

## The Scenic Route to Peggy's Cove

### *A Visit to Peggy's Cove and Nearby Coastal Villages and Vistas*

#### The Wreck of the *S.S. Atlantic*, 1 April 1873

“The luxury liner *S.S. Atlantic* belonged to the *White Star and Ocean Company*, and was on a regular voyage from Liverpool in England to New York with 976 people on board (33 cabin passengers, 800 steerage passengers, and 143 crewmen). She was constructed of iron, 420 feet long, and had 4 masts and a funnel, and 6 water-tight bulkheads, and was valued at \$500,000. Her captain, James A. Williams, had decided to call at Halifax because the



coal on board had been rocky and had burned badly, and there was not enough left to reach New York if the vessel ran into a gale. Because of poor navigation the *Atlantic* struck Marris Head at 3:10 a.m. on April 1st and in a few minutes heeled over and filled with water. Some of the passengers and crew climbed up the masts. Then three of the officers managed to rig a line to a slippery rock forty yards away and some of the passengers succeeded in reaching it. Fishermen from Lower Prospect were rescuing them by going out in their rowboats to the rock where the tide was rising. 546 were drowned, including all the women, and all but one child..

Although there were at least 138 women on board not one was saved. Some women were in the lifeboats which capsized and others swept overboard with their children because they did not have the physical strength to hang onto the rails or the rigging. The boy who was saved was 12 year old John Hindley. He was emigrating from Lancashire with his parents and young brother to join two married sisters in New York. He had been awakened by great noise and got up to see what was happening. The ship suddenly tipped over but he followed some men into an upper berth in the upper steerage compartment. One of the men broke open a porthole and someone pushed the boy out and yelled at him to climb up and hang onto the ropes.

When John was taken to Halifax, Alderman William H. Neal outfitted him from "top to toe" with clothing from Neal's dry goods store on Granville Street and he was photographed by William Chase. A reporter observed that the boy was too shocked to realize the dreadful tragedy.”

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There is a cairn in Terence Bay as a memorial to those who lost their lives, and efforts are underway to protect the graveyard where many victims are buried.

