

I have been told that Joshua Dewis built a small vessel in Economy before coming to Advocate about 1845. Soon after settling here he got the Spicers at Spencer's Island interested in building a vessel, so made a start and built the brig "Amazon" in 1860 & 61 the first to be built at that place.

My father, Robert Dewis, made his first trip in this vessel and sailed in her for two years. The following is an account written by him and published in the Nautical Gazette, New York, Jan. 28, 1914:

"I have always been interested in the opinions concerning the history of the "Mary Celeste", because I served my first apprenticeship at sea aboard that vessel. She was, however, the British brig "Amazon" at that time. Furthermore, considering the general interest manifested in the recently published but very doubtful solution of the mystery of the desertion of this ship, it occurred to me it would be of further interest to state a few facts about the origin of this vessel as I have never seen a published account of them. I know all the facts of her early existence, because I helped build the "Amazon", was launched on board and served continually on board her for two years in foreign trades all the time. May 18, 1861.

The "Amazon" (Mary Celeste) was launched at Spencer's Island N.S. in July 1861, being two years in the process of building. My father, Joshua Dewis, who built her, was a large owner. She was the first vessel built here, where so many large ships have since been built and started on their cruise around the world.

After lying at anchor a few days, she proceeded to the Five Islands, N.S. under command of Capt. Robert McLellan, when she was loaded with timber and deals for London. We sailed down the Bay of Fundy, but the captain being sick, we put into Quebec, N.B. Here a doctor came aboard and advised our return to Spencer's Island. The captain was landed, and in a couple of days died there. In a few days more we secured another captain, John N. Parker, called (Capt. "Jack" Parker) of Walton, N.S., who took charge, and with some changes in the crew, started on our voyage again, but put into Eastport, Me., for some reason I cannot recall, and on the way out of port ran into some fish weirs in the Narrows, and then lay for some days before we finally proceeded on our course across the Atlantic. We got to London all right this time, discharging the cargo and loaded another for Lisbon, Portugal. On the way down the channel, we ran into an English brig in the Straits of Dover and sunk her quickly, the crew climbing on board with us and all being saved. We put into Dover and landed our shipwrecks, repaired some damages and resumed our voyage. This seemed to have been the climax of our mishaps, for, from then on, all went smoothly.

After two years voyaging between various ports in the Mediterranean, the British Isles and the West Indies, we arrived at Halifax. Here there was a complete change in the crew; I among others left, and the mate, William Thompson, became captain, and

sailed her for about three years, when she again returned to Halifax. Captain Thompson then left the "Amazon" and a captain Murphy took charge. He took her to Glace Bay, N.S. to load coal. Anchoring in the harbor, a heavy gale came on and drove her ashore at the spot where an American Co. was digging out a dock. They bought the wreck and dug her off, partially repaired her and took her to the United States, and after further repairs, according to requirements she was placed under the American flag with the name "Mary Celeste". This name is familiar to all readers of newspapers and I will not attempt to give any further history, ROBERT DEWIS, Advocate Harbor, Nova Scotia, January 7, 1914.

My father then continued in other vessels until he got his Masters Papers.

After building the "Amazon" my Grandfather came to West Advocate, bought the Alex Knowlton property and carried on the ship building business down in the Hollow just below the house.

The first:	Brig	"G.B.Pazant	built	1862.
	"	"Albert Dewis"	"	1864.
	Barque	"Advocate"	"	1866.

Joshua put his son Robert in Command of the brig "Albert Dewis" and he sailed her for some time until she was sold to parties in England.

In those days the Capt. was allowed to take his wife and family along with him. On one of his trips to the West Indies in the "Albert Dewis" at Kingston, Jamaica, my sister, Antonette, was born, 1867. George Spicer was mate and he was sent ashore to get the Dr., M.D. In the same vessel 1868, he was on a trip to Cow Bay in Cape Breton for a load of coal. My mother and his sister Eleanor, were with him. While waiting for their load of coal a big storm came in from the Atlantic and drove every vessel ashore that was in the harbor. Most of them were a total loss. This was in the night and in the morning every vessel was high and dry. With both anchors out the "Albert Dewis" did not drive up as high as others. After a few days work they refloated the vessel, repaired the damages and brought a load of coal to Halifax and paid part of the expenses. Shortly after this she was sold to parties in England.

In 1876 the Spencer's Island Co. built a barque 800 tons called the "Calcutta". Father took command of her. Mother, Maggie my sister, and I went along with them. We were away two years. During that time we made several trips across the Atlantic, the cargoes were mostly oil in bbls. from New York to England. On one of those trips from New York to London we sighted a brig flying signals of distress. Father shifted his course and came down along side, found her nearly full of water. It was getting late in the afternoon and quite rough, so we laid low all night. Next morning all the crew (8) men left the brig in their big boat and came on board the "Calcutta". They were pretty well worn out pumping so long. Her Captain said several vessels had passed them

without offering help.

It was the brig "Viola" on the 4th. of March 1878. For this rescue the British Board of Trade gave Father a Silver Medal. I have the same in my possession at this time.

After two years Mother brought Maggie and I home. We came from New York to Spencer's Island with Capt. George Pettis in the schooner "Weatherspoon". I was 5, Maggie 4 when we went away. Mother went back and joined Father in the vessel again.

On another trip from England to Bombay in the "Calcutta" via Cape of Good Hope, while sailing down the North and South Atlantic they found their fresh supply of water was getting low and as they were passing the Island of St. Helena, they decided to call and fill up the tanks, so lay close under the Island and went ashore in the boat. Mother went along with Father. As the settlers on the Island do not have many visitors during the year, they received them very cheerfully.

On this Island Napoleon Bonapart had been banished after the Battle of Waterloo. Mother and Father were very anxious to see the house he lived in. With an Officer they were taken up to the top of this high Bluff and shown through the house and the room and bed where Napoleon had breathed out his last breath on this earth. There was a picture of the room and Napoleon on his death bed shown in one of the English histories., when Mother saw the picture she said it looked the same, even the paper on the wall looked the same as what she saw while in the room.

The wind blows the same way about all the time on the Island and Mother said the trees were all leaning the same way. What people they had a chance to talk with showered them with questions about the outside world. Most of the Inhabitants never have a chance to leave the Island. With the tanks all filled with water and back on board again they headed for the Cape of Good Hope and then for Bombay in the year 1882.

From Bombay the vessel was chartered for Manilla in the Phillippeans and it was on this voyage she was lost on a Coral Reef in the Macasser Straights or the China Sea. She struck the Reef in the night and by morning had a large hole punched through the Hull and was solid and fast. They lived on board as usual for a week or more and fitted out the 3 boats with sails and provision for the trip back to Sing a Pore, the nearest British port.

In the centre of Coral reef was a sand bar of considerable size and every night after the days fishing the wild birds would gather in large numbers and feed their young, and at night or dark the older birds would make a circle with the young ones in the centre or inside. With a few of the older ones on guard the rest would put their heads under their wings and sleep. Never seeing human beings before they were not the least afraid.

*It was on the voyage from Monte-Vedia instead of Bombay that she was lost-*

In packing their belongings and making ready, Mother was somewhat bothered to know how she would carry 10 Gold pieces \$20.00 each, as gold was more plentiful in those days than paper money. She decided to put a heavy piece of cotton around the top edge of her corsets the width of the gold piece and placing the pieces edge to edge and stitching both edges of the cotton and in between the pieces, this way she carried them nicely. When everything was ready they set sail but very sad to leave the ship that had taken them to so many ports and their home for so many years. After 7 days and nights in the boats and some rough weather they arrived at Sing a Pore.

In passing the Island of Borneo several big canoes came out loaded with Natives but did not bother our boats, our men had a few guns for protection. As they neared the Western end of the Island they decided to land so they could walk around. When the boats landed the Natives came down in swarms but were friendly. Some of the Native women took Mother by the hand and led her up to one of their houses built on stakes or poles, about 6ft. high They gave her a careful looking over and examined her clothes and compared the color of her flesh with some of their children. The house became so crowded the posts began to crack and give way so they soon scattered. After a few hours walk around, they boarded their boats and sailed for their last port. The Natives gave them a few ducks and some little trinkets. On arriving at Sing a Pore the authorities held a Court of Inquiry, The following was their finding:

"A Marine Court of Inquiry was held yesterday before

"R.S.O'Connor, Esq., Senior Magistrate

E.Bradley, Esq., J.P. and

John Blair, Esq., J Pass Assesions into the loss of the British ship "Calcutta" in Macasser Straights. The Court was of the opinion that the loss of the ship was not due to any fault or neglect by the Master or Officers and their Certificates were accordingly returned. This was in January 1884.

After a few days rest at Sing a Pore they took a steamer via India, Red Sea, Suez Canal, Mediteranean to London, then across the Atlantic to New York and home. *mother stood the like a good sailor.*

In 1887 the Spencer's Island Co, built another large ship called the George T. Hay 1647 tons and Father took command of her. They loaded deal at Spencer's Island for Liverpool, England, delivered the lumber and loaded salt for New York. When two days out she sprung a leak and they put back and arrived in Falmouth partly full of water and a heavy list. After discharging the salt and repairing damages they re-loaded the cargo and came to New York. Father left the ship in New York and came home and settled on the farm his father, Joshua, left him.

A few years later Robert Dewis and A. W. Atkinson entered into partnership and built the following vessels at his ship yard in West Advocate:

Sch.	"Nettie Shaw"	3 mast	550 tons	1889
"	"R. L. Dewis"	"	560 "	1890
Barque	"Robert Erving"	Square on four	600 "	1902

After this Robert retired to his farm and when he got past working gave the farm over to his son, R.L.Dewis, and later on the same property was handed down to John W. Dewis, making it the 4th. generation. Scott Dewis owns the Fred Dewis part of the lot.

The Samuel Dewis that left Economy back in 1855 moved to ShubenaCadie, Hants Co., N.S. owned large farms. He had 3 sons and they also owned large farms and shipped large quantities of milk into Halifax City.

I have in the home at present the following pictures of vessels:

brig	"Amazon"	built in Spencer's Island
ship	"George T. Hay"	" " " "
Barque	"Calcutta"	" " " "
Barquentine	"Robert Erving"	" " West Advocate
sch.	"Ada Mack"	" " " "
"	"Nettie Shaw" (model)	" "
ship	"Glooscap"	" Spencer's Island
Barque	"Lord Rippon"	model per Robert Knowlton---jack-knife work.

December 12, 1950-----R. L. Dewis in his 80th. year...