



Left to Die: The Story of the SS Newfoundland Sealing Disaster

Gary Collins

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“They didn’t die like flies, you know, like I’ve heard some reporters say over the years. Oh no, it wasn’t like that a’tall. The men who died didn’t just drop like flies. There was nothing quick or easy about it. They had frozen feet, and fingers too numb and cramped with the cold to wipe the tears from their eyes.”

Cecil Mouland, the last living survivor of the SS Newfoundland sealing disaster, told his story to Gary Collins in the fall of 1971 while travelling to St. John’s, where the old ice hunter would live out his final days. This book grew from that encounter and stands alone as the defining tale of the Bonavista Bay men who were left to die on the ice.

The historic convergence of ice, seals, and men in late March 1914 marked the end of Newfoundland’s innocence. Men both young and old left their homes from all over the province that year to pursue the annual seal hunt. Among the vessels that took them to the ice was the Newfoundland, a wooden-walled steamship captained by the famous Captain Westbury Kean. With no wireless aboard the ship, the stage was set for seventy-eight of the men who went over the side and their fates sealed.

Left to Die is Gary Collins’s most ambitious and creative work of non-fiction, a storytelling masterpiece. With new photos and new research revealed, he recalls with stunning clarity what history remembers about the sealing disaster of 1914.



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