



**Captain Joseph Roach
World War I
Mercantile Marine**

Born: August 1894

Place of Birth: Coleys Point, Bay Roberts

Parents: John and Manoah Roach

Joseph grew up around and on the sea. As a young man, he was a capable and competent seaman.

He became employed by the MacRae & Sons Company and was an integral part of the business in Grady Harbour, Labrador where the Company had its main fishing premises.

As an experienced seaman and captain, he was called upon to use his skills as a captain to ferry goods across the Atlantic to England during the war years. Travelling in convoys mainly from Halifax, it was a dangerous job but one he seemed to be bred for.

He captained several sailing vessels on these dangerous journeys over the course of the war. His reputation grew with each convoy.



Halifax Convoy

Joseph was married to Elizabeth Mary (Marshall) and together they had a family of seven (7).

The 1921 census shows Joseph (27) and “Lizzy” (24) married but not yet with children.

Things seemed to be fine with the young family and then tragedy struck in early 1931 when Joseph unexpectedly passed away at an early age. Below is the obituary notice as it appeared in the local newspaper, The Guardian 1931:

“Died suddenly, at Coley’s Point, Jan. 3rd, Capt. JOSEPH ROACH (late mercantile marine), aged 38 years. Leaving to mourn a wife, seven children and four brothers, Ananias, Henry, and Robert, of Coley’s Pt., and Isaac in N.S. The deceased was well-known in many parts of the country, and particularly in Bay Roberts and vicinity. For a number of years, he was a master of sailing vessels to Labrador, where he was in charge of Messrs. MacRae & Sons fish premises at Grady. During the Great War he commanded several vessels on trips to

Europe and was awarded a Mercantile Marine service medal. He was deputy-sheriff for Bay Roberts section for several years. Funeral Jan. 6th, to the church of St. John the Evangelist, Coley's Point. (This is a combination of two separate articles on the deceased.)"

The 1935 census shows Elizabeth (38) a widow with seven children ranging in ages from 15 to 4 years old.

!945 still has Elizabeth as a single mom. She is now 49 with five of her seven children at home.