

The Shipwreck Watch

A Journal of Macquarie Island Shipwreck Stories

Volume 4

1825

All Hopes on a Longboat – the *Caroline*

The *Caroline* sailed from Sydney under the command of Captain Daniel Taylor, and reached Macquarie Island in February 1825. A month later, she was wrecked at what is now known as Caroline Cove. The crew spent the next five and a half months living off the land and strengthening a longboat so that a few men could make a brave dash to Hobart to get help for the other castaways.

The Caroline was a ship of 224 tons, built at Philadelphia, U.S.A around 1800 and registered at London in the name of Edward Lord of Hobart.

Wrecked at Caroline Cove

Sealers and crew of the *Caroline*, were working at what is known as Caroline Cove in February 1825. They loaded 160 tuns of elephant seal oil that had been collected by a sealing gang from the *Caroline's* previous voyage. The ship was about to set sail for another part of the island. At first the weather was moderate, but a heavy gale arose. In the early morning of 17 March 1825, the ship's cables parted and the *Caroline* was blown onto the rocks.



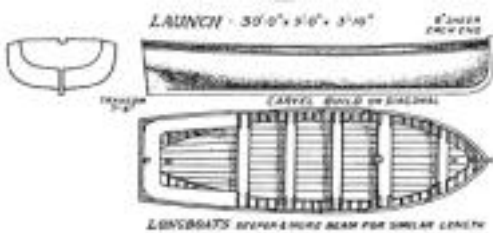
A cave at Caroline Cove. Photo Geof Copson.

The crew rowed safely ashore, but their only possessions were the wet clothes they stood in and one trunk they brought with them from the ship.

Using a rope, they hoisted this trunk up the cliff to the plateau. The *Caroline* soon broke up and her precious cargo of oil barrels were washed ashore.

Captain Daniel Taylor saw little chance of rescue in the near future, so he set his crew to work strengthening the ship's longboat. The plan was that a few brave men would row and sail to Hobart to get help for the remaining castaways. They cut the longboat in two, lengthened it to thirty feet, broadened its beam to twelve feet and deepened its hold to six feet.

Luckily, the crew of the brig, Wellington, spotted the castaways on 30 August 1825 before any of them had a chance to make such a dangerous voyage.

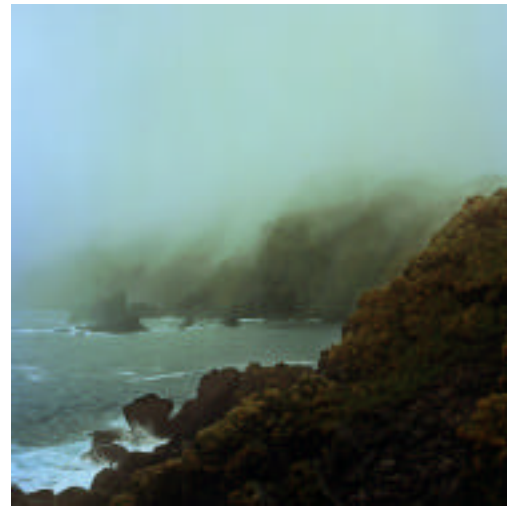


Sketch of a ship's longboat by

The *Wellington* did not have enough room to take on board all the castaways after loading her own cargo and crew, but the *Wellington's* master

offered Captain Taylor and a few members of his crew a passage to Sydney.

The brig, *Cyprus* arrived at Macquarie Island seventeen days later. She had been chartered by the *Caroline's* owner, to sail to Macquarie Island and find out what happened to the *Caroline*. The *Cyprus* returned to Hobart with the remaining castaways and a convict who had escaped to Macquarie Island and lived there for two years.



Caroline Cove. Photo by Geof Copson

While the *Cyprus* was at Macquarie Island, she, too, was badly damaged in a gale, and only just managed to avoid being shipwrecked.

The *Caroline* had not been insured. Lord had the remnants of the wreck, auctioned in Sydney on 6 October 1825. This included the half-finished longboat. Another sealing employer, Joseph Underwood, bought the longboat for 37 as well as masts, rigging, cables and sails.

References

McNabb, R. 1907, *Murihiku and the Southern Islands*, William Smith, Invercargill, pp176-179.

Broxam, G and Nash, M, 1998, *Tasmanian Shipwrecks*, Vol. 1 1797 - 1899, Navarine Publishing, Canberra, p13.

Cumpston, J. S, 1968, *Macquarie Island*, Antarctic Division, Melbourne, pp 63-65.

Further **R**eadings

The convict's story is told in:

[Alexander Miller - Convict Stowaway](#)