

The ship Commissioner

History from Donna MacEachern who organized a Geocache exercise around the trails of Cape George.

History,

The Community of Cape George has always had close ties with the sea, and from 1842 to 1912, over twenty ships were built there. Unfortunately there have been just as many shipwrecks.

A resident of Cape George, Angus MacDonald, was supposed to be a mate on the ship the 'Commissioner', which was sailed by Captain Graham. However, as a favour to a friend, he first agreed to sail a coastal schooner from New Glasgow to Arichat before boarding the 'Commissioner'. He was instructed to wait at Arichat, with Captain Graham's wife and children, for the 'Commissioner's' arrival. Nevertheless, as the 'Commissioner' was on its maiden voyage, from Nova Scotia to Bermuda, it was hit with gale force winds, later known as the "August Gale of 1873". Unfortunately the 'Commissioner' lost its battle against the storm and Captain Graham, along with nine crew members, lost their lives as the ship sank. Sadly this ship went down within sight of Captain Graham's Mothers house at Cape George. All that was recovered from the wreck was part of the cabin, the main hatch, and two life buoys bearing the vessel's name.

Captain Angus MacDonald, who fatefully managed not to be on the 'Commissioner' when she sank, went on to have a successful career as a sea captain and is reported to have made fifty-two crossings of the Atlantic during his career.