

The Raleigh

Contributor: Wilfred Davis

Collector: Gertie Fowler

Gertie Fowler:

This is Gertie Fowler, I'm here in L'Anse au Loup today with Wilfred Davis, and Wilfred is gonna talk to me the day... today about the Raleigh, and the day that it went ashore. So Mr. Davis can you tell me what you think that caused the accident.

Wilfred Davis:

(Laughs) Now that's a that's a that's a hundred dollar question, I don't know.

Gertie Fowler:

No

Wilfred Davis:

Some says she had to turn from an iceberg, but Dad told me there was 'nar iceberg in the Straits at that time.

Gertie Fowler:

Nope.

Wilfred Davis:

That was in August

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

But I say there was some misunderstanding went on, as far as I'm concerned, I know. Because he headed for shore, he never had no radar or nothing like that, this only what he he had a compass or something like that. But there was no equipment like you got today.

Gertie Fowler:

No

Wilfred Davis:

Nothing like that, only just a compass I suppose and ... but anyway he didn't steer the right course.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah, so what do you think happen that day, now?

Wilfred Davis:

I say they was on the booze, I say.

Gertie Fowler:

You think so?

Wilfred Davis:

Yeah. Will that were they were goin' to the river.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Wilfred Davis:

To go trouting you know, all of those officers.

Gertie Fowler:

So that's what the local people figured, was it?

Wilfred Davis:

That's what a lot of people figured, my dear.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

I don't know what else.

Gertie Fowler:

Nope

Wilfred Davis:

You know what I mean, a long ways off, you know what I mean?

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

But if you'd have give them a hundred yards further off, he'd have went in the bay.

Gertie Fowler:

That's true. But it was pretty foggy though?

Wilfred Davis:

Oh, it was black thick fog.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

Yeah. And then when she went ashore.....

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

...the Captain called for volunteers.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

And there was eleven stokers. Well there just the same as.... the only thing they done was shovel coal as far as I'm concerned. 'Fer, knowing anything about the water or anything like that, they did not ... you know ... knew nothing and they got in the life boat to come ashore. They didn't know where they were coming, 'twas black thick with fog, they couldn't even see the land.

Gertie Fowler:

So you never, ever found out how they lowered the life boats or anything into the water did ya'?

Wilfred Davis:

Hey?

Gertie Fowler:

You never, ever ...

Wilfred Davis:

No, No..

Gertie Fowler:

.... heard them say

Wilfred Davis:

No ... No

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. How come them eleven people get drowned ?

Wilfred Davis:

Well they got drowned, when ... when she struck the land. When their life boats come in from the Raleigh, she came in and struck the shoal and went bottom up

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

that's how they got drowned.

Gertie Fowler:

So how did the people now on the, in L'Anse Amour take care of all them men?

Wilfred Davis:

Well, wouldn't all together L'Anse Amour. L'Anse Amour got the... most of the... name but people went all around the coast, far as L'Anse au Loup and Point Amour and Forteau ...

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

All from the Raleigh. Seven hundred and fifty people.

Gertie Fowler:

That's true.

Wilfred Davis:

What didn't go, mean to say, they housed them into people's houses there in L'Anse Amour. There's only two or three houses there.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

And then, you know the stores and whatever. They got in that and they put up camps and all that around but the most of them was fed by the Raleigh ... from the Raleigh, I'd say.

Gertie Fowler:

They went back aboard the Raleigh?

Wilfred Davis:

They went back aboard and got food, they had to ...

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

.... you know. Because them times, my dear, you had a job to get a mouthful for yourself, let alone fer a crowd.

Gertie Fowler:

That's true.

Wilfred Davis:

But the Lily ... the Lily boat she was a small warship.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

She went a shore, this side of the light.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Wilfred Davis:

But now they was all looked after in L'Anse Amour and Point Amour and around too, as well as, the Raleigh ah.... crowd.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. So I suppose in your house when you was growing up, now, that was the big topic was it, talking about the Raleigh?

Wilfred Davis:

Oh, it was always ... yeah.... yes, yes. Well I was only three years old see when the Raleigh went ashore, there.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. Always heard your mother tell the story, though hey?

Wilfred Davis:

Mom would tell the story about several people coming in, now, like you, one thing or the other. She'd tell what she knew, you know.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

But I can mind I can mind when I I was five years old.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

I was saw the boat on the rocks out there for two year for there was anything done with it. It was just same as she was on dock.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

And dad went out there, she was froze in you know what I mean. Like it be's around the winter time. That was in March I suppose.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

Use to go back and forth to, I don't know what 'fer probably getting coal or getting something. I knows I was out there one time with him, I was only a boy chasing him like a cracky.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

Yeah. (laughs). Yeah.

Gertie Fowler:

So can you remember some of the stuff that you might have took off the boat?

Wilfred Davis:

(laughs) Yes

Gertie Fowler:

After you was

Wilfred Davis:

That's what if you was down the L'Anse Amour now, there's a piano there.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

That cost seven hundred and fifty dollars. That's what the crew was, that's what they paid a dollar a man.

Gertie Fowler:

Is that right?

Wilfred Davis:

For that piano was there. He's there in.... in Cec's home there now.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

That was brought in and give to the old lady, that was living there. Me father's aunt, hey.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Wilfred Davis:

Far as I know.

Gertie Fowler:

Fer...

Wilfred Davis:

She left that to me, but I never bothered it. They had it down there and I said "Keep it you want it".

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

Yeah.

Gertie Fowler:

What else do you remember about it?

Wilfred Davis:

Hmmm?

Gertie Fowler:

What else do you remember about it, now?

Wilfred Davis:

What I remember?

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

(laughs) I don't remember a big lot, mame. I knows the Raleigh went ashore the 8th of August and there... there was eleven stokers got drowned.

Gertie Fowler:

But you never, ever heard them say, like how they got the lifeboats off the... off the boat or anything ?

Wilfred Davis:

Well the lowered them like ... like you know to put them in the water. They'd let them go. They was all hung over ... over the side of the boat.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Wilfred Davis:

They only just let them go, they got in them.

Gertie Fowler:

That's true

Wilfred Davis:

But I don't know how rough it 'twas, but I knows the stokers they never had no experience you know what I mean?

Gertie Fowler:

No

Wilfred Davis:

They just came into the rocks and they got drowned right on the rocks that's all you could call it.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes 'by

Wilfred Davis:

You knows the Raleigh there now, the shoals and ..

Gertie Fowler:

That all you have to add to your story the day then?

Wilfred Davis:

Huh?

Gertie Fowler:

Is that all you wants to tell me the 'day then?

Wilfred Davis:

Well now, I don't know what else I can tell you.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup. Well that sounds good.

Wilfred Davis:

What..... about... the Lily, I was talking about. She was a small warship, she ran ashore there just above Point Amour.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Wilfred Davis:

That was ... that was before I was thought about.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Wilfred Davis:

'Cause I was born, in on November 9th , I was born in Forteau.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

I took a in my Uncle's home there in Forteau.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

And I was reared up in L'Anse Amour. That's where I spent my lifetime.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay, so how old are you today then?

Wilfred Davis:

I'll be eighty nine if I lives to see November.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, you're smart.

Wilfred Davis:

Yes, that's how old I'll be.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay. Yeah will thank you very much then.

Wilfred Davis:

Well.... I had some hard times.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes

Wilfred Davis:

A lot of poor people.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes 'by

Wilfred Davis:

Nobody was rich. Huh?

Gertie Fowler:

Nope.

Wilfred Davis:

But still we never eat no dole or nothing like that, we managed to keep her going.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. But I suppose when a ship went a shore like that

Wilfred Davis:

Oh my dear, you ... ah ... you know you got everything that you want as far as I was concerned.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

Raleigh well she sove the Labrador that time.

Gertie Fowler:

You think so?

Wilfred Davis:

I'd say.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

A lot of people, got a lot of stuff off of her, you know the clothing and all that.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, 'by.

Wilfred Davis:

Had to because she was loaded, you know what I mean with that stuff.

Gertie Fowler:

That's true.

Wilfred Davis:

Yes, sir. But I don't know nothing else to tell you. I was reared up in L'Anse Amour. I was a fishermen all my lifetime. Most all. I was a farmer and I was a lumberjack and I was everything.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, sir.

Wilfred Davis:

I was a lifetime at it. Fishing all my lifetime for nothing. The first fresh fish ever I sold.

Gertie Fowler:

Hm....

Wilfred Davis:

I sold in St. Anthony. I went to St. Anthony fishing. I sold it for two cents a pound.

Gertie Fowler:

Tsk... Tsk. Wasn't much then was it?

Wilfred Davis:

Was it.

Gertie Fowler:

No

Wilfred Davis:

And all me lifetime me dried fish. Huh? You got up so as low as \$1.70 a kental. I sold it for that. And that was that was all you had to depend on, was your fish.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. Wasn't much, was it?

Wilfred Davis:

No my dear.

Gertie Fowler:

That's why you got into the got into the cows and a lot of the gardening.

Wilfred Davis:

We had a we had a barn full of that stuff.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

Cows and hens and pigs and sheep and all that, whatever you ... you managed to cut hay for.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

Had it all. That's what we survived with anyway. Had our own gardens.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup

Wilfred Davis:

It's all work (laughs) I tell you that.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, yup. You worked hard

Wilfred Davis:

Oh yes.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup

Wilfred Davis:

We worked enough, I tell you maid.

Gertie Fowler:

Everybody had to pull their weight.

Wilfred Davis:

Yes sir.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup

Wilfred Davis:

Yeah. We never got nothing for nothing we caught. Salmon, we fished seals, you spoke about that last night.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup. Yeah well we'll get back to

Wilfred Davis:

I fished seals all my lifetime in L'Anse Amour. Huh?

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

And the most thing we got 'fer it was just to keep the dogs from starving. And a lot of the people eat the meat. Eat it ourself.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes for sure.

Wilfred Davis:

Huh?

Gertie Fowler:

Yup.

Wilfred Davis:

In the spring of the year now, the first thing soon as the ice cleared away enough, get your twine in the water ... you you you get a few seals. You know. People would come after them for their dogs and fer to ... fer to... fer to... eat the meat.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. So how did you manage to ah ahwhen you set your nets and that now fer the ...

Wilfred Davis:

You'd set them just the same as if you'd set that table here.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

Our net went off there from the land, another one went that way, and this was ... was was the one we caught the seals. We barred them off with ah ... what we called an entry.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Wilfred Davis:

They was put out with a capstan, huh?

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Wilfred Davis:

and when they went in over that they would spend up over the capstan to keep them from going back.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Wilfred Davis:

And they didn't mesh up, one thing or the other. (Clears throat) Yes, 'tis a big story, but as far as the Raleigh is concerned, I don't know what momma said that's all.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup. Well that's good then, that's perfect what you told me.

Wilfred Davis:

(laughs)

Gertie Fowler:

Alright

Wilfred Davis:

That's all you want to know, now if there's anything you sees is wrong you can always fix it up.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay. Yup.Thank you

Wilfred Davis:

Huh?

Gertie Fowler:

Thank you very much for your memories.

Wilfred Davis:

'Cause I got no education. I only had grade 8 or 10 that's all.

Gertie Fowler:

Well that was good.

Wilfred Davis:

I had a job to get that.

Gertie Fowler:

That was good back then.

Wilfred Davis:

(laughs) Oh, yes.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup. Thank you then.

Wilfred Davis:

Oh, you're welcome.