

Loss of the Due Dispatch

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Loss of the Due Dispatch'. It consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'You lands-men and you sea-men bold, With hearts both stout and strong. I'. The second staff continues: 'pray you pay at - ten - tion To a mel - an - cho - ly song. When you'. The third staff continues: 'hear my dread - ful sto - ry I am sure you will make known _____ I was'. The fourth staff concludes: 'born in the town of Pat - rick York, In the coun - ty of Ty - rone.'

You lands-men and you sea-men bold, With hearts both stout and strong. I
pray you pay at - ten - tion To a mel - an - cho - ly song. When you
hear my dread - ful sto - ry I am sure you will make known _____ I was
born in the town of Pat - rick York, In the coun - ty of Ty - rone.

My name it is John Williams,
A man just in my prime,
For to deceive young women
I always was inclined.
It was four unlawful children
Were laid unto my charge,
I was forced to leave my country
And then set out at large.

It was on the ship called Due Dispatch,
We made our way straight down,
It was with peace and quietness
Our good ship did resound.
It was in the dead time of the night
Our ship she struck a rock,
Our passengers on deck did fly
And there received the shock.

Our captain's name was Lanchester,
A small boat he did fling
And two of our cabin passengers
Into the boat did spring.
The first and second roll she gave
The boat it hove up keel,
And these two young men they both were lost,
These young men's name was Steele.

And then, to our amazement,
Our ship she split in twain
And many of our passengers
Went floating on the main.
The rest of us climbed on the rock,
Where we clung with fear and dread,
And there we clung for five long days
Without support or bread.

Our sufferings can ne'er be told
As on that rock we stood,
With water to our middle
As the tide did flow and ebb.
The weeds that grew upon the rock
We ate instead of bread,
We killed and ate the captain's dog,
Likewise we drank his blood.

We talked of eating human flesh
That lay upon the rock
And many of our passengers
With hunger down did drop.
But God is always merciful
And relief He sent straightway,
Our empty boat did chance to drift
To the island of Cap Ray.

It was there a fisherman did dwell,
Our boat he espied and caught,
Which made him think there was a wreck,
Right well he knew the spot.
So as the sea quit raging
A boat he then put out,
He came unto the very spot,
To him we did call out.

He took us to the island
Where his lonely hut did stand;
This island was inhabited
By one lone fisherman.
A little bread and water
Was all he could afford,
Five more days in starvation
I am going to record.

And then by chance a ship there came,
Commanded by Captain Grant,
He took us all to Halifax,
God's blessing on him rest.
'Twas in the poorhouse of that place
We received the best of care,
To God alone our praise we give
Who safely brought us there.

Note on The Loss of the Due Dispatch

This story is supposed to have been written by a member of the crew. My father and oldest brother told the story as they heard it from one of the survivors, a man by the name of Shaw. His wife, who was also one of the survivors, could not bear to hear it mentioned but would burst into tears and leave the room if the subject was mentioned.

Mr. Shaw said that as the survivors huddled together on the rock they held each other's hands so that if one fell asleep he could be held back from sliding off the rock. Every time the tide rose it would break over the rock, often taking at least one of their number. Some of them became crazed and jumped into the water and were drowned.

This song was so sad that I never learned much of it except the tune, though I have heard my father sing it many times. When I tried to find the words, I could find no one of my family who knew the song, but a son of my father's oldest sister still remembered it and sent the words to me from Nova Scotia. So, thanks to my cousin Frank Spinney, who is over ninety years old, I got the words of the song that seems to have been forgotten by so many.