hearts”*** – Fished out of Lameque, NB, but was considered a victim of the disaster as well.
 - Captain Charles Joseph Gauvin, 53
 - Second Hand – Germain Alfred Chiasson, 55
 - Second Hand – Hilaire Romeo Gauvin (nephew of captain) 26
 - Captain Gauvin died in the storm- others survived

- ***Peggy Jane*** – Owned by Senator Norbert Theriault
 - Captain Elmer Joseph McIntyre, 46
 - Second Hand – Hubert Joseph McIntyre, 17
 - “Guest” Joseph Frederick LeBelle – on two week leave from Royal Canadian Air Force. Went aboard to jig cod
 - All survived

- ***Marion M*** – 40’ fishing boat
 - Captain Oswald “Ozzie” Williston , 40
 - Second Hand – Leo Joseph Roy, 27
 - Both drowned

- **40’ Fishing boat (name n/a)**
 - Captain James Maxime Manuel, 43
 - Second Hand – Meldric David Manuel (son) 18
 - Both survived

- ***The C.G.W.*** – Tied to a steamer (for approx. 2hrs.) by a line thrown from crew. The steamer then started dragging the anchor and cut them loose.
 - Captain Charles Goodfellow Williston, 39
 - Second Hand – Joseph Maxime Maximin Martin, 17
 - Both survived

- **Vessel info n/a**
 - Captain Levi Joseph Savoie, 47
 - Second Hand – Joseph Odilion “Dillon” Mercure, 30
 - Came in early after having to cut their nets to avoid a steamer
 - Both survived

- *Ola M*
 - Captain Placide Joseph McIntyre, 47
 - Second Hand – Israel Joseph “Dickie” McIntyre (son) 18
 - Both survived - * very little info profiled on these two in the “Trouble at Sea” publication (Reason??)

- *The Sjaan /The Shawn* – Keel stick of beech and a wheel house
 - Captain Wendell Noble Williston, 39
 - Second Hand – Garth Robert Smith Williston, 19
 - Both survived

- Vessel info n/a
 - Captain William Joseph Chiasson, 48
 - Second Hand – Joseph Adrien Chiasson (son) 19
 - Second Hand – Joseph Robert Chiasson (son) 16
 - All drowned in the storm

- *J.B.W.* (John Brian Williston)- built in Escuminac
 - Captain Norman Edgar Williston , 40
 - Second Hand – Pierre Leandre Oscar Doiron , 60
 - Both survived

- *Agnes I* – small 33’ vessel
 - Captain Alvin Joseph Durelle, 30
 - Second Hand – Edmond Joseph Martin, 17
 - Rescued the crew of the *J.B.W.* – all survived

- *The Bay du Vin Special*
 - Captain Wathen Haynes Williston, 30
 - Second Hand – Windsor Joseph Kingston
 - Second Hand – Eric Raymond Williston (cousin) 13 – youngest victim of the disaster

- *The Bennett* – Named after the late Prime Minister Richard Bedford Bennett. Originally a Government of Canada cutter. 40’ x 10’
 - Captain John Thomas Williston, 25
 - Second Hand – Milton Kimball Williston, 51
 - Second Hand – William Merlin Chapman, 18
 - All survived

- Vessel name n/a – This boat collided with Captain Andre Martin’s vessel – *Dorcus’ Boat* – in a rescue attempt by Captain Martin. All five were victims.
 - Captain Albert Joseph Chiasson, 50
 - Second Hand – Joseph Alphonse Chiasson, 17
 - Friend – Amon Joseph Manuel, 43
 - All three died in the storm leaving a total of 13 children

- Vessel name n/a – 38'-40' boat. Fished from the Hardwicke wharf
 - Captain Charles Williston Gregan, 40
 - Second Hand – Leonard George Gregan, 26
 - Both survived

- Vessel name n/a – 38' fishing boat-square stern
 - Captain Gerard Jerome Robichaud, 45
 - Second Hand – Gerald Edwin Joseph Robichaud (son) 18
 - Both survived

- *Fred's Ping* – 38' older vessel- Stern and bow were shaped the same
 - Captain Gonzague Louis Savoie , 25
 - Second Hand - Joseph Elmer Martin, 22
 - Second Hand - Gerald Joseph Savoie , 24
 - All survived

- Vessel name n/a
 - Captain Gerard Joseph Turbide, 51
 - Second Hand - Hubert Sam Martin , 34
 - Both survived

- Vessel name n/a
 - Captain Raphael Joseph Robichaud , 43
 - Second Hand – Victor Joseph Robichaud, 41
 - Both died

- 38' Wooden V-stern fishing boat
 - Captain Joseph Frederick William Manuel , 32
 - Second Hand - Edgar Joseph Manuel , 33
 - Second Hand – Edwin Joseph Sippley, 22
 - All three survived

- *The Phyllis* – 38' square stern – new vessel
 - Captain Alyre Frederic Martin, 35
 - Second Hand – Arsene Joseph Turbide (owner) 28
 - Alphonse Laurent Turbide- “out for a ride” 14
 - All three survived

- *The Bay du Vin River* – 38' vessel
 - Captain William Percival Gulliver, 27
 - Second Hand – Hubert Gulliver, 53
 - Both survived

- **Vessel name n/a – 40' with cuddy**
 - **Captain Bernard Joseph McIntyre , 40**
 - **Second Hand – Donald Elmer McIntyre , 23**
 - **Both survived**

- ***Me and You***
 - **Captain Thomas Phillips Lewis,56**
 - **Second Hand – Robert Michael Searle , 24**
 - **Second Hand - John Osborne Stanislaud Preston, 24**
 - **All survived**

- **Vessel name n/a – smaller boat**
 - **Captain Joseph Edgar Bonefant, 54**
 - **Nicknamed “Red Goodchild” or “Jerry”**
 - **Out alone in his boat. Saved by Captain Thomas Lewis of the *Me and You*. Said that Captain Lewis should have received a medal.**

- **Vessel name n/a**
 - **Captain Eric Joseph Daigle, 39**
 - **Second Hand - Jean Baptiste Daigle , 23**
 - **Both survive**

- ***Sea Gull / Le Goeland***
 - **Captain Charles Samuel Mazerolle, 52**
 - **Second Hand – Wilfred Joseph Mazerolle , 50**
 - **Second Hand - Joseph Prudent Mazerolle , 28**
 - **All three survived**

- **Vessel name n/a – 40' v –stern fishing boat**
 - **Captain Alfred Joseph Mercure , 32**
 - **Second Hand – John Augustin Joseph McIntyre, 21**
 - **Both survive**

- **Vessel name n/a – 42' cabin cruiser**
 - **Captain James Sterling Williston , 50**
 - **Second Hand- David Archibald Gardner , 19**
 - **Second Hand – Francis Alexander Newton , 17**
 - **All survived**

- ***The Maritime* – 41' x 10' “a real good outfit”**
 - **Captain Roland Goodfellow Williston, 50**
 - **Second Hand – Frederick Fowlie Williston , 46**
 - **Both survived**

- ***M.P.W.***
 - **Captain Ian Phineas Williston , 29**
 - **Second Hand – Robert Joseph Russell , 21**
 - **Both survived**

- ***Carmella D***
 - **Captain Clifford Samuel James Kingston , 57**
 - **Second Hand – Alfred McLenaghan , 32**
 - **Both drowned**

- **Vessel name n/a**
 - **Capitan Ernest Joseph Durelle II, 31**
 - **Second Hand – Nelson Joseph Durelle, 29**
 - **Both came in early at 12:30 am and survived**

- ***Paul D* – Yvon Durelle owned the boat**
 - **Captain Joseph Roy Martin, 47**
 - **Second Hand – Joseph Arthur Robichaud , 45**
 - **Ludger Joseph Martin (son of captain) 14 “out for the sail”**
 - **All survive**

- ***Oniva* – 37' x 10' V –stern**
 - **Captain Joseph Alvin McIntyre , 20**
 - **Second Hand – Joseph Ambrose McIntyre , 23**
 - **Came in early and survived**

- **Vessel name n/a**
 - **Captain Jeffrey Joseph Richard , 59**
 - **Second Hand – Jean Louis Richard (son) 28**
 - **Second Hand – Lionel Joseph Richard (son) 30**
 - **All three died in the storm**

Living Survivors of the Disaster (as of 2007-08)

- **Joseph Aldore McIntyre**
- **Joseph Urbain McIntyre**
- **Walter Archibald Williston**
- **Theodore Bell Williston**
- **Hilarion Joseph Martin (Larry)**
- **Aquila Joseph Manuel**
- **George Wesley Chapman**
- **Hebert Fenety Williston**
- **Joseph Brian Roy Lloyd**
- **Chlorn Myrlin Jimmo**
- **Eve Joseph Doucette**
- **Alphonse Joseph Doucette**
- **Cyril Galvin Jenkins**
- **Meldric David Manuel**
- **Joseph Maxime Maximin Martin**
- **Joseph Adillion Mercure**
- **Garth Robert Smith Williston**
- **William Merlin Chapman**
- **Gerald Joseph Savioe**
- **Alyre Frederic Martin**
- **Arsene Joseph Turbide**
- **Alphonse Laurent Turbide**
- **Donald Elmer McIntyre**
- **Robert Michael Searle**
- **Eric Joseph Daigle**
- **David Archibald Gardner**
- **Ian Phineas Williston**
- **Robert Joseph Russell**
- **Ernest Joseph Durelle**
- **Ludger Joseph Martin**
- **Joseph Alvin McIntyre (Bill)**
- **John Osborne Stanislaud Preston**
- **Francis Alexander Newton**
- **Henry Stymiest Williston (Harry)**
- **Alexander Perley Taylor (Sandy)**
- **Joseph Alexander Savoie – Neguac**
- **Moise Vernon Jimmo**
- **Joseph Frederick Le Belle**

Deceased Survivors of the Disaster

- Placide Joseph McIntyre
- Israel Joseph McIntyre (Dickie)
- Wendell Noble Williston
- Norman Edgar Williston
- Pierre Leandre Oscar Doiron
- Alvin Joseph Durelle
- Edmond Joseph Martin
- John Thomas Williston (John T)
- Milton Kimball Williston
- Charles Williston Gregan
- Leonard George Gregan
- Gerard Jerome Robichaud
- Gerald Edwin Robichaud
- Gonzague Louis Savoie
- Joseph Elmer Martin
- Gerard Joseph Turbide
- Hubert Samuel Martin
- Joseph Frederick William Manuel (Joe)
- Edgar Joseph Manuel
- Joseph Edwin Jude Sippley
- John Edward Meuse
- John Joseph McIntyre
- Thomas Edward Nowlan
- Henry Joseph Jimmo
- Valaire Joseph Robichaud
- Raymond Alexander Thebo
- James Perley Chapman
- Edward Carroll Cook
- Roy John Lloyd
- James Leslie Galloway Lewis (Les)
- John Archibald Doucette
- Bernard Lawson Jenkins
- Joseph Oran Martin
- Joseph Alfred Mazerolle (Jack)
- Germain Alfred Chiasson
- Elmer Joseph McIntyre
- Hubert Joseph McIntyre
- James Maxime Manuel
- Edgar Lewis Babcock
- Charles Goodfellow Williston

- **Levi Joseph Savoie**
- **William Percival Gulliver (Billy)**
- **Hubert Gulliver**
- **Bernard Joseph McIntyre**
- **Thomas Phillips Lewis**
- **Joseph Edgar Bonenfant**
- **Jean Baptiste Daigle**
- **William Joseph Mazerolle**
- **Charles Samuel Mazerolle**
- **Joseph Prudent Mazerolle**
- **John Augustine Joseph McIntyre**
- **Alfred Joseph Mercure**
- **James Sterling Williston**
- **Roland Goodfellow Williston**
- **Frederick Fowlie Williston**
- **Joseph Roy Martin**
- **Nelson Joseph Durelle**
- **Joseph Ambrose McIntyre**
- **Joseph Arthur Robichaud**
- **Joseph Theodore Savoie**
- **Hilaire Romeo Gauvin**
- **Joseph Raymond Leblanc**
- **Lloyd James Clifford Kingston**

Victims of the Disaster

The names listed below are those of the victims who lost their lives at sea on the evening of Friday June 19, 1959 as a result of a tragic storm known as the Escuminac Disaster.

- George Edward William MacLeod , 28
- John Burton Chapman , 17
- Allen Douglas Mills , 49
- Andrew Allen Mills , 22
- Edgar Joseph Daigle , 33
- Remi Joseph Martin , 20
- Andre Andre Joseph Martin , 33
- Alonzo Joseph Martin , 23
- Henry Garmet Cunard Williston , 49
- Haley Alexander Rich Williston , 20
- Arthur Joseph Kelly , 27
- Hugh Edmond Kelly
- Hector Hebert Kelly , 19
- Harold Goodfellow Taylor (Hab) 20
- Fraser Charles Cooke , 61
- William George Manuel , 70
- Charles Joseph Gauvin , 53
- Oswald Smith Williston (Ozzie) 40
- Leo Joseph Roy , 27
- William Joseph Chiasson , 48
- Joseph Adrien Chiasson , 20
- Joseph Robert Chiasson , 17
- Wathen Haynes Williston , 30
- Eric Raymond Williston , 13
- Windsor Joseph Kingston
- Albert Joseph Chiasson , 50
- Joseph Alphonse Chiasson , 17
- Amon Joseph Manuel , 43
- Victor Joseph Robichaud , 41
- Raphael Joseph Robichaud , 43
- Clifford Samuel James Kingston , 57
- Alfred Sylvanus McLenaghan , 32
- Jeffrey Joseph Richard , 59
- Jean Louis Richard , 28
- Joseph Daniel Richard (Lionel) 30

The Escuminac Disaster by Bernadette Keating

THE ESCUMINAC DISASTER by Bernadette Keating

(As sung by Bernadette Keating, of Chatham, at the 1959 Miramichi Folksong Festival, when she was thirteen years old.)

It was the nineteenth day of June it happened,
Nineteen and fifty-nine was the year,
In and around Escuminac
A sudden storm did appear.
Oh, wicked waves! Oh, wailing wind!

A number of men set out with their nets
That afternoon around three,
Some delayed, and they escaped
The perils of the sea.
Oh, wicked waves! Oh, wailing wind!

The waves were Oh! So very high,
Like mountains in the sea,
They slashed and tossed and ripped the boats
And wrecked the fishing fleet.
Oh, wicked waves! Oh, wailing wind!

Children and wives of the fishermen
Waited in despair,
Hoping and praying in tears of grief,
Some sign of life would be there.
Oh, wicked waves! Oh, wailing wind!

God granted some of the men should be saved,
And thirty-five would be drowned,
That most bodies would be washed ashore,
And a few might never be found.
Oh, wicked waves! Oh wailing wind!

Stories were told of the brave and the bold,
How heroes were born that day;
Men who braved the winds and waves
Out in the Miramichi Bay.
Oh, wicked waves! Oh, wailing wind!

They in boats which had not capsized

Feared the dangers around,
Yet stayed to help their neighbours and friends,
Knowing some already drowned.
Oh wicked waves! Oh, wailing wind!

A young fisherman lad of eighteen years
Caught a rope which he was cast.
He passed it on to his brother and Dad,
Thinking of his own safety last.
Oh, wicked waves! Oh, wailing wind!

We shall never forget those disasterous hours
Of death, sadness and sorrow,
But we know that God in His infinite way
Will give courage to fleets of tomorrow.

On the afternoon of June 19, 1959, fifty-four vessels sailed from Escuminac for the salmon fishing. It was fine when they went out, official broadcasts were predicting good weather. No one anticipated the freak storm which burst upon the fishing fleet that night. In the storm twenty-two of the salmon boats were lost, with nearly three-quarters of a million dollars worth of equipment. Thirty-five men and boys were drowned. The news of the two long nights and days of terror, and the heroism of the fishermen made a tremendous impact on the people of Miramichi.

In 1959 Bernadette Keating of Chatham was thirteen years old. She composed the words and music of her own song, the most beautiful of all the tributes to the heroism of the fishermen. It was very touching to see the child, in her simple school-girl's dress, sharing her own deep emotion with a hushed audience.

- Louise Manny, *Songs of Miramichi*, pp. 92-93

Bernadette Keating
Louise Manny
c. 1959
New Brunswick, CANADA

Chanson sur le désastre de Baie Ste-Anne par Jerry Hébert

CHANSON SUR LE DÉSASTRE DE BAIE STE-ANNE

(Composée et chantée par Jerry Hébert de Lagaceville en 1959)

Nous venons d'apprendre la nouvelle
D'une terrible tragédie,
Qui s'est passée sur la mer,
Semant le désastre et la mort
Dans le village de Baie Ste-Anne
Et le village d'Escuminac,
À plusieurs parts on pouvait voir
Une boucle de ruban noir.
On voyait au bord du rivage
Un peuple affolé et en pleurs,
Regardant au loin sur la mer,
Attendant ceux qui ne venaient pas.

Oh, mer! Oh, mer! Tu es trompeuse,
Disaient plusieurs en sanglottant,
Parfois tu parais si belle,
Mais maintenant tu nous fais pleurer.
Dans les beaux jours tu nous enchantes,
Tu nous donnes le cœur de chanter,
Mais quand ta colère devient grande,
De grand deuil tu nous fais perte.
Tu laisses sur le bord du rivage,
Des veuves, aussi des orphelins;
Au cœur une grande blessure,
Mais toi, tu ne regrettes rien.

Les habitants de ces villages
Étaient de ses vaillants pêcheurs,
Ils sont allés sur la mer travailler
Pour gagner leur pain,
Le cœur tout rempli de courage,
Croyant toujours s'en revenir;
Soudain la tempête fait rage
Et trente-cinq ont trouvé la mort;
Malgré le bruit de la tempête
Qui se mêle à celui des flots.
La voix de Dieu se fait entendre,
« Venez à moi, tous mes enfants. »

Et à vous tous qui m'écoutez,
J'ai un conseil à vous donner,
Tenons-nous toujours sur nos gardes,
Car Dieu viendra nous visiter à l'heure
Jamais il nous a parlé
Quand il viendra nous chercher,
Il vaut bien mieux prendre garde,
Car il est de toute vérité
Ici-bas la vie représente pour nous
Tout un grand océan,
Chaque jour sur une barque légère
Nous allons vers l'éternité.

Jerry Hébert a intitulé sa chanson « Le Désastre de Baie Ste-Anne ». Baie Ste-Anne est la localité francophone qui se trouve au sud d'Escuminac. M. Hébert a perdu de nombreux amis dans la tempête qu'il décrit dans sa chanson. Comme tant de nos auteurs, il éprouvait l'envie irrésistible d'ajouter sa complainte aux hommages aux pêcheurs décédés. Sa chanson décrit bien la beauté et la rage d'une mer sournoise et se termine par une réflexion philosophique :

« Ici-bas la vie représente pour nous
Tout un grand océan,
Chaque jour sur une barque légère
Nous allons vers l'éternité. »

Jerry Hébert
Louise Manny
vers 1959
Nouveau-Brunswick, CANADA

While gathering information for this second edition, it has been brought to our attention that three vessels have been forgotten.

To complete the list of Vessels involved of page 258, add:

Lors de la collecte d'information pour cette deuxième édition, nous avons appris que trois bateaux n'ont pas été mentionnés.

Afin de compléter la liste des bateaux impliqués de la page 258, il faut ajouter :

- *Loretta M*
 - Captain Louis Manuel
 - Edmond Manuel
 - Both survived

The next two vessels from the Acadian Peninsula were also involved in the Disaster but had not been mentioned.

D'autres pêcheurs de la Péninsule Acadienne étaient sortis durant le désastre mais ne sont pas mentionnés ailleurs.

- *Lamèque I*
 - Capitaine Camillien Haché
 - Ulysse Haché
 - Gérard Brideau
 - Roger Gionet
 - Alyre Gauvin
 - All survived

- *Gloucester 27*
 - Capitaine Abbé Léger
 - Second hand – Phamphile Léger (son)
 - Claude Gionet
 - Jean-Baptiste Lanteigne
 - All survived.

