

Not Too Long Ago

...Seniors Tell
Their Stories

The Seniors Resource
Centre

St. John's, Newfoundland

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Dear Reader:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Seniors Resource Centre, I am very pleased to present Not Too Long Ago, a collection of stories from seniors.

To everyone who contributed stories, I wish to offer my heartfelt thanks. You have created a marvellous reading resource for seniors who are motivated to improve their literacy skills.

It is most appropriate that this collection is being released in this International Year Of The Older Person. As members of our community of seniors, you have unselfishly offered these stories to other seniors who had learning challenges in their younger days. By creating a book of stories of such a high interest to seniors, it will make the process of learning and improving reading skills more enjoyable.

Not only seniors and those learning to read will enjoy these stories. I am quite sure that everyone interested in Newfoundland and Labrador culture will be enriched by your experiences.

I would also like to thank the Seniors Resource Centre's Literacy Project Committee for overseeing this project. Thanks also to the students in the Rabbittown Learners Programme, and those seniors who read the raw material and who made invaluable suggestions.

Charles S. Rennie, Chair
Board of Directors
Senior Resource Centre

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the sixty-three seniors who contributed to *Not Too Long Ago*. It is said that experience is a great teacher. If so, your experiences are about to give readers a great education in Newfoundland and Labrador history and culture.

All of you have greeted me in your homes, and offered an open invitation to return. I would like to thank you for their hospitality.

On behalf of generations to come, I congratulate you on your contributions to this book.

Producing *Not Too Long Ago* took the cooperation of many people across the province. This would not have been possible without those who know our communities and who know our seniors. I wish to thank Joan MacLean of Northwest River and Janet Skinner and Donna Paddon of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. In Cartwright, Jessie Bird also recommended many wonderful people to be interviewed.

Across Newfoundland, contributors were recommended by our network of seniors, peer advocates, community leaders and personal contacts: Barbara Barrett of Arnold's Cove, Linda Bath of Bonavista, Dorothy Bonnell of Bell Island, Peggy Doucette of Port au Port, Theresa Greeley of Gander, Evelyn Grondin-Bailey of Burin, Harriett Greene of Port aux Basques, Stella Hollett of Burin, Catherine Pennell of Trepassey, Philip Power of Grand Falls, Gladys Snow of Rocky Harbour, and Jim Young of Twillingate. Thank you all.

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Garry Cranford
Writer/Researcher

The Stories And Their Organization

The stories in Not Too Long Ago were collected from seniors across the province, primarily through taped interviews, supplemented by written submissions. The reading style is as varied as the storyteller, and edited as little as possible, in an effort to retain the original flavour of the conversation. In all, there are sixty-six stories and poems.

The goal of this project was to bring together, under one cover, a collection of stories that represented a culture to which mature Newfoundland and Labrador readers could easily relate. By doing so, it is hoped that the content will have as high an interest level as possible to those readers this book is aimed at: the adult reader.

All major regions are represented. The stories are arranged into five sections based on the place of residence of the seniors telling them.

For ease of organization, the material is grouped under the following geographic regions:

- Avalon
- Eastern
- Central
- Western
- Labrador

Generally speaking, the setting of each story takes place in the communities or regions of the province where the storyteller now lives. For instance, the trapline stories of Labrador are told by individuals who live in Labrador.

However, there are exceptions. For instance, Frank Mercer's story is set in Labrador, but he resides in Bay Roberts, so his story is grouped with those of the Avalon. Likewise, the baby in the mailbag resides in St. John's, but her dramatic story took place on the west coast of the island.

I would suggest that the reader study the Table of Contents. Either the titles or the sections under which the stories are listed will suggest the geographic setting.

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Bell Island Miner

Charlie Bown

Charlie Bown was born in Newfoundland. His father came from Nova Scotia to Newfoundland to manage one of the two companies mining on Bell Island. When Charlie Bown grew up, he went to work as a Bell Island miner.

ON THE MORNING of January 17, 1938, I made my first trip down into No. 6 Mine. The previous week had been spent going to the Main Office to get hired on. I was given a small brass disk with a number stamped into it.

With this disk, I became only a number, no longer a name. The number would allow me to go to the company store to pick up a miner's helmet, a wide leather belt for my waist to hold my lamp, coveralls and safety boots.

I was told the hours of work: Ten hours per day, 60 hours per week at the rate of 32 cents per hour, or \$19.20 a week. I was also given a book on safety regulations.

About 6 a.m. on Monday morning I went to the dry-house, or change building, by No. 6 Mine. In this building I was given a line on which I could hang up my clothes. Washing materials and showers were provided when I came off shift.

Dressed in my work clothes, a helmet, a belt and safety boots, I proceeded to the lamp cabin. Here I passed in my number and received a numbered electric lamp. It was an expensive item and I was responsible for its care.

At 6:30 a.m. all the men left the dry-house and went to the mine opening. At the opening of the shaft there were flatcars known as trams.

There was a line of about ten trams holding 30 men on each one. We all sat with our legs inward so they could not swing out and hit the walls of the mine tunnel.

Going down into the mine, a man with a very bright light sat at the front of the train. He was the "trammer" or signalman. He looked out for obstructions such as fallen timber or rock on the tracks ahead.

At the bottom of the mine, long tunnels extended east and west. At the entrance of each tunnel there was a row of ore cars pulled by an electric locomotive. The men got off the tram and got aboard the ore cars to be taken to their place of work.

The mining process in No. 6 Mine was the "pillar and room" method. This meant a square opening was drilled into the solid ore and then proceeded inward. This left pillars on both sides for support. The wall of ore towards which you looked was known as the "face." The sides of the room were known as "ribs." The roof was called the "back" and the floor was called the "footwall."

Two men using an air drill bored twelve holes to a depth of ten feet. The centre of the room, about ten feet across, was drilled in a wedge affair. This pattern would have been planned and drawn out by the foreman earlier that morning. The wedge piece detonated first, leaving the straight holes to be blown out more easily only seconds later.

The blasted ore was loaded aboard 4-ton cars. A machine called a "drag" hauled the ore from the face to the opening of the room. The other method was to load the ore by hand. Horses hauled these cars to the face or the room. Two men, one on each side of the ore car, would load their complement of eight cars a day, or 32 tons.

Locomotives pulled the ore cars to the main dumping area, known as the pocket. Another series of cars, six in number, would haul the ore to the surface.

Around 10 a.m. it was mug-up time. This was done in shifts as the work had to continue. Lunch at 12 noon was done in the same way, with no stoppage in work. At 5 p.m. all work ceased and each man made his way to the main slope to board the train for the 20-minute journey to the surface.

I washed and changed my clothes and headed for home. My first day ... I had become a Bell Island miner.

complement	helmet	pocket	square break
detonate	locomotive	possession	trammer
electric	obstructions	regulations	tunnels
expensive	pattern	safety	wedge
footwall	pillar	signalman	



Seal Fingers

Arnold Chafe

Arnold Chafe is one of the old-time fishermen from Petty Harbour. Besides fishing, he went to the ice to hunt seals.

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH that I never got seal fingers. I often cut myself out there and bandaged it up. You often heard tell of seal fingers.

Seal fingers came from a strain. That's what they always said. When they had the seals sculped, some fellas would put a rope in them to tow them. Or you could put your fingers in where his eyes were, in the eye sockets, to pull him along. With the real heavy ones you could pull your fingers out of joint.

Seal fingers was a pretty bad infection, with swelling and pus, and it would be some sore. You could go to what doctors you liked. Old Mrs. Stafford on the Southside Road was an ordinary person, but she could cure them. Fellas I knew went to her.

You could get a cut, and then the old fat would get in there. A friend from Petty Harbour was out with me. He got two seal fingers on the one hand. He had to go up and get them done up. There were two women doing them up, to keep them dry and everything.

The two women bandaged them up, and then they hauled a condom down over the fingers. There weren't too many of them seen in Newfoundland, but that's what they put on them, a condom. When he came back down, the boys said to him, "What? They did them up with condoms?" They couldn't believe it.

There were a few fellas who said, "Well, they weren't brought out here for that reason, but they come in handy!"

bandaged
condom

infection
sculp

seal fingers
socket

strain



Ambulance Driver

Arthur Clarke

Arthur Clarke was born at St. Thomas, Conception Bay. In his youth he fished with his father before finding work outside his home town. At Bell Island, he eventually was hired as a driver of the ambulance, in those days, a horse and cart.

I WAS SENT TO BELL ISLAND when I was seventeen years old. I got a job down in a little mining pit called 44-40. Then I went to another surface pit, where I carried on for years. From that I got a job down in the East Barn, shovelling snow for the big bosses.

One day I was asked to go teaming horses. I went down just for the day. When I had the day in, the boss told me to come back the next day. He said, "Half the boys down here won't take the horse you got because they're afraid of it."

The horse was called Ben. When I would back in for coal, he would start to dodge off somewhere. I began to give him extra oats at the start, and another handful when I finished. After a while, that horse never moved. All the rest of the crowd were afraid for their lives of him. After that, whenever I went in the barn, he would bawl out to me. He knew my scent.

That's how I got in the barn. Dinner hours most of the boys used to go home. If anyone had an accident, I would go to wherever there was trouble.

I used to be a doctor, chauffeur, and undertaker. Not just me. Some of the other boys there in the barn did the same thing. Sixteen of us worked there.

After a while, they got a square wagon for an ambulance. It was all open. It puts me in mind of those chuck wagons you see on TV sometimes.

They had a horn on the outside of the barn. You could hear it all over the place.

They would call the barn and tell us where to go. Then I would put the harness on the horse and go. By the time I got the call and I reached No. 3 Mine, it would take five minutes. To get to No. 4 Mine, the farthest one away, it took twelve minutes.

I drove out in the open, not covered. There used to be hard winters those years. With the wind in from the north and the snow squalls.

I was at that for 26 years. In those 26 years I saw some queer, horrible accidents. Some of them lived and more of them died. I saw people burned. Burned to death.

When I brought them to the stretcher, I thought I would get half sick.

I witnessed men coming out of the mines after a fall of ground. One man was six foot two. Two and a half tons of stuff fell on him. His body was flattened, and he was hanging out over the sides of the stretcher. I saw some horrible old accidents, wicked.

They later hired out the ambulance job to someone with a van. I had to do something else. I didn't like the mines job. I saw too many accidents, to tell you the truth.

I got a job as a blacksmith's helper. I was there for five years. Then, when there was a maintenance helper off, they put me at that.

I started off at 28 cents an hour. I used to bring home \$17.10 for a sixty-hour week, ten hours a day.

accident	blacksmith	harness	squall
ambulance	chuckwagon	maintenance	stretcher



Outport Nurse

Margaret Giovannini

Margaret Giovannini was an English nurse who came to Newfoundland to work in the outports. Today she is an independent senior of 98 years, living in St. John's. She loves to talk about her years living in outports. Here she shares some of those memories.

I ARRIVED IN NEWFOUNDLAND on April 16, 1939. I had always wanted to travel but could never afford to do so. When the opportunity arose to work as well as travel, I liked it. We travelled to Newfoundland from Liverpool, England on board the *S.S. Nova Scotia*. Department of Health and Welfare nurses met me at the boat in St. John's and I was taken to the nurses' residence at the Balsam Hotel.

The first few days were spent mainly attending clinics at the Department headquarters which, at that time, was in the basement of the Public Library. I had misgivings about doing dentistry, which was required in the isolated outports. However, after receiving advice on procedures under the guidance of the dentist present at those clinics, I felt a little more confident.

I had been a Queen's District Nurse in England and was well acquainted with district work. I was also a certified midwife and had practiced as such for several years in England.

My first district in Newfoundland was Rencontre East in Fortune Bay, which included eight other settlements. These could only be reached by boat. It was always possible to answer calls except in stormy weather, which fortunately did not occur often.

Harbour Breton was the nearest medical centre and Dr. Paton resided at the hospital there. One week prior to taking up my post in Rencontre was spent in Harbour Breton meeting the medical officer. We were informed on procedures to be taken when medical advice and assistance was needed. If we needed urgent medical assistance, the hospital ship *Lady Anderson* was at our disposal and answered all our calls, weather permitting. A doctor and nurse were on board the boat at all times.

Our telegrams for assistance or advice were given priority by sending a pink telegram form, which was sent immediately to the doctor on board the ship. When in a settlement on an emergency call, the doctor would visit other patients requiring attention or advice at the nurse's request.

I always looked forward to the arrival of the hospital ship as I could visit the staff, have one or two meals with them and enjoy their company and discussions.

Before starting work on my own, I helped with clinics on the *Lady Anderson* all day. I was then taken ashore to begin my work at Rencontre. I had a busy first day, as several children needed attention; one or two were very sick.

The doctor on board the ship had already advised me regarding drugs and treatments. I was glad of this advice, as many of the drugs had different names in England.

I had a very comfortable boarding house where every kindness was shown to me. Especially in winter, if I had been away all day in other settlements on monthly visits or on a sick call, my landlady, Mrs. Baker, kept a lookout for the boat. She would have a nice big fire ready to warm me up, as well as a nice cup of tea and a meal.

A very convenient surgery and waiting room were provided. All instruments for dentistry and minor surgical needs were supplied by the Department of Health and Welfare, as was a liberal supply of drugs. No effort was spared to provide the supplies which were ordered once a month.

All liquid medicines were provided in one gallon jars. In winter especially, it was necessary to order a large supply, as weather often delayed the boat's arrival and no roads connected the settlements.

Balsam Hotel	Harbour Breton	procedures	surgery
certified	isolated	Rencontre East	surgical
dentistry	medicine	settlements	telegram
emergency	opportunity	S.S. <i>Nova Scotia</i>	



Recollections of Placentia Bay

Berkley Ingram

Berkley Ingram lives in the Golden Years Manor at Arnold's Cove. Except for a few years in St. John's, he lived all his life in Placentia Bay.

I WAS BORN JANUARY 17, 1912 at Woody Island, Placentia Bay. I went to school a short while at Woody Island. At only seven years old I helped my mother trench potatoes.

I remember one very stormy day. It was snowing and cold, but not windy. My father and another man had to go approximately three miles over ice, towing a sleigh to get a lady, a Mrs. Bollard who was a midwife.

They had to wrap the lady in blankets in the sleigh. Then, with ropes over their shoulders, they towed Mrs. Bollard and the sleigh all the way from Bollard's Point to our house on Allen's Point.

I cannot remember much more about Woody Island, as I was not eight years old when I left home. My cousin and his wife came to visit mother, who was his aunt. They had no children and they asked Mom and Dad if they would let me go with them. Mom and Dad talked it over and decided that I could go. They knew I would be well cared for.

My cousin's wife was, I always said, an angel. I was given the best of everything and treated like a prince. Walter Ingram, the cousin who adopted me, was a teacher before taking the job as telegraph operator and postmaster. I learned telegraphy at age ten while helping him by delivering messages around and sorting the mail. I had to be sworn in to use the telegraph at age twelve.

About a year after, we encountered line trouble for three or four days. We had to get a boat and take whatever messages were on hand to Argentia to be transmitted to St. John's. En route a fire started in the engine room. There were two 45-gallon tanks of gas, one on each side of the engine room. We were lucky to have salt in the hold of the boat, and that is what the engineer threw on the fire to extinguish it.

Another time my cousin, his wife and I left Tacks Beach to go to Harbour Buffett in open boat. On the way, something happened which caused a fire around the engine room. The man

attending the engine drew water from the dill room, which only increased the fire. Then he had to draw water over the side of the boat to extinguish it.

At age fourteen I went to work with the firm of Alberto Wareham & Sons as sales clerk in their general store. When not busy there, I went down to the fish store to help pack the dry codfish. 448 pounds of fish were put in each cask and pressed down with a heavy screw by two men. That fish was exported to Spain, Denmark, Portugal and Barbados.

After working with Warehams' for a couple of years I went to St. John's. I opened a confectionery store on Boncloddy Street. After a year I moved down to New Gower Street. I was only there about a year when the Shop Act came in. Then I had to screen off the grocery side with wire netting, and was only allowed to sell confectionery after six P.M.

I went to work with Alberto Wareham & Sons again. Before Newfoundland joined Confederation, when supplies were brought in by their boats from P.E.I. or other foreign places, they would put a tidewaiter on board to enforce customs regulations.

One of their boats came from P.E.I. with produce for their firm at Spencer's Cove. After the cargo was unloaded, the boat was light in ballast. We left Spencer's Cove to return to Harbour Buffett and the wind was very strong. Coming around Buffett headland, one gust of wind in the sails caused the boat to lean over enough that the tip of the sail's boom touched the sea.

Here is another memory. One winter I fell on an axe and cut a piece of flesh completely out of my leg. After about a week, proud flesh came in the cut. Someone got clam shells, crushed them to a powder and sprinkled it on the cut and it healed in a short time. I have the scar on my leg for anyone to see now, at age 86.

ballast	message	sleigh	transmit
confection	postmaster	telegraph operator	
extinguish	regulations	tidewaiter	



Baby In A Mailbag

Hilda Menchions

Today Hilda Menchions is a senior citizen living in St. John's. In December of 1919 she was just a baby aboard the steamer *S.S. Ethie*. Her mother and grandfather were aboard when the ship ran into a storm. Captain English, acting on the advice of his purser, decided to run the *Ethie* aground in a sheltered cove. Little Hilda Batten was sent ashore to safety in a mail bag.

WE WERE DOWN AT FLOWER'S COVE at the time. Dad worked in the Newfoundland Customs office there.

Government was about ready to close at the end of the month, so Mother decided to come up to Norris Point in Bonne Bay and visit her family. That was how we came to be aboard the *Ethie*. This was in December, 1919. Later, Dad was supposed to come up on the last boat out and continue with us to Bareneed, Conception Bay.

My grandfather Joseph Batten built the Anglican church at Flower's Cove, so he was down there working. He was aboard with mother and me when the storm struck.

I heard mother say that she was in the stateroom, lying down. They had to have everything they could find piled up against her bunk, so she wouldn't roll out of it.

When the time came for the rescue she wouldn't go first. I had to go before her. Of course Mom made sure that grandfather went ashore to take me when the mail bag landed. He couldn't do anything else for me.

I did hear her say the worst time she ever felt was when she put me in that mailbag. I think it was the worst storm they had ever experienced up to that time on that coast. They had to put me down in the mailbag because you couldn't hold onto a baby and the bo'sun's chair. Grandfather went ahead, and I guess she probably followed me to make sure I was all right.

Mother never talked about it too much because it was a frightening experience for her.

I know one thing. She kept the mailbag. They gave her the mailbag and she looked after it. She kept it safe and clean somewhere in the house. She had it folded up and it was never dirty looking.

The Mailbag

Mother died and I had no children, so my husband and I decided to give the mailbag away. Both of us were no longer young, and if anything happened, there was nobody to take it. We thought we would put it in the Gros Morne National Park for safekeeping.

I gave it to them and I had the picture taken, and as plain as could be, there was a band of red. Because the old mailbags were that colour. A band of red and then bands of white on the outside.

A few years ago my husband's cousins visited from B.C. We took them to Bonne Bay to see the bag. When the parks fella took it out it was black. It looked like it had been in a coal bin or something. That's the truth. I said, "Gosh, that's not it."

Mainlanders are more outspoken than some of us Newfoundland women are. One of our visitors went along and said, "Mrs. Menchions is not very pleased about that mailbag. She says it is not the right mailbag."

That's one thing I'm disappointed about. Very, very upset.

My husband Clayton was a clergyman. When we lived on Walwyn Street in St. John's, we always turned on the radio in the morning for Peter Miller's show. One morning he was talking about the *Ethie*. Frank Galgay and Mike McCarthy had written the story and said there was no baby involved.

At this, Clayton jumped up and went to the phone. He asked for Miller. "That's a strange thing," he said. "I just listened to the radio. You're saying there's no such thing as Hilda Batten being on the *Ethie*. I'm sitting down eating breakfast opposite her this morning!"

I spoke to Peter Miller then myself, and I also had a call from Captain English's daughter.

I have never talked much about it at all. I always kept it to myself. Clayton often said, "My, if I were like you, I'd make a fortune, because I could go on telling my story." He was just joking, but he was right. I have always been shy about it.

Now, I can't tell you much more, because mother didn't talk about it very much. You can understand that. I guess it brought back memories that she didn't want to remember. She had to go through quite a lot, didn't she?

She was stuck in that bunk, and they were all thinking they were going to be lost, until this Walter Young thought about the sand bar. *

[Walter Young was the purser, who knew the coast very well. He recommended a spot where Captain English could run the ship aground. All 92 crew and passengers were saved.]

After the interview, as I was leaving, Rev. Menchions remarked that it was an emotional event in his mother-in-law's life. He recalled sitting with her one day when Newfoundland writer Cassie Brown was on the radio, recounting the event. As Mrs. Batten listened, tears flowed freely down her cheeks. - G. Cranford



Bareneed	emotional	mainlanders	stateroom
Conception Bay	Frank Galgay	Mike McCarthy	Walwyn Street
disappointed	Gros Morne	sandbar	



Ranger Mercer's Mission

Frank Mercer

Mr. Frank Mercer now lives in Bay Roberts. His home is filled with pictures, diaries and stories about his life as a lawman. He was a member of the Newfoundland Constabulary, the Rangers, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Many stories have been written about a famous journey he took by dogsled in 1936.

RANGER FRANK MERCER WAS THE FIRST permanent police officer stationed at Nain, Labrador.

In January of 1936, he set out by dogsled to investigate a suspected murder at Okak, 100 miles away, to the north. The body of an eskimo had been found in the cabin of a white trapper. It was believed that he was killed in a dispute over a trapping line.

Ranger Mercer set out for Okak on a komatik, driven by an eskimo sled driver. Many storms slowed them down as they went over the mountains to Okak. They found the body in the cabin. The man had a gash on his forehead. Ranger Mercer needed to have the body examined to be sure it was murder.

The nearest doctor was 600 miles away, to the south, at the Grenfell Mission in Cartwright. Quickly, he and his driver made a wooden box for the body, put the dead man in, and stuffed moss around him. The three of them – two alive and one dead – began the long trip south to the Grenfell Mission.

When they reached the foot of the mountains, they met with many more storms, one after the other. To survive they had to build an igloo, where they waited and waited. One afternoon, the weather cleared and they began going up the mountain. At midnight, they found a pass at 4,000 feet.

Ranger Mercer remembers the scene as if it were only yesterday. The Northern Lights were dancing in the sky, making hissing sounds as they swept across his gaze.

They began to go down the mountain. The sled began to pick up speed so Ranger Mercer cut his dogs loose. That way, the huskies would not be run over by the sled they were hauling behind them.

Finally, the two men lost control of the sled. They could not hold it back any more. It flew down the mountain and dug in the snow at the bottom. The top came off the wooden box and the corpse flew out and stuck in the snow 50 yards away.

At that moment, his driver acted strangely. The stress of the journey in the company of a dead body had gotten on his nerves. Frightened by the turn of events, he screamed and ran away.

Ranger Mercer was now all alone in the cold north.

He found some of the huskies and went to retrieve the body. He picked it up, brought it to the coffin on the sled, and placed it inside. Using the dogs to follow his driver's scent, he located the man. The man's nerves were completely gone, and he acted like he was crazy. He was speaking nonsense and would not get on the sled. Walking some distance behind, he followed Ranger Mercer to the nearest camp.

At the camp was an elder who knew native medicine. He took the intestine of a seal and blew it up. He tied it to a stick and stuck it on the coffin. Next, he put the claw of a raven around the crazy man. He calmed down enough to continue the trip with Ranger Mercer.

It took twelve days to cover the 600 miles. The Grenfell doctor at Cartwright discovered that the man had died as the result of a fall when he was drunk. There was no murder. The man had fallen while drunk. When it was discovered that the trapper had moonshine in his cabin where the body was found, he received six months in jail.

The life of a policeman is risky in normal situations. In the far north, in the land of ice and snow, it is even more dangerous. During all his adventures in Labrador, Ranger Frank Mercer was one lucky man.

Cartwright	journey	Okak	suspected
dangerous	komatik	native medicine	
huskies	murder	permanent	
investigate	Northern Lights	receive	



The Wreck of the *S.S. Florizel* (1918)

Paddy McCarthy

Patrick (Paddy) McCarthy was coming out of Mass on a Sunday morning when he heard about a shipwreck. He was living in Renewes, Newfoundland.

I WASN'T VERY OLD. I was only fourteen years old. After coming out of Mass, everybody heard about the *Florizel*, which struck ashore on Horn Head, Cappahayden. There wouldn't be a heck of a lot of ways to get the news then, but I suppose the Goodridges had a telegraph office or something like that. All hands went up to see her then.

My father and I went up on the horse and slide. I suppose it was about eight miles from Renewes to Cappahayden. It didn't take us long, about three quarters of an hour. Then we had to walk to Horn Head, so we left the horse in Cappahayden and walked up. That would be all of half an hour. Maybe you'd do it quicker when you were serious, rushing. Anyway, it was half an hour.

It wasn't very nice, what we did see. The *Florizel* was out on Horn Head Rock. The stern half of her was down, but the bow part was up. When the sea rolled in, it would roll right over her, even over the bow section.

The few people who were aboard her were in the Marconi room, right by the funnel. Just as they'd open the door you'd see their hands waving. Not too often, but any chance they got, you'd see them wave. Then you'd know there was someone alive. But with regards to getting to her, it was as good as trying to climb to the moon.

It started to get nice and fine. The sun came out and the wind died right down. By two o'clock it got to be a perfect day, with not a breath of wind. Soft. You knew it was calming down a bit, but on Horn Head you could hardly notice it because of the shoals. It was awful. The seas were funneling in. But everywhere else along on the shore you knew it was smoothening down.

Helping With The Rescue

I was at the rescue myself! There were eleven or more dead bodies driven in there, and you'd take them up and bring them into Cappahayden Station. That was the only place suitable to bring them. The train was running a scattered time there.

There were places on the shore you couldn't get to, it was so rough. But when a body drifted into any sort of a cove or a half smooth place, you had to take them out of the water. You'd bring them up from the beach to the road. Then you put them on the cart and took them to the station.

I often remember the woman that I brought in. That was Mrs. Butler. She belonged to the east end of town (St. John's). I didn't know the Butlers, but they said that's who she was. She had on a brown fur coat. That was all that she had on her.

And then there was a man from St. John's whose last name was Snow.

When it got dark, I stayed in Cappahayden, because I had an uncle up there. Then I came home with the horse the next day, Monday. My father stayed up there.

In her book, *A Winter's Tale, The Wreck of the Florizel*, Newfoundland writer Cassie Brown lists the names of those people whose bodies were recovered. Among them were Mrs. William F. Butler age 40, and Mr. Fred Snow, aged 22, both of St. John's.

Cappahayden
funneling

Goodridge's
Horn Head

Marconi Room

Renews



Straight From The Heart

Phyllis Mercer

Phyllis Mercer is originally from St. John's but now lives in Kelowna, British Columbia. Though Mrs. Mercer lives far away, her heart and soul are still back home. Her poem Straight From The Heart was submitted by her friend Catherine Milley.

There's an island in the cold Atlantic waters
Where restless waves beat ever on the shore –
Where seagulls' crying wakes you in the morning
Calling you to come back home once more.
The rocky crags and hills may lack the verdure
Your conscious eyes around you ever see –
But your heart and soul are constant in their longing
To hear once more that restless, northern sea.

Though the Long Range Mountains and their spreading foothills
And icy streams make Codroy's valley green,
Your dreams are of the rugged rocks and harbours
The wild Atlantic fashioned with its stream.
Cabot called his first sight "Bonavista" –
And Baltimore discovered "Ferryland" –
The rugged, foggy shores of dear old Avalon
To you, is home, your home, your Newfoundland.

You stand once more atop that craggy summit
Where once Marconi stood, when day is done –
Before you only gray Atlantic waters –
Behind that snug, safe harbour and the sun.
The surf rolls loudly near that hidden valley
Where bluebells nod o'er mounds that mark the dead
Who fought and died for honour, king and country
So many years ago, in Newfoundland.

You turn and there before you stretch the White Hills
Holding Quidi Vidi in their hands –

You can almost hear Virginia's rippling waters –
 From here it is a green and pleasant land.
 Then in your dreams you turn towards the sunset
 You see old landmarks there before you stretched –
 The old-time houses and the old Cathedral
 Of this, the oldest city in the West.

And as the sun goes down behind Freshwater
 Flooding Southside Hills with red and gold,
 There's not another country that can proffer
 A sight as dear your tear-filled eyes behold.
 The lights come on, reflected in the waters
 Their beauty more, by far, it seems to me
 Than all your Western cities' sights can offer –
 This scene from Cabot Tower is to see.

The place so dear to every Newfoundlander
 Is not paradise with hills of green,
 But the cool, salt-laden air –
 The skies above, so clear –
 And childhood's memories of what might have been
 Beckon you though nature all around you
 And man's inventions are at your command
 Take you home, back home, if only in your dreaming,
 Back home once more to dear old Newfoundland.

Atlantic	conscious	landmarks	reflected
Avalon	crag	Long Range Mountains	seagulls
Baltimore	fashioned	memories	Southside Hills
bluebells	Ferryland	mounds	spreading
Bonavista	foothills	paradise	summit
Cathedral	Freshwater	proffer	verdue
childhood	inventions	Quidi Vidi	Virginia
command			



The Hard Winter of 1959

Anastasia Molloy

Anastasia Molloy was born at Portugal Cove South on the Avalon Peninsula. She was a young wife and mother, expecting another baby when the area was hit by one snow storm after another. Getting to the midwife or to a nearby hospital was impossible.

MARCH 4th, 1959. It was my sixth child, and I was having a hard night trying to sleep. I had to call old faithful Nurse Abernethy to come to Portugal Cove South. She would usually come from Trepassey on horse and slide, but the weather was so bad she couldn't make it; it was eight miles away, so she had to call St. John's for a helicopter to come to Portugal Cove South to pick me up.

The roads were blocked in the country, and they would be blocked for months at a time. There was no electricity at the time, either.

I knew everything would be fine. Albert, my husband, now deceased, looked after the children, all five of them. The oldest was ten.

When the children heard I was going away for a little while, they got upset. I was a little nervous while waiting for the helicopter to arrive. I didn't know what to do, but I had to leave.

It was around three o'clock that evening when the helicopter arrived. People came from every corner and gathered around wondering what was going on. Even my son thought it was a flying car.

The helicopter landed in the meadow in the outer part of the Cove. Albert had to tackle the horse and bring me to the helicopter.

I was in St. John's an hour later. I then had to send a message over the radio on the Gerald S. Doyle news to let Albert know I had arrived. The baby was born on March 12th; it was a girl.

Every morning, after the baby was born, I would listen to the radio to see if the roads were open to go home. This morning I heard on the news that there would be a boat leaving St. John's with food for the people. At the time, Myles Murray was our M.H.A., so I phoned him and he said he would have me on the boat that evening.

When I left the hospital they gave me three disposable diapers, but they only lasted for the trip home. I hated to part with them; I thought they were the best things that were ever invented! But I had to go back to the cloth diapers when I reached home.

The boat was in Bar Haven. I was on her at 10:30 that evening and arrived in Trepassey at nine o'clock the next morning. That was the 27th of March.

I was at home for two weeks before the roads were open in the country, but the children were all excited about the new baby, Donna. It was an experience I will never forget.





The Dog Harp Seal

Richard Westcott

When I interviewed Richard Westcott of Petty Harbour, he was 100 years old. A man with an alert mind and a wealth of memories. Any person who lives for 100 years has seen a lot to talk about. Here is the story about the time he crossed the path of a dog harp seal out at the sealfishery.

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER it was the year I was in the *Thetis* or no. It must have been the year I was in either the *Thetis* or the *Diana*, because there was a man Weir from Petty Harbour, and I was with him that same year.

When you are out on the ice, you get separated, quite a distance away from the others. I was walking along the ice that day, by myself. The other man with me was far enough away that I couldn't see him.

There was no danger of falling in the water, of being drowned that day, except for walking down into a seal's bobbing hole. They were always there, where the old seal was getting up and down.

It's the harp I'm telling you about. The male harp seal. We always called him the dog harp, and there's a mark on his back. He's all white, but there's a mark on his back; they call it a saddle. The shape of a saddle.

The Dog Seal

So I was walking along and I looked and I saw this dog. I said to myself I think I'll try to kill him. I didn't have any sense. So I walked over towards him and made a smack at him with the gaff!

He made for me, right savage! And if I didn't back away from him, he'd have eaten me.

He was savage, snarling. But just as I backed up, I could see one bobbing hole, about the size of a barrel, and I kept clear of it. But there was another one there that I didn't see. It was covered over with snow.

I backed right down into it, the same one he was going for. As it happened, I only put one leg down. And I pulled it up just as quick as the dog went down and he never bothered me.

Whatever way I went into it, I was at liberty to haul my leg up just as quick. Only for that...

When I came aboard, I said to Jimmy Weir, "I don't know whether I'd have been eaten or no, but I got one leg down into the dog harp's bobbing hole, after I was trying to kill him. But I got my leg out of the way just in time, and the seal went down."

Jimmy Weir said, "You were some lucky. Do you know there was a man who got his two legs stuck down in the bobbing hole and he couldn't get out of it. The seal went to jump down the hole and squat him to death."

Because there wasn't enough room for the two of them in the one hole.

The dog harp seal is 300 or 400 pounds. He's terrible big, the dog. Now the female is only about three quarters as big as he is. But it wasn't a female, I guarantee you that.

I never went near one after.



bobbing hole
dog harp seal

saddle
savage

snarling

squat



The Rock In The Box

Gus (Eric) Blackwood

The Blackwoods of Bonavista Bay are famous for being good fishermen on the Labrador. Eric Blackwood is from this family and is retired and living in Hare Bay. When the family gets together there are many tales told over a drink. One such tale is the story of The Rock In The Box.

I'VE HEARD THE STORY ever since I was big enough to remember, and I've seen the rock.

That's the story of my grandfather, Ned Blackwood. The story is, he went to St. John's to ship his fish to Baird & Company.

Now the old man, he had a schooner that carried about 900 or 1,000 quintals of fish. He knew his schooner so well that he knew he wasn't getting the weight for the fish that was coming out. When they had her unloaded, he figured he wasn't getting the weight that he should be getting.

It got on his nerves. In those days, when they weighed the fish, the weights were all put in a box and it was locked. There'd be a hundred and twelve pounds in the box.

The old man knew there was something wrong. He asked the weighmaster to see the weights but he wouldn't unlock the box.

In those days they used to wear what they called pigskin boots, big old leather boots. The old fella got mad and he up and kicked the box. He shattered the weight box, and besides the hundred and twelve pounds, out fell this rock. The rock was a pound and three-quarters or two pounds, something like that, that they had put in the weight box extra. So for every quintal of fish they were gaining about two pounds. And no doubt about it, he figured right.

The way the story goes, the old man hit the weighmaster and he went flying over three puncheons. He was in so bad a shape that they had to take him to the hospital. Grandfather got to keep the rock.

He could have sued Baird's. They gave him something, I don't know what. Anyway they pacified him and that was all there was about it.

My Uncle Ned Blackwood was there when they were weighing grandfather's fish. Uncle Ned kept the rock.

And every one of us, when we went to St. John's and went to his house, Uncle Ned would show us the rock. He would tell us the story of grandfather and the Rock in the Box. I don't know what happened to it after he died.

A good many years ago, to get a bottle of liquor you had to go and buy a liquor book. I went to get one. There was an old fella there, a clerk, a white-haired man.

When I told him my name, he said to me, "Did you ever hear the story of the rock in the box?"

I said, "Yes, many times."

"Was that old fella any relation to you?"

"Yes, he was my grandfather."

He said, "If I had time, I'd tell you the story of the rock in the box. I was on Baird's wharf when that happened." But there were other people lined up there to get liquor books.

I never got his story. I never saw him after.

Baird & Company liquor	pacified pigskin boots	puncheon schooner	weighmaster
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Did John Cabot Land At Bonavista?

Gordon Bradley

Gordon Bradley of Bonavista is a founding member of the Bonavista Historical Society. He is a local expert on the area's heritage. I asked him if John Cabot set foot on land at Bonavista.

DID JOHN CABOT LAND AT BONAVIDA?

That's almost as bad as the question that one of the BBC fellows asked me last summer when they were here. They asked me what I thought Cape Bonavista looked like when John Cabot came around.

I answered, "It's like all the rest of the bloody coast. Rocks and trees!"

The new sign coming into Bonavista, put up for the John Cabot celebration last year, says: "Site of Cabot's Landing." That is a mistake.

Cabot's Landing was never the phrase that was used. It was the "Landfall of Cabot." A landfall is really where you sighted land. So you would come up to the land you sighted from your ship and search for a place to land, if you planned to go ashore.

We don't know if John Cabot ever went ashore at Bonavista.

[Landfall means "the first sight of or approach to land over open water." - The Canadian Oxford Dictionary]

Cape Bonavista

heritage

landfall

phrase



I Lost My Love For School

Rhoda Collins

Rhoda Collins lives in a comfortable house in Glovertown. She is a religious woman, and full of wonder at the good things around her. The following is an excerpt from Mrs. Collins's book on her life, *He Was There All The Time*.

TO ALL MY CHILDREN: Greetings in Jesus's name. I am now at the age of seventy-seven. Twice a widow and now living alone. Yet not alone, because God is with me.

I thought it good to write a story of my childhood days to keep on record for you. Most of this you will find hard to relate to, being brought up in a different age.

I was born and raised in a small place called Silver Fox Island. My parents were Job and Maggie Rogers. I had three sisters: Eva, Statia, and Priscella, and one brother, John.

Childhood days were exciting days. I loved going to school. I liked helping my mom around the house. I was the oldest child and felt responsible to help. My sisters and brother grew up the same way.

I have a sad memory of the last day I went to school, which I have never forgotten.

The last year I went to school, new books came out. I bought them all. Geography, Hygiene, Arithmetic, and Grammar. I was excited about my new books. There was so much to learn about the outside world. All the different animals, the beautiful people, and so many things we never heard of before.

We grew up on a small island in a little world of our own. There was no communication with the outside world. We had no radio or telephone in those days. There was so much to learn from our new books.

All was going well for me until one morning, our teacher Baxter Norris did something very foolish. Just after school started that morning, he discovered the name "Joseph Matthews" written on the window sill. He asked who did it, but everyone denied writing it.

Each child had to go up to his desk and take an oath on the Bible. Still, nobody did it. Then each child had to write Joseph Matthews on his slate, to see whose writing was most like it, so he could judge the guilty one.

I hadn't seen the name on the window. However, he judged my writing to be the one most like it. I knew I was innocent, but as a sensitive child, it was too much for me to take.

It was dinner hour and my heart was breaking, so I left the school, never to return. So that's how my school days ended. I have suffered much for it over the years.

I went home from school that day and broke down crying as I told my mother I would never go back. She was hurt as well, but didn't force me to go back. We all thought the teacher had done a very foolish thing.

It took me a long time to get over my hurt. I lost my love for school, and was deprived of my education. I always liked to do things well, but for the education part, I will never measure up.

My writing is very poor and I am unable to do the things I would love to do. However, I've tried to pick up what I can, on my own. I have come this far, thank God, and I'm sure I'll make it now, to keep in touch with each of my family.

arithmetic	Eva	guilty	Priscella
childhood	geography	hygiene	Silver Fox Island
deprived	grammar	innocent	Statia
different			



Food Aplenty!

Wilson Hayward

Wilson Hayward is one of the best fishermen in Bonavista. The first few times he went in boat he got sick. The next day he would cry to go out in boat again. To him, work was fun and he loved every minute he could get on the water. He says no one went hungry in Bonavista, unless they were lazy or in poor health.

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WE used to do in the fall of the year. My father would go fishing in the summer right up to September month. Then he would take all that he caught, and pay his fishing account.

Now, what we made from September to December, we used to buy our food for the winter. I saw a time when we had fourteen 100-pound sacks of flour.

We would have a 45-gallon tierce of molasses out in the store. When we wanted a gallon of molasses we would take out the stopper and let the molasses run out into a jug.

We had a 200-pound barrel of beef in the pantry. We had two chests of tea. Then we had two bags of hard bread for brewis during the winter.

We had thousands of potatoes. One year I remember we had 78 barrels of potatoes down in my cellar. We sold half of them. We had plenty of carrots and cabbage. We used to throw the cabbage up on the boards in our store to freeze up. We also had a full barrel of pickled cabbage. The big solid heads were cut down the middle and salted.

If you had health and strength and could work, there was no way in this world to starve a man in Bonavista. Back when I started we were in the Depression. The whole world was in Depression. But eighty percent of what we ate those years, we never paid for it. We reared our own vegetables.

My father had six youngsters and he never got five cents from the government in his life. My mother always had a cooked dinner. When 'twas potatoes and turnip, we managed to get a bit of salt meat. We had our fish. The next day we had fish and brewis with potatoes and drawn butter. The next day we might have potatoes and turnip and cabbage and puddings. Then the next day we had potatoes and herring, the best kind of food.

We had molasses buns and molasses bread. My mother made up plain bread one day and the next day she made up a batch of molasses bread, because there were six children and father and mother. She had molasses bread with raisins and molasses buns with pork in them, all the time.

The molasses used to last us seven or eight months before it would be all gone. But it would go. Because my grandmother and my father used to sweeten their tea with molasses.

There was no one hungry, only the sick. The man who was sick, he could not work, so the government should have fed him properly. But the government was not giving him enough. Well, that man, he saw hard times. And they did see hard times, the sick.

The lazy also saw hard times. But a man that was a little bit eager, who could go fishing and come in from fishing and go in the garden and dig his ground was okay.

Every year we had a pig. Every fall, when the cold weather came, we would kill our pig and we'd hang him up out in the store.

We kept cows for fifty-four years. We had thousands of milk, thousands of cream.

The women did a lot of work. They were looking after the family in the home. They helped make the fish and worked in the vegetable garden. They helped to make the hay, and tended the cattle. They kept the family going. The women in Newfoundland, they were the mainstay.

brewis	drawn butter	pantry	sweeten
cabbage	eager	potato	thousands
carrot	mainstay	starve	tierce
chest	molasses	strength	turnip



Maura Falton

C. Milley Johnson

C. Milley Johnson is an active senior in the Little Catalina-Port Union area. "Maura Falton" was a valentine greeting common in areas of Newfoundland settled by people from England. It is from the expression Good Morrow Valentine. It was shortened to Morrow Valentine, and with an outport dialect became "Maura Falton."

I RACED ACROSS THE GARDEN as fast as the devil could scorch a feather. It was February 14th, and I wanted to "Maura Falton" Uncle George before anyone else was up. Whoever Maura Faltoned him first would get fifty cents, and that was a lot of money fifty years ago.

Aunt Sue was up cleaning the old Waterloo before she lit the fire and the stove would get too hot. It was freezing indoors as well as out, but I didn't mind that. I sat on the chair nearest the hall door.

Aunt Sue had an old wool sock hauled over her hand for the final touch to the stove. I couldn't see how she could make it shine more than it already did, but she gave it a brisk once-over, then neatly folded the sock, put it in the blackening box, and stored it under the stairs.

She was smiling to herself and looked like I imagined Mrs. Santa Claus looked. She had a frilly dust cap on and a big apron that covered her entire dress and a black spot on the side of her cheek.

Her eyes twinkled despite her age. She was the best "old aunt" in the community; she gave the children more "martrimonies" – small raisin tarts – than all the other women who lived there. Without saying a word, she went to the sideboard and produced one for me as if by magic, and then, laying the kindling in the stove, it wasn't long before the pleasant crackle of burning wood could be heard.

The two rungs in the front of the chair I sat on were missing and I could swing my legs in and out as fast as I wanted. I was calculating in my head what I would buy at Uncle Will's shop with my fifty cents.

Five Union Squares – they were my favourite – soft marshmallow squares, pink and white and covered with sugar. Oh yes, I can get those delicious licorice – ten of these I can afford, and ring sticks. I'd have as many rings as Selina who had one on nearly all her fingers, because her father

owned the store. I could also afford a few chocolate mice for Nanna, who never grew up when it came to eating candy, especially chocolate mice. That must be who I inherited my sweet tooth from. No common candy for me today; that was okay when you only had a cent.

The outside door rattled and my heart ceased to beat. Was Neddy coming too? Neddy was my cousin from up the road. But I didn't hear another sound, only a chair being moved upstairs. Oh, the agony! Wouldn't Uncle George ever come down?

I was imagining Uncle George kneeling by the bed saying his prayers, because everything had gone quiet upstairs. I spoke for the first time. "Aunt Sue, do you think Uncle George is getting up?"

"Yes, me maid, he'll be down in a minute. 'Tis cold up there and that's the thing he don't like since he got old."

Then there was a sound like thunder. I nearly jumped out of my skin. "He's killed, Aunt Sue!"

She didn't move. She just looked at me and laughed. "Das the rock he keeps in the bed to keep it warm. Seems he dropped it."

I "scrouged" around on the chair until the seat must be gone out of my pants, my legs swinging faster than the pendulum on the clock.

I felt like running upstairs, but one would never do that, so I just sat there praying silently that Neddy wouldn't get there before Uncle George got downstairs.

I heard the porch door open and I said to myself, "That's it. The little devil is here. Now I'll have to share my money." I had never been lucky enough to get it because Neddy was "bolder" than I was, and he'd open the hall door and call out, but I could not do that, chicken that I was.

The door opened and there was Aunt Ad. "Suse, can I have the loan of your broom to sweep up? Mine came all abroad last night."

Oh, what a relief. I couldn't stand Aunt Ad. Nanna always said she was a "maw-mouth," but I was sure glad to see her now, instead of Neddy.

Then I heard the plump, squeak, plump, squeak, coming down the stairs and I started to swing my legs faster and faster. "Faura Malton" went through my mind. Oh no, that's not right!

"Keep your head on straight, girl," I could hear Nanna say.

The door opened and I was struck dumb. Not a word would come. I heard the porch door close or open, I didn't know which, and then it came to mind. "Maura Falton, Uncle George!"

He stood by the stove, rubbing his hands together, ignoring me. I'm going to die if he doesn't do something, I thought. Maybe I didn't say it. Should I try again? Then he turned and looked at me

and the loveliest smile I have ever seen on a person's face in my life greeted me. "Well, Kari maid, you beat Neddy after all."

He put his hand in his pocket, rattled some change and came up with the shiniest half dollar you ever saw. He passed it to me and I put my arms around his neck and kissed him over and over.

"Ah, Kari my dear, you are a real kisser. God bless you." Tears came in his eyes and I knew he was remembering his own granddaughter who was living in Toronto whom he only got to see in the summer.

I don't know what "Maura Falton" means even to this day, but it was always the custom that whoever Maura Faltoned you first on St. Valentine's Day, you had to give them a gift. Uncle George was my favourite because he always gave fifty cents.

blackening	kindling	matrimonies	St. Valentine's Day
calculating	licorice	once-over	thunder
chocolate	maw-mouth	pendulum	twinkled
crackle	marshmallow square	scorch	Waterloo



I Worked For Sir William Coaker

Ena Mifflin

Growing up in Port Union, Newfoundland, Ena Mifflin met and worked with Sir William Coaker. When she was seventeen she applied to work for the Union Trading Company.

WELL, IT WAS A FUNNY THING, why I learned typing. I don't know what kind of a creature I was. But when I was five or six years old I used to go to church. When I'd come home I'd put a book up on the chair and I'd be going with my fingers [make-believe keying the organ]. I never had typing in my mind then.

There was one girl there who went up to Butler's Business College, in St. John's. That was in the basement of Victoria Hall. She went up there to school and she came back to work with the trading company.

So, I said, "I'd like to know typing." But I didn't have it in my mind that father was going to say go.

"If you want to go, you can go."

I went to St. John's in September and I boarded at 102 Merrymeeting Road. I went to Butler's Business College. This is where I learned my typing and shorthand.

An Interview With Sir William

So anyhow, when I went to work, I was seventeen. When I went in Sir William's office, he was sitting down with the *Fisherman's Advocate* before his eyes. I was shaking in my shoes. I was there so long before he ever looked up. So by and by he looked up and he says, "Good day, Miss Brown."

I was so frightened, I didn't know if I was Miss Brown or who I was. So he started talking to me and before I left he said, "When you go to work, if you got nothing to do, take your pencil and write your own name. Make like you are busy. Not like Miss So-and-so, reading books all the time."

That's the advice he gave me.

Mr. H. A. Dawe was the manager. But now, the *Advocate* was there, and Sir William used to send down the editorials and I used to type them as best I could. I don't know if I had them right or not. I have a copy of his bad writing.

If Sir William came down with a written note, even the men in the office couldn't read it. They used to have to bring it in to me to try to figure it out.

When I was working there, I typed it all. I made out all the bills for the advertisements. I typed out all the electric bills.

A Wedding Present

My husband worked in the Trading Company's office. When we were married, Sir William had a place on Bonavista Road, called Paradise. I sent an invitation and I got a letter back. He could not come, but he sent a gift.

Sir William wrote, "I am pleased to find you dropped the idea of having Congress Hall for your wedding. I hand over my gift of twenty dollars and ask you to invest it in a memento of your old boss. May God's blessing go with you and Gus through your whole life. Sincerely yours, W. F. Coaker."

Now, there's not too many in Newfoundland who got a gift like that from him! He gave us the twenty dollars because we didn't have a big wedding in Congress Hall. He believed in saving.

We sent to Eatons and we had a big box of stuff come for Sir William's twenty dollars. We bought a clock, an iron frying pan, a flat iron and some other things.



Midwife Ida (Mayo) Pittman

Addie Pittman

Addie Pittman of Marystown respected her mother-in-law quite a lot. So did many other people, especially women in the area. Mrs. Ida Pittman, midwife, delivered 1,400 babies.

MY MOTHER-IN-LAW WAS IDA PITTMAN. She was a Mayo, born in Creston North. She moved to Marystown and married Richard Pittman.

Richard was married before, and his wife died in childbirth. They had one son, Patrick. When he grew up he went fishing and he was drowned and buried on Sable Island.

Richard and Ida Pittman had nine children. She's my mother-in-law, really, but we always called her grandmother, like all the children did.

There was a midwife called Mrs. Curdeau, and Mrs. Pittman used to go as a young woman to help her. From that she got interested in it.

She went on her own after her oldest son got married. The night that his son was born, Mrs. Curdeau was sick and couldn't come. Mrs. Pittman went on her own and delivered her first grandson, Pad, Patrick Pittman. He's in his sixties now.

Then she worked with Dr. Harris. Dr. Harris came here in 1924. She delivered approximately fourteen hundred babies. Very, very few complications. She went and stayed eight to ten days and looked after the household. If there were younger children, she looked after them.

Her two older children were girls, so they could help look after the family. Her husband was good in the house too, and he helped her a lot, because he didn't mind if she was gone a week or two.

Area Covered

Mrs. Pittman would cover Marystown, Creston North and South, Little Bay, Beau Bois, Spanish Room, and sometimes Jean de Baie. But now there was a midwife in Jean de Baie. 'Twas only in an emergency that she'd go to Spanish Room or Jean de Baie.

She was a big woman, about 250 to 270 pounds. One woman told me she was so lightfooted, she was the only woman she ever knew who could go up a stair and not let it squeak. And she went on horse and slide, and dory. She was very nimble although she was very big.

In the thirties the times were so poor. Years ago they used to have beds with steel laths on them. She said sometimes all they had was an old fisherman's coat under them. She'd have to come home and get towels and bed clothes to make diapers for the baby. It was all flannelette diapers then. She'd cook for the family while she was there. Five dollars was the fee, when she got it. She didn't always get it. The last few years she got six dollars. Sometimes they'd offer a quarter of mutton or something.

She stayed with them and if they needed a doctor she'd send for the doctor. He always came, because he knew that when he was sent for by Mrs. Pittman, he was needed. They got along very well together.

She not only delivered babies. When people were sick, she went and stayed up with them and visited, made them soup. When they died she "laid them out" as they used to say years ago. She'd dress them, and wash them. She was a wonderful woman.

Birthmarks

I don't know if there was as much superstition about childbirth as there was about birthmarks. For instance, they didn't want the women to sit with their legs crossed because it would make the birth more difficult.

She told us one instance. There was a young man who threw a clam at a pregnant woman. When the baby was born, right on her leg was the print of the clam shell.

Another time a man was lighting the lamp, and the match fell on the woman's cheek. When the child was born there was a birthmark on his cheek that they said was like the brimstone on a match.

You wouldn't want to frighten a pregnant mother because it would bring on premature labour. And of course they weren't allowed to drink or smoke. That was out of the question then, in those days.

Cravings

When my daughter was born she was always putting out her tongue. My mother said to me one day, "Addie, you must have wanted something before she was born."

I said, "I don't think so." I couldn't think of anything. I mean, times were a little better in 1948. I had everything I wanted.

So, we were talking one day and I said, "I love turbot. I wish I had a bit of turbot. I wanted a bit, about seven months ago."

Then Mom said, "Yes, that is exactly what you must have wanted." The next time we got a turbot, she rubbed it along the child's mouth. She never licked out her tongue after.

You smile and laugh at it, now.

Grandmother was born a Protestant, but she became a Catholic. She had the best of two worlds. I tell you, she knew the Bible better than the ministers or the priests knew it. You couldn't stump her on a question from the Bible. She was very, very attentive to her church.

Well, I guess when she went to her Protestant friends she said prayers that they were used to. When she went to the Catholics she knew their prayers, too.

In those days it was a terrible thing to die without having the priest give the last rites. Religion was far different than it is today, I suppose. Now, Doctor Harris wasn't a Catholic, but none of his Catholic patients died without the priest. He made sure that they got the rites of the church before they died.

A Comfort

Mrs. Pittman went in all kinds of weather. Lots of times, the storm would be so bad, they had to put something over her face to keep her from smothering on the sleigh. She travelled by dory and horse and slide and of course, walked in the summertime, sometimes three miles.

She has gone out when it was pretty bad. I've heard men say that she went when they didn't really think they were going to make it. They were pretty nervous, but she always seemed cool, calm and collected.

I have heard scores of women, and even their husbands say, "When Mrs. Pittman came through the door, it was just like some kind of a blanket of peace came over them, and they didn't worry any more."

Where she was so big, she could lift and handle the patients so well. Lots of times she had to counsel the husbands too, because they didn't realize what their wives had to go through.

Lots of times, husbands were very upset. Of course they were never in the room when the baby was born, a sacrilegious thing then. She'd have to hush them out, "You go on out and cut up your wood now. Don't worry about anything."

Sex Education

She said that when she'd bring the black bag the older children knew there was going to be a baby in that black bag. She had to take the black bag in the room, because they'd be curious enough to look in it.

If it was in the spring or summer, she'd say, "I went up on the meadow and I turned over this big rock and I got this baby boy or baby sister for you." Of course, they spent their time turning over rocks to see if there was another baby under them!

Bill, my husband, was ten years old when his nephew Pad was born. He didn't know any more than the baby was in the black bag that she used to carry. When John's wife came downstairs some days later, Bill looked at her and said, "My heavens, mother, Lizzie must have been some sick. She's after losing some weight."

He was ten years old then, and never made the connection. Of course there was nothing explained to them. They were just left. "An airplane dropped them."

The midwife would put a cake of soap on the woman's belly button, and bind her up. She put a band around to keep the stomach in. And you stayed in bed ten days and rested. It didn't matter how well you were, or how well you felt, you stayed in bed.

A lot of the people never had any prenatal information like they have today. I mean, I had a cousin, she used to wash fish. She'd wash away at the fish, and when she'd take the first pains of childbirth, she'd wash her hands, go up and go in bed and have her baby. Just like that. Of course, everyone wasn't like that.

We had sickly people. I think there were more miscarriages then, in a way, because people didn't rest the same. I suppose they didn't have the nourishment as they have today, and vitamins.

She lost a patient one time; she bled to death. She was very upset about it, but then again, the woman was advised not to have any more children. In those times there was no birth control or anything and she had the baby too quick. Mrs. Pittman was very upset over that because she really thought that she should have adhered to her advice. It was out of her control. The doctor was there. It was out of both of their control.

The baby lived but the mother died.

The Mother Or The Child

It was a Catholic belief or custom that the child had to come into the world for baptism, even if it meant losing the mother. However cruel this may seem, it was the rule. I sometimes think it was a very hard decision and one that was given a lot of thought. Imagine a mother with five children dying, and leaving them orphans. Families with many children suffered when this rule was adhered to.

I did hear a midwife say she had a case. Doctor Harris was there as well, and he came downstairs. He said to the woman's father, "I've done all I can, and I can't save the two of them."

The father said, "Save the child and bring it to the world for baptism."

Dr. Harris said, "I'll do my best." Fortunately he saved the two of them.

Religion was really a big part of the things that were going on. When he had difficult cases, Doctor Harris used to say to the husband and the family, "If you know any prayers, go on your knees and pray for that little woman."

Grandmother Pittman often baptized children. The child might be sickly when it would be born and she'd baptize it with ordinary water.

On Call For Other Problems

If anyone got infections, they'd do home remedies for that. If they had a cut, they'd put that together with turpentine.

Then they'd make poultices, like linseed poultices. Sometimes you'd have pneumonia, pleurisy stitches, and they'd make poultices out of linseed meal to put on your chest.

The women sometimes, their breasts would rise (swell) – get infected from the milk, and they'd do the same. Sometimes a doctor would have to come and lance it, but more often they'd ring out a hot cloth between another cloth and put it around the breasts.

One time Mrs. Pittman wasn't feeling well, and just down the road here, a woman was expecting a baby. She was expecting twins, and she had other family. Mrs. Pittman had delivered all her children, and of course she didn't think anyone else could deliver them, only Mrs. Pittman.

Her husband went up to get Mrs. Pittman. She didn't think that she could come. Lo and behold, her husband went home and told his wife.

"That's okay," she said "I'll go to her!" So she went up to Mrs. Pittman's and stayed up there ten days at Mrs. Pittman's house and had the twins up there, twin boys.

Of course her husband was up to the house almost the ten days too. He used to come every day to his dinner.

Cleanliness

Grandmother could be stern when it came to cleanliness. She was very clean. They were more particular than they are today. The patient was washed, always, and of course they always washed their hands with Jeye's fluid any time they could. You always smelled the Jeye's fluid when you went in the house. I can remember that.

When Mrs. Pittman went to a patient, things weren't always sanitary. Often times she would come home and remove her outside clothing in the porch. She would be afraid she had picked up something to endanger her family. Of course these things were rare most of the time. They might be desperately poor, but the things for mother and baby were clean.

However clean or unclean, rich or poor, Mrs. Pittman felt it her duty to go. Her own feelings were put aside as she went to help others. A very stern, kind, and very charitable woman. At

times she was at home eating a meal, or mending or washing clothing, when a knock on the door told her someone needed her. She quickly left, leaving her own family behind. The sick and needy were her priorities.

Hard Times

In the thirties the neighbours were very poor. Every time she'd cook her meal, like meat and potatoes, she'd save the pot liquor for the next door neighbours, because they didn't have anything. Times were pretty poor in the thirties. On six cents a day!

When she gave them the pot liquor, she also gave them a pan of homemade bread to put in the liquor to soak it up. Youngsters used to come there, with no inside clothes, just a pair of pants on, and bare feet. We don't know how many pairs of socks she knit and gave to the youngsters. She was very charitable.

I mean, we all went through poor times, but I never saw any hungry times. We always had lots of vegetables and meat. We always had a cow to kill, and we had hens, and eggs, fresh butter and milk. But there were people who never had any of that.

The youngsters used to like her because she was great with them. She used to tell them stories, tell them about how they were born. Perhaps it would all be made up, but they enjoyed it. She would tell the little ghost stories to the youngsters. They were always in awe of her because she was such a big woman.

There were some other midwives around, but I would say she was the most popular one in her day.

God Bless Mrs. Ida.

approximately	diapers	mutton	premature labour
birthmark	emergency	nimble	Protestant
blanket	flannelette	nourishment	question
breast	infection	pleurisy	sacrilegious
brimstone	Jeye's Fluid	pneumonia	smother
catholic	lance	poultice	squeak
childbirth	linseed	pregnant	superstition
complication	match	prenatal	vitamin
Creston North	miscarriage	priority	



Twillingate Fisherman

Hubert Waterman

At the time of this story, 1998, Hubert Waterman's family-owned boat was out to the ice, hunting seals. The Nancy Joanne had a crew of ten people. Four were his sons and four were grandsons. A man of the sea, his ear was tuned to the ship-to-shore radio as he told of his life. He started fishing when he was a boy.

I WAS PRETTY YOUNG, and I enjoyed it. I was only about twelve years old when I went with my grandfather and father. We always had motorboats, that was one good thing. Some of the crowd around here never had motors. They had to row.

That first summer, grandfather, father and I fished on the grounds out here.

We fished on the Gull Island Ground, and on good days we would go out on Old Harry, down off Long Point. Then there's another spot below that, Phillip's Spot. Just outside that was Daley's Spot. Below that was Easter Ground and then Young Harry, and then it was Gull Island.

In the fall of the year, I fished the ground out there, too. There's Smoker, Hooper's Ledge, Bread Box and Fudge's Ground. I know the marks of all the grounds and I know just where to shoot a trawl. We'd go trawling late in the fall, and we'd take up a lot of cod years ago.

That's right out here, sir. I can go out there and take you right on the mark, to put your line right down.

My grandfather and father had schooners. They used to travel to Labrador years ago. They gave up the Labrador and started fishing off here, handlining and with traps.

I used to cut my tails then, and made a few dollars. Well, if I made twenty dollars, that was a lot of money years ago.

My great grandfather, William Waterman died about 84 years ago, when I was a baby. He came out from England and settled down here. He was a tough old gad.

I heard a lot about him. He always ran schooners. In the fall he would go in the bay, woodcutting, for the winter supply of wood. An old guy down here told me they would leave

Monday morning, and Saturday night the schooner had to be out of the bay again, with a load. He didn't allow any slack.

My grandfather was born here, Skipper John Waterman. He ran into island ice (an iceberg) going to Labrador, and sank his schooner. The iceberg was in the fog, and he ran right into her, and beat the schooner up. You know, you never hear talk of them losing any men years ago.

My father, Joseph Waterman was born right here and built his first motorboat down here. He had a three Hubbard engine in her. That's after they gave up the Labrador. I fished in that old boat, and one bonfire night, she drove off her collar. The shackle gave out and she drove in and she beat up.

That fall we went in the bay cutting timber. My brother and I used a pit saw to cut all the timber for father, and he built a boat down in the stage there. We fished in her one year, but the next year father died of pneumonia.

From that time on, I was on my own. That was when the Depression started, that first year. I was about eighteen or nineteen. I went to the Labrador then, for three years. In Ashbourne's schooner.

I gave that up. I didn't like being a shareman, so I went on my own here in Twillingate.

Ashbourne	handlining	Labrador	schooners
Daley's Spot	Hooper's Ledge	mototboats	shareman
Depression	Hubbard engine	Phillip's Spot	Smoker
Easter Ground	iceberg	pneumonia	woodcutting
England			



Farewell Eyes!

Art Wicks

Art Wicks is one of the best known fishermen in Newfoundland. He is often heard on radio open line shows talking about the fishery. Here is one of his memories of living in Port Nelson, Bonavista Bay.

THIS IS A REALLY TRUE STORY. Now, up in the other bottom, in the other little cove, the first man to inhabit that was a man by the name of Uncle George White.

Uncle George White came over from Greenspond and at that time, he used to sell wine in jars. It was really common in those days.

Then the law said that you had to go two miles inland before you could sell any wine. So, Uncle George White had to go two miles inland, to a place called John White's Mesh. That's where he built this wine factory. People who came over from Greenspond or anywhere, they had to walk in there, two miles in the country.

Anyway, Uncle George was a real wine drinker himself. At that time, I think our doctor was Doctor Jamieson, one of the early doctors. Uncle George went over and the doctor found something wrong with him.

His eyes weren't all that good and the doctor told him, "You're drinking too much wine. If you drink any more wine you'll go blind."

Uncle George didn't give a damn. If he didn't say goodbye to his drinking, he would lose his eyesight. What was more important?

He turned to the doctor and said, "Farewell eyes!"

Bonavista Bay
common

Doctor Jamieson
farewell

Greenspond
inhabit

Port Nelson
wine factory



Tidal Wave: Adrift In A House

Pearl (Brushett) Hatfield

Pearl Brushett lived at Kelly's Cove, Burin Island, when the tidal wave of 1929 struck. She was five years old when a wave took her house out to sea. Her mother, Carrie Brushett, and five children were in the house. It was a ride they would never forget.

THE FIRST WAVE took our house from Kelly's Cove beach over to Bartlett's Island. It grounded there.

My sister Lillian and I were in the same bed. She had an earache. Mother warmed up a plate and put it under her ear in order to get relief. Lillian still has the old plate.

My older sister Lottie said to Mom, "Are you going to wake up Lil and Pearl?" Mom said yes and she came and woke us up.

The first thing I remember after they woke us up was looking out the window. All the flakes and all the stages were down in the harbour. The harbour was all debris. I remember that.

Then the second wave came and took us back to the beach. Not exactly where it came from, but near. That's when Mr. Ben Hollett and his wife Beatrice came down and got us out through the parlour window.

The window pane was 12 by 24 inches. That's what we all went out through, that pane of glass. Mom cut her wrist when she broke out the glass. My sister Lottie jumped out and she got a big scar on her right forearm.

I don't remember being scared. Mom was there, so naturally we figured Mom was going to look after us.

Lottie and Mom went to Mrs. Hollett's house and got their cuts bandaged. Years later Mom still had pieces of glass coming out of her wrist.

Then we took off and went higher on the hill, which they called the Humpess Head, but don't ask me how it was spelled.

I remember the next day. I know it snowed, because I remember Fred. He didn't have any clothes to wear. I can see him so plain, in this child's dress. We were down helping pick up some of the debris and found some of the girls dresses. I guess they were from the neighbours' children.

Our house didn't break up. It was towed in and moored off in Ship Cove by the old schooner Daisy.

The Cat Went Wild

Even the old cat stayed in the house. It got really wild. When they tried to get it out of the house, it jumped out the window and over someone's head and swam ashore. We never saw it after. It probably just went wild.

Dad was down in the woods, cutting wood for the winter. I think it was a couple of days before he heard. I remember him telling me their boats all went dry, down there in the bay where they were. I guess they were laying down or something and they heard all the chains rattling because the tide was all out.

Dad towed the house back to Kelly's Cove. We used to use it for a fish store, where we stored the salt fish.

I had nightmares for a long time after. In my dream I was always going up a hill and the water was only a few feet behind me. For years after. I was traumatized I guess.

After the tidal wave, mother always had a roaring sound in her head, like the sea. She never ever got rid of that. She lived until she was seventy-five. She always heard that noise. I imagine she was in shock and she was never treated for it.

You know, floating around with five children in the house, I guess you would be in shock too!

Bartlett's Island
debris

earache
nightmare

plate
schooner

traumatize



Tidal Wave: On Great Burin Island

Louise (Emberley) Hollett

Louise Hollett is a senior citizen living in Burin Bay. She was twenty-three years old when the tidal wave hit her town of Great Burin on Great Burin Island. Louise was in the kitchen enjoying the smells from the oven when she heard a noise.

"I WAS IN THE HOUSE," Mrs. Hollett recalls. "It was about five o'clock. We were getting supper. We had a lady come over to visit us that day and Mom was baking apple dumplings. That's what she had in the oven, apple dumplings."

"I don't know what else we were going to have, but I know we were going to have these, maybe for dessert or something. I heard this noise and I thought it was the stove. We ran out by the door and you could feel the earth shaking under your feet."

To The Telegraph Office

After supper, Louise made her way to the telegraph office. Up and away from the beach there was a road called the "high road", but she took the route down by the water. Parts of the lower walkway were simply planks laid across fish flakes, joined by bridges. The harbour was to her left as she walked.

"I went over to hear the news and when I was going over, the harbour went right dry. Darby's boat was there and she was high and dry at the wharf."

In the post office they used to have telegraphy. Mrs. Helen Darby was the telegraph operator and she had a big news book. The news would come and she would write it all out and then put it out in the lobby. Sometimes she would read it for the crowd of men standing around.

"After the earthquake, they came over from Shalloway," recalls Mrs. Hollett. "That's another island they had to come over footbridges to get there. They came over to hear the news and see what was happening."

The Tidal Wave

"I wasn't over there very long, only a few minutes, when I heard the big rush and the water all rushed in."

Luckily, the water did not come up to where Louise was standing. "The telegraph office was up higher. There were the wharves and then you came up a little bit to what they called the beach. They had beaches down there where they used to make fish. Then there was an upgrade to the telegraph office.

"Everybody went up on higher ground. And we were scared stiff. The funny thing was, we didn't know what a tidal wave was. We were quite ignorant of what was happening. We thought the place was sinking or something.

"There was a lighthouse keeper up there, from somewhere in England. Sidney Hussey was his name. He told us what was happening. 'You know, when there's an earthquake, there is usually a tidal wave if it is out in the ocean.'"

Seeing the damage on the beach, the visitors from Shalloway became nervous. They had good reason to be uneasy. "The Shalloway people lived right down on beaches," says Mrs. Hollett.

"They thought their houses would be gone. They got the ferry boat that was there and tried to go over to see how their families were and see what was gone. Do you know, they couldn't steer the thing at all, with so much tide. They finally got there and there was hardly a thing damaged."

Worried About Mother

At the telegraph office, Louise was worried. "I was out by the door, looking and listening. Everybody was looking. I didn't know what to do. My mother was home and we lived down near the water. I went home by way of the high road and called out to her. She and this other woman came up over the hill."

On the slope, the whole community gathered to watch. "Mr. E. M. Hollett had a store where he used to keep lumber and other things. You could hear all the lumber tumbling out of his store, as the high tide took all his wharves out to sea. Some of the lumber lodged on the bank and in the landwash. All night long we could hear the men trying to salvage it and throw it up on high land."

Great Burin did not sustain as much damage as other villages on Great Burin Island. "It came in there and went down through the Reach and down in Stepside, but in Kellys Cove it got pinned there. It brought up there, so they had more damage than the rest. Then it went on down to Port au Bras. It sort of passed along by us."

A Night Away From Home

"Believe it or not, the magistrate lived in Great Burin. He was Malcolm Hollett. He served in the First World War and after the war he was honoured as a Rhodes Scholar and went to England and received his degrees. When he came back he became a magistrate and later served in the Newfoundland government.

"He was instrumental in helping organize provisions and help for those affected by the tidal wave. He was my mother's first cousin and it was to his house we went and stayed when the tidal wave was at its worst."

Father Arrives

Two or three days after the tidal wave, Louise's father sailed into Great Burin.

"My father was Joseph Emberley. He and another man went down to Swift Current cutting wood, because hardly anybody lived there then. The other man had one of these little jack boats. They ran up in the bottom, which they call Piper's Hole.

"That evening, they noticed that the tide was pretty high, and swirling. The boat used to spin around, but he didn't know what was causing it. He didn't know anything about what was happening. But when they were coming home they met the wreckage of things and found out it was the tidal wave."

apple dumplings	jack boots	planks	Sidney Hussey
community	Joseph Emberly	Port aux Bras	Stepaside
earthquake	lighthouse keeper	provisions	Swift Current
footbridges	magistrate	Rhodes Scholar	telegraph operator
ignorant	Piper's Hole	Shalloway	telegraphy



The Tidal Wave: At Lord's Cove

Mary (Walsh) McKenna

Mary McKenna now lives in Halifax where I visited her. This is the first part of her story about the amazing things she saw happen during the tidal wave in 1929.

I WENT OVER TO ST. PIERRE when I was thirteen and I worked at a hotel. A woman had three children for me to take care of. I used to go back to Lord's Cove in May because my father needed my help. His name was Jim Walsh. I would work with him during the summer and I was there late in the fall when the tidal wave came in.

The Earthquake

I was coming home from the store when I felt the earthquake. I was holding a package and my father's wallet. I was just shaking, because there was nothing to hold on to.

Your whole body shakes, especially your knees, when you're standing still. You don't know if you should move or not. It was November. The ground could have had a little frost in it, but I doubt it. And I was standing there, shaking, like everyone else.

When I got home, my father said to me, "What in the heck is going on? Everything was shaking in here."

I went to look in the pantry and there were a couple of cups down on the floor. Off every kitchen in Newfoundland, in the old houses, there's a little cupboard there with dishes in it.

The First Wave

I was in the front door when I saw the harbour. I still had my coat on. I called to father.

I said, "Pop, there's no water in the cove. It's all rocks."

He said, "What?"

And I repeated it. I said, "Come and see." That's when he got up and looked out. He stayed staring at the dry harbour. Then we saw the wave coming.

People were outdoors, hollering to everybody else. That was the way you got in touch, one with the other. So they all came out and saw it. Then when we saw the water coming, everybody started to run, because it wasn't like it was coming in through the cove. It was like it was coming from the sky. That's how high the wave was. But it got smaller as it came in.

Fighting Water With Fire

In Newfoundland years ago, especially the Roman Catholics, they always died with a candle in their hands, did you know that? See, my mother was sick for a long time, and when she died somebody had to hold the candle. That was the church's rule. It was one of those old-fashioned candles. So anyway, it wasn't all burned away. There was quite a bit of the candle left at the time she died, so my father kept it.

I was still in the door when we saw the wave coming. He was in the hall. He left me and ran upstairs and grabbed the candle. He jumped in his boots and went out to the bank where the capstan was and he stuck it down in a piece of chain.

He lit the candle and the candle was still going until after the third wave. He only took it out of there when he thought the waves had stopped.

Everybody else lost their stages, dories, skiffs and everything. Ours was still there. So of course, that was quite a thing, people coming and looking at that. We never lost anything.

The water never came up, never came anywhere near there. Father believed it was because of the candle.

candle	dories	old-fashioned	skiffs
cupboard	hotel	Roman Catholic	wallet



Tidal Wave: My Experience

Eloise Morris

Eloise Morris worked as a teacher and headmistress, and as a nurse and nursing administrator. After a life of work in the United States and on mainland Canada, she retired to Burin, Newfoundland.

I WAS IN ST. JOHN'S. That was in twenty-nine. I was born in thirteen, so I was sixteen. I was staying at the College residence then on Long's Hill, going to Prince of Wales. I went there part time. I was taking three years music in one for my licentiate, and taking two or three subjects at Memorial at the same time.

I remember around five o'clock in the afternoon, I was supposed to be going down to the Crosbie Hotel with Eloise Hollett who was in there with her father, Captain Tom. And I was sitting watching for them to come to the front gate.

While I was there the lights over on the pole across the street started swinging back and forth and the old pole was swinging with them. But that's all. We knew nothing about what had gone on.

It must have been three or four days before we got any news, really. My father was the United Church clergyman in Collins Cove, near Burin. I knew that he was up on high land. I mean, it wasn't going to hit that old parsonage.

We were all sent home to the south coast, about the fifteenth of December. You could go by the old *Portia* from St. John's. *Portia* used to come right around, come in to the government wharf down here (Burin).

If you were going across the harbour to Collins Cove you got in the mail boat with them and they rowed you across there.

It was after dark when we got in. I got in the mail boat and went across to Collins Cove. There was no wharf, just the blank seaboard there. Those mail boats had keels on them, so you could not get them in anywhere close.

The mail man took a suitcase belonging to me, plus the mail bag. The other man took me. They went as far as they could go and then I had to crawl up over this twenty-foot bank of snow.

I thought, my gosh, the house is way up there, up over the hill, that's where I was heading. There was a light on in the kitchen. I thought, my God, if I can make that, I'll be all set.

It took a lot out of Dad.

It seemed to be the beginning of the end, for Dad. The same night I arrived, I got sent off to fetch the doctor because my father was sick. That, I think, was the beginning of the end, really.

He died in 1938 at sixty-four years of age, a fairly young man. He developed serious heart trouble, and a lot of it came after the tidal wave.

I know there was one case, somebody over in one of the coves, I don't know the name or anything now, but he had to be committed afterwards. At that time they required an okay from three people. I think it had to be okayed by a clergyman, a doctor and a police officer, something or other like that. I don't know what the details of it were.

On the shoreline, everything was cleaned out. There used to be a big store, Bartlett's General Store, and that was swept up and turned right around. The front door was right up by Kelly's house, underneath the hill, on the road up there.

Around the coastline, there wasn't a fish store left.

Bartlett	Crosbie Hotel	kitchen	parsonage
clergyman	fetch	licentiate	residence
coastline	government	merchant	underneath



Tidal Wave: Kelly's Cove

Marion (Kelly) Moulton

Marion Kelly was thirteen years old when the tidal wave hit. It happened on a Monday, a beautiful day for washing clothes. She was living at Kelly's Cove, near Burin.

I WAS AT A WOMAN'S HOUSE to write a letter for her. She was an old woman. She was writing her daughter, in Boston, I believe. She couldn't write, so I was writing it for her. After the shock, I wanted to go home. We didn't know what to think really. I didn't stay. If I didn't go when I did, I would have been caught in the wave, going down around the shore on the way home.

So, I don't know, I think all our lives are planned. Don't you?

The Tidal Wave

Some time after the shock, I was at the kitchen table working by the light of a kerosene lamp. I was still in my school clothes, a navy skirt and white blouse.

That was later, a couple of hours after the shock.

I was doing my homework. I was doing English. You know the sentence I was doing? "If you do not leave the house, I will send for the policeman with that fine."

Of course, we didn't expect a tidal wave. We didn't know anything about it, really. It came round seven o'clock.

They say that the harbour dried out. Whether it did or not I really don't know, but that's what people said. Then it came back in.

Well, you could hear the sea coming in. It was roaring.

Of course we all ran out in the yard to see what was going on. The sea was just like a mountain coming, but slowly. That's what it seemed like to me. Right straight. There were three waves.

My little brother and sister were in the doorway. I ran and got him and ran behind the house and jumped the fence. I really don't know how high. When I got over the fence the water was coming underneath it.

I don't know how I did it. Because Elroy was biggish. He didn't remember anything though, he never did. He was only three and a half.

When I got over the fence I looked back and the house was just going with the light in the window

Mother and Dorothy are Lost

Mom came out in the yard. I don't know if she went back in the house or not, I never knew. Mother and my little sister didn't make it. They never did find my mother Frances, or my sister Dorothy.

It took everything when it came.

Later, the schooner Daisy was in here at the government wharf. The Daisy went out looking. She towed in a house, but it was not ours.

In Kelly's Cove three or four houses washed out. Mrs. Carrie Brushett and her five children were in one. The first wave came and took the house and took it out to sea and they were all in it. The second wave came and brought it back and put it on the beach. Then they all got out before the third wave came and took the house right out to sea. That's the house the Daisy towed in.

My other brother Curt was at my aunt's house at the time. I raised them up, the two boys, Elroy and Curt.

Father was down in the woods. We had a big schooner, and he was down getting wood for the winter. He didn't know a thing about it until he got home, a week later.

Boston	Dorothy	navy skirt	white blouse
Carrie Brushett	Elroy	remember	
Curt	government wharf	roaring	
doorway	kerosene	straight	



Big Game Outfitter

Howard Elliott

Howard Elliott grew up in big game country. He was born at Millertown, on the shore of Red Indian Lake. Before starting hunting camps he was an equipment operator for the Anglo-Newfoundland Co. (A.N.D. Co.)

IN 1958, WE STARTED A HUNTING CAMP. Claude my brother, and myself. I did the cooking and everything and Claude did some guiding. He had just one year at it, but I stayed with it. I was the first one with a guide licence in Millertown.

The A.N.D. Company had hunters coming to them, but they had no place to keep them. I was on the river at the time, and Ed Ralph, our woods boss, wanted us to take a camp.

He said, "Howard, whatever you want, from a fork and a knife to a D-4 tractor, it's right there for you. It's only a matter of going and picking it up. Use away until you get it paid." That's where we started off.

I bought it off the company for a dollar and seven cents. Seven cents was tax.

My main camp was at Lake Ambrose. It was a former A.N.D. company depot. The carpenters and boatbuilders and other workers stayed in that building.

That year I started off, I had seventy-eight visitors. They all stayed at the camp. I had thousands of room.

Every weekend we'd have hunters. Then we started to spread out, until I had seventeen guides. I had three cooks and my wife. I had seven speedboats, a tractor, a J-5. I had four pickups, outboard motors and everything. The boats were for the rivers and the different lakes.

Our Long Lake camp was big, 52 feet long. That was a nice lake, Long Lake was. A rough lake, just the same. It was about half a mile wide, and when you got out in the middle, the water was rough. One time I had to go right to the bottom of the lake and turn around and come back on the other side. We couldn't get across it at all.

My three main camps were at Lake Ambrose and Long Lake, and one down in Stratton's Valley. I could keep fifteen at Stratton's Valley and twenty-one at Lake Ambrose. I had another place for the guides to stay in, down alongside Red Indian Lake, alongside the Exploits Dam.

Moose Country

Moose? Don't talk, for the love of God. From Lake Ambrose down to Exploits Dam, that was fifteen miles. I've counted as high as sixty, seventy moose. You'd never believe what you'd see.

We had thirty-eight hunters there one week. They came on a Sunday, and by Wednesday evening we had everybody packed up, ready to go home the next day. Not a soul left without a moose or caribou.

The best area we had up there was Stratton's Valley. We used to have sixteen hunters there, and every week we'd have our moose. We came out one morning to bring the moose out, on a Thursday or Friday. From the camp to the road, we counted nine moose in five miles. That was after we had taken a lot of moose along that same road.

There was no end to it. Moose were all over the place. The woods were just cut out by loggers, and they were right into the browse.

boatbuilders carpenters	Exploits Dam Lake Ambrose	licence Stratton's Valley	tractor
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The Lost And Found False Teeth

Dorothy Goodyear

Dorothy Goodyear of Grand Falls worked all her life in a caring profession. She worked as a nurse and nursing administrator. She is well known in her community for writing many stories about her life.

IN THE FALL OF 1939, I was home from St. John's for Christmas, with my mother and brother, in our little village in Notre Dame Bay. It hadn't improved much since I left because there was not much work, or money on the go.

It was what was referred to as the Dirty Thirties. But we young people didn't seem to mind. Everyone in our little place seemed to have plenty for the winter and was happy enough. Now we all skylarked with our old school chums, just like we did when we were youngsters. For fun, I'll call one of them "G."

He was a young man about my own age. He was in our house every day and night, singing and playing.

This evening, he ran in on his way home, out of the woods, to see if my brother and I were going to the concert that night in the Orange Lodge. It was getting dark. John, my brother, was feeding the animals and mother was gone to the harbour to visit her brothers. When G. was on the platform, leaving, I pushed him for fun and he grabbed me around the neck.

I said, "Oh my. My false teeth is knocked out."

We put down our hands on the step as we thought to pick them up, but they were not there. Now, we were afraid to walk, for fear of treading on them. Well, we looked every inch over, and over again, but still no teeth.

Now I was in tears. My small wages in St. John's on which I had skimped to buy them were wasted, to say nothing of how bad I looked with four front teeth gone. I shone the old flashlight until the battery died. Then I got the lamp from the kitchen. G. lit the old faithful lantern, got a hammer, and took up the board to see if they slipped down through. Still no sign. I was heartbroken – so was G. We hoped that it wouldn't snow that night, so I might find them in the morning.

I called off the concert. I couldn't go with a mouth like that. I wouldn't have the heart. I got John his supper, fish cakes I had fried earlier. He said I had no right to be carrying on.

Poor G. left to run home, around the shore, a couple of houses away. He was heartbroken and blamed himself. John was sitting down to his supper and I was trying to mumble down a bit too.

The old porch door came open, and then the kitchen door with a bang, and in ran G., beaming, his fist clenched up, and shouting, "I got 'em, Dolly, I got 'em."

When he opened his hand, still full of myrrh, there were the teeth – hooks gleaming. I said, "Where? Where, G.?"

He said when he was taking off his bib overalls to wash and have supper, they were hooked in his sweater and were well anchored.

Many a gift has been put in my hands that I have been thankful for – even my diplomas – but never one that meant so much as the teeth at that time of no money.

We are both senior citizens now, and he has lived his life in St. John's with a lovely wife and family. They visit us in Grand Falls, where I married, and we still sing and play. When we go to their home in Manuels, we love to talk over our young days and that story is always told. I have had a lot of dental work done since then, but I still have, with many other treasures, the little teeth that nearly broke our hearts and almost made me miss the concert.

I always say now to Mr. G., "God Bless the bib overalls and the fluffy homespun sweaters."

And like little Tim, "God Bless us all."



Turring In Twillingate - Overboard!

Captain Wilbur Greenham

Captain Wilbur Greenham had many jobs in his life. This is one of many stories about his life as a cod fisherman, sealer, lumberman and captain of schooners and ferries.

TWILLINGATE IS A GREAT PLACE FOR TURRS. Me and poor old father, we have gone out, when I wasn't very big. I'm not very big now, certainly. We were in the row punt. We rowed down to what we call the Lower Head, about three or four miles. It was nothing then to come in with sixty or seventy turrs.

My brother Fred, he's still living, he was out with him, the fall that they turned the boat over. Fred was back at the engine.

Fred asked me if he could have the three-quarter gun. They had my gun and he had two breech loaders, and out they went. He was only a young fella.

Down came three or four turrs, and a big lop on, too. Fred pushed the tiller right across her. Over goes the boat! And the two breech loaders, gone. As for my gun, I wasn't troubled if he lost that one or not.

So alright, she's gone bottom up. Father's pipe came out of his mouth. Fred, a young fella, was a bit more active than father.

Fred got up on the bottom of the boat, and there was poor father in the water. He was near enough that Fred had him hooked by the fingertips. It so happened that a fella by the name of Eric Young was not too far away. And Eric came, got them in his boat, turned father's boat upright, and towed her in.

That's all right. They went over and went in the house. Mother was there.

She said, "What's the trouble?"

He said, "We turned the boat over. The first time in my life. Mother my dear, come on, hurry up, give me some dry clothes and something to eat."

"Why do you want to hurry for something to eat?"

"We're going out again."

That's true. She got him some dry clothes and something to eat.

He said, "Mother, I've lost my two breech loaders. I've got to go over now and get a new one." So, he went over to see John Loveridge. He didn't know anything about father turning the boat over. John Loveridge was running the business over there, and John and father were the best kind of friends.

He said, "John, I need to get a breech loader. We had a misfortune. We turned the boat over. My first time. I lost my two breech loaders."

"Well," John said, "Skipper Andrew, if you're going to buy one breech loader, I'm going to give you the other one for nothing."

"That's up to you."

So he bought one breech loader and John Loveridge gave him the other. No more than an hour from the time he was in the house, got a lunch and dry clothes, he was out in the same spot again!

Tough, wasn't he? He was eighty-five years of age and had salmon nets out in Twillingate Bight. They had big grapelins, seventy and eighty pounds. He pulled in the whole lot, single-handed when he was eighty-five.

No matter if it was flat calm, he wouldn't go out without putting a rope around his waist and tied down somewhere in the boat. He always did that, when he went out single-handed. The way he put it, if he fell overboard and drowned, they had a better chance to get his body. And he lived to be ninety-three.

Father's name was Andrew, but everybody called him Chum. Chum Greenham.

breech loader fingertips	grapelins John Loveridge	misfortune	Twillingate Bight
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"Just There" Was A Long Way

James John

James John is an expert Gander River guide living in Glenwood, Newfoundland. With his native heritage, he has a special feeling for the land and water around him. He learned his guiding skills from his father, James John Sr.

FATHER'S STYLE WAS TO catch or kill only what you could eat, what you're going to supply for the winter. Even when we had to go and kill caribou to eat ourselves, we were only allowed one. One caribou could do us a month. After that month was over, he would send us up for another one.

He'd only give us two bullets each, me and my brother. I was eighteen or nineteen then, and right accurate, longing for the time to come. But he would hold off and send us up in the right time of the year, in July or August, to make the kill.

We would go up to Northwest Gander, up on our trapping ground. We would spend four or five days, or a week up there, hunting, because caribou weren't plentiful then. You had to wait for them a lot.

We would sit and wait until the right time, when we could hear them way off in the distance. Whenever there were four or five caribou together, we could hear the noise from their hooves.

You waited when it was calm, or when the wind was blowing your way. You waited until you knew they were coming your way. Then you went towards them to get handier and handier to the noise. By and by, sure enough, you'd see them and you'd pick out one of the caribou.

It had to be a boren doe (barren doe), dad used to call it, a caribou that never had no calf. He wouldn't kill either one that had a calf, or a stag. My dad used to tell us how they used to tell them apart. Those Indians, like dad, grew up in the woods, so they knew exactly what they were looking for.

A boren doe had the best meat. We had to be able to tell a boren doe from another doe or a stag. Well, you could tell a stag, because he probably had little bunches on his head, horns. A doe who had a calf had a long tail, eight or nine inches.

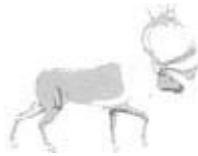
But the boren doe had a little short tail, because it never had any calf. It's so fat around the rump, it fills out the tail, so that it looks like they only got a short one. This is how you tell them apart.

My father was a big man. He was six foot two. He could carry a lot of meat on his back. I have seen him put a full caribou on his back, a caribou with just the guts cut out of it. He tied two legs together and hauled it down over his back. With his rifle under his arm, we had to go fifteen miles, and he never put that caribou down!

Once I was carrying the liver, heart, and the kidneys, in a little packsack. Every half an hour I said, "Dad, when are you going to stop? How far have we got to go?"

He said, "Just there." He wouldn't say how far, in miles. "Just there."

That "just there" was a long ways.



accurate	bullet	kidneys	stag
boren doe (barren doe)	hooves	liver	



Train Conductor

Gordon Lannon

Gordon Lannon lives in Bishop's Falls. In 1944 he joined the Newfoundland railway and retired in 1985. His father was working for the railway when Gordon was hired.

AFTER I GOT MY DISCHARGE from the army, in 1944, I got a job with the railway. I wanted to be a locomotive engineer. Well, I was going to go firing at first. You started as a fireman, shovelling coal.

We lived in Kilbride at the time. When I was a boy, the trains used to go up through Bowring Park. The locomotive would be pulling the train up the hill. I'd see them when the fireman shovelled the coal in, in the nighttime. She would be going up the grade, and you would see the black smoke coming out of the stack, into the sky.

So anyway, I went out and I applied for a job with the railway. You had to go as a student fireman at that time. I saw the chief engineer. He said, "Well, we'll give you an opportunity, a chance to prove yourself."

I went home and I told Dad. Now, he was the type of man, when he said no, he meant no. We were sitting down to supper. I forget how many were at the table, but there were quite a few of us there.

He said, "No, you're not going on any locomotive, because I don't want you to end up like a few other poor unfortunates that were killed on the railway."

Charlie Cahill had been killed out at Northern Bight shortly before that. The locomotive went off the track and turned over and they couldn't get out, and they were scalded. I said, "Very good." I wouldn't go against him for all the tea in China.

So I left the next day and I told the superintendent, "Dad doesn't want me to go firing on the locomotive."

He said, "What about a job braking?"

I said, "Fine, anything at all."

He looked over his glasses, at me across his desk. He said, "Why would you want to go to work with the railway?"

"Well sir, I'm tired of living off my father. I'd like to go on my own."

That was the fourth of December (1944). The next morning they sent me up to see Doctor O'Regan on Patrick Street. He gave me a medical, and sent me back. Mr. W. J. Chafe used to be chief inspector. He and Leo Brazil were in the dispatching office, so he sent me out to get a rule book and a switch key.

I went home. Dad wasn't there, and I told Mom, "I got a job with the railway."

The next morning, about 6:30, the phone rang and this was the dispatcher. He said, "If you want to, you can go to Argentina."

It was a mixed train. We had a baggage car, a mail car and a couple of coaches. We'd pick up passengers along the way at Whitbourne, going to Argentina.

Anyway, we went to Argentina and we came back. I made several more runs after that with the same crew. A couple of days later I was called to go to Bishop's Falls on a freight train. At that time they were moving paper from Grand Falls to St. John's, because Botwood was icebound. Anyway, we left St. John's with thirteen cars.

We came to Clarendville. When I got off there, here was Dad coming down the stand. That was about three o'clock in the afternoon. He looked, and I don't think he could believe his eyes. "What are you doing here?"

I said, "I got a job braking." He shook his head and he laughed.

He said, "You were bound to get a job with the railway, to go railroading, weren't you?"

baggage locomotive engineer	opportunity passengers	shovelling	superintendent
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Caught In The Act!

Madeline Lannon

Madeline Lannon of Grand Falls can tell many stories about her life as a registered nurse. During World War II she was nursing in Argentina. Some mornings Madeline and her roommate entertained the sailors, without knowing it.

THE LARGE LIVING ROOM windows in the nurses' residence opened out French style. It was July month, in 1942, at Argentinia, Newfoundland. Every morning when Blanche Dunphy and I came off night duty, we used to watch the sailors on the *U.S.S. Prairie* do their P.T. exercises.

The *Prairie* was moored at the wharf, just down from the residence. Blanche and I decided that we would do the exercises along with the sailors. We would open the French windows, strip down to our bra and panties, and do the exercises. Blanche and I never felt so smug, or self-satisfied.

We felt so good afterwards, until one night, when my world fell apart. I was at work, nursing a sailor off the *Prairie*. He told me what fun he and his buddies had, watching two girls at the nurses' residence do their exercises. They used to take turns with binoculars.

It's a wonder I didn't explode. We never realized we were putting on a free show for Uncle Sam's boys!

P.T. – physical training

Argentina
binoculars

exercises
Newfoundland

residence

U.S.S. Prairie



Twillingate Lighthouse Keeper

Jack May

Jack May of Twillingate carries on the old tradition of lighthouse keepers. I met him at the lighthouse and he told me a little of its history.

THE HISTORY OF THE LIGHTHOUSE, if it was written, I never saw it. And I could never get any information out of Jack Roberts, God rest his soul. He died two falls ago, I guess it was, at the age of 96 or 98. He would never talk about his work at Long Point.

His father was Robert Samuel Roberts. Of course that was shortened to Bob Sam. He was the first principal lightkeeper here. As far as we know, he started here, in 1876, with a lightkeeper by the name of Henry Preston, who came over from England. Now, Henry Preston, it is generally surmised, and I guess mostly by me, was probably an expert on the mechanisms for lighthouses.

He came over as an expert and worked with Bob Sam Roberts, and they were both here together. He stayed in Newfoundland. As a matter of fact, he died and is buried in the United Church Cemetery on the north side.

Except for the tower, there isn't much of the original 1876 equipment left. The light was lit in 1876. It was started the year before, apparently. I think the lighthouse was built because this was one of the major exporting areas for fish, to the Indies and Spain, and places that used salt fish years ago.

I think it was realized very early on, that there were not adequate warnings around here for ships to safely come into Twillingate Harbour. There were large ships coming and going all the time, during the shipping season.

The light was turned by weight-driven clockwork. Weights were cranked up to the ceiling of the first level and as they dropped, they turned a turntable with kerosene lamps and the lens.

It appears most of the materials came over from England. Even if they came out of St. John's, they probably came over from England to St. John's and then they were dragged up over the cliffs here. The remnants of the landing area are still down there.

This was probably one of the best-kept lights, up until the numbers of lightkeepers were downgraded from 24-hour watches down to two and now down to one. You can't keep a light with one person like you can with three. I get called down at odd hours, when the light is out, or when the fog alarm is not working. I can't know about that when I'm home.

The Foghorn

I do not turn on the fog alarm any more, unless the automatic system fails. It comes on automatically. The fog alarm is controlled by a fog detector. There's a beam of light fed out to be reflected. The more light reflected, the lower the visibility. When it gets down to about two nautical miles, the system goes into standby and five or six minutes later, the system fires up.

They had diaphones here up until sometime into the fifties, sixties. They were just huge devices that provided the sound that deafened most lightkeepers that worked back in those days. The sound is what's caused most of us who worked in the system to have serious hearing problems. I too have a serious hearing problem. My wife says I'm as deaf a doorknob. And that's a fact.

The diaphones were driven by a compressor. As the sound trailed off, it made what's called a grunt. As the piston came to a stop, there was a grunt. That's what they called the sound. The Fishermen's Broadcast still has the sound of a classic old diaphone in the introduction.

It looks like lightkeeping may have a new lease on life. It has now been confirmed that the 24 lightstations in Newfoundland as well as 27 in B.C. will remain staffed by lightkeepers.

adequate	cranked	kerosene	piston
automobile	diaphone	lightkeeper	visibility
clockwork	downgrade	mechanism	
compressor	foghorn	nautical mile	



Baptism Under Fire

Ernest Peyton

Ernest Peyton is known in the Gander area as the former owner of Peyton's Flowers. Like thousands of Newfoundlanders, he went overseas to fight in World War II. He enlisted in the Forestry Service before signing on with the Royal Air Force.

I WAS BORN IN TWILLINGATE, but I was living in Grand Falls when war was declared. I was sitting in a boarding house, and the radio was on. That's when I heard the Declaration Of War.

There were four of us, good friends, working in Grand Falls. I was working in the paper mill, part time. The four of us enlisted and we all came back safely.

They weren't recruiting for the armed services, but they were recruiting for forestry workers. We signed up to go overseas with the forestry unit in 1939. After being in the forestry, we figured we could go into the forces, if we wanted to. Which is what we did.

We tried to get in the navy, but the navy wasn't hiring. The air force was hiring, and all four of us got in the Royal Air Force.

We had foot drill down in Blackpool, England. After that we got shipped to the same air base. It was in 1940, and Hitler was trying to knock out the air force. We got bombed just as we got off the truck at the base.

One of the buildings was knocked apart. Some of the hangars were damaged. We had to crawl under the buildings while they machine-gunned us, flying over. That was a baptism under fire. Our first training was just as ordinary soldiers.

We were given rifles, and we had to patrol at night, between air raids.

I started out as ACII. Aircraftman Second Class. That's as low as you can get. The next thing I did, I volunteered to go overseas, from England. I was tired of being at the station, doing very little.

They were looking for people to make up a draft, so I applied. When they were going along, they said, you sound foreign. I said, "Well, I'm from Newfoundland."

"Oh," they said, "you're lucky."

Now, I didn't know what they meant. I knew I was going somewhere, but I didn't know where. I certainly didn't think I was going to go to Canada. That's where I got sent. To Nova Scotia!

They were building up a training station there. I went training as a flight mechanic.

Amy Anstey and I were going together for years. She was nursing in New York, so I went down there and we got married. She came back to Truro with me. After a year, I got sent back to England, and Amy went back to nursing in New York.

When I got back to England I was stationed in Wales. I joined a Newfoundland squadron then. That was great.

As a mechanic, I did everything. Not only engines, but controls and anything else. I did some flying, but that was on test flights. We did the repairs and then we flew with the pilots to check it out.

When I was discharged, I was a Leading Aircraftman. LAC. Something like a corporal in the army.

air force	draft	mechanic	station
Aircraftsman	enlist	patrol	Truro
baptism	forestry	pilot	
corporal	machine-gunned	recruiting	



Shrove Tuesday

Mary Pittman

Mrs. Mary Pittman is a retired teacher, now living in Grand Falls, Newfoundland. She is the author of a book *fish & brewis, toutens & tales*. This book describes life in St. Leonard's, Placentia Bay, before resettlement. In writing this book she took the name Len Margaret.

THE DAY BEFORE Ash Wednesday was reserved strictly for special dinners and family entertainment, in anticipation of the fast and abstinence of the Lenten season. Dancing, card-playing, weddings and public social gatherings were prohibited during the forty days of Lent.

The vegetables were taken from the cellar the previous evening and shared with neighbours who may not have had enough of the varieties to last up to this time of the year.

The puddings were mixed and put in separate pudding bags ahead of time. The meat (rabbit, venison, fresh beef or seabirds) was selected and made ready.

Breakfast consisted of oatmeal porridge, hot buttered toast and tea. There would be no strenuous labours executed this particular day. Only the milking and attending to the needs of the livestock, stacking firewood and making enough splits to carry over until Thursday. There would be no axe used on Ash Wednesday.

Dinner would be a generous meal of meats with rich brown gravy, figgy duff, bread puddings, pease pudding, cabbage, potatoes, turnip, carrots and salt beef. Sauce was always made to be served with left-over raisin or boiled bread pudding.

When the table was set, the family sat and grace was recited by the oldest member. Before eating, however, a little ceremony was performed. This ritual was firmly believed to ensure a bountiful harvest and good luck in all family endeavours until the next Shrove Tuesday when the ceremony would be repeated.

A small toggle was carved from a piece of birch or other hardwood earlier in the day.

Then a small piece of the puddings made from flour, a piece of salt meat and a cube of bread would be pushed on to the toggle and hung over the outside door-facing. This being accomplished with all due respect, the family was allowed to begin eating.

After dinner the father and older members of the family sat back and chatted at will, while the mother and female members cleaned the dishes and put the kitchen to rights.

Pancakes were always the supper dish for Shrove Tuesday. Although every pancake was consumed, the meal was more of a lark for the youngsters. The recipe was no different from any pancake mixture except for the addition of symbols that were thrown into it.

It was a type of fortune telling to tell what you'd be when you grew up, and each contribution had its own particular meaning. A portion of the batter was used for this and only one item was put into each pancake so that none of the children could get more than his share of fortune telling.

The meaning of each item was as follows:

ring — husband or wife
straw — farmer
match — boatbuilder
nail — carpenter
button — bachelor or old maid
medal — a priest or nun
money — rich man or woman
linen — tailor or seamstress

It sounds like a hazard to have such things hidden in your supper, but as far as I can recall, no one in St. Leonard's ever choked on a nail or swallowed a ring.

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abstinence	endeavours	oatmeal porridge	toggle
accomplished	entertainment	prohibited	vegetables
anticipation	figgy duff	strenuous	vension
choked	hazard	swallowed	



Station VOGF, Grand Falls, 1933

Geraldine (Christian) Power

Geraldine Power is a spry senior citizen living in Grand Falls, Newfoundland. She was the first female radio announcer in Newfoundland. The radio station was located in the living room of her parents' house.

IN 1933, MY FATHER, Sandy Christian, built radio station VOGF (Voice Of Grand Falls.) It operated on an assigned frequency of 1030 kcs, with an output of 200 watts.

This station was built for my benefit, and being a teenager at the time, I had to take on a big responsibility. Just looking at the mike made me nervous. It was a tall mike and had to be lowered down to my height.

I was to operate the station while my father was at work. This was from morning until 6 p.m. My father would rush home from the office just before 6 p.m. to read the Postal Telegram news bulletin, which people looked forward to each evening.

The station was very popular with listeners, especially during the daytime hours, for one reason. It was the only reception they could pick up on their radios.

The people who advertised were E. V. Royal Stores, Co-Op, S. Cohen & Sons, and Ford Basha Insurance, along with many spot announcements during the day and night. Phil Ryan also had an evening broadcast of local news.

Sundays my father would take over the station and throughout the day hymns would be played.

The living room of our house was equipped with a piano, an organ, and of course, a gramophone. We would order our records from New York. If we had saved those records, they would be collectors' items. They were made from a cardboard film, shiny on one side, which was the playing surface.

I remember when they became too worn, my father passed them out to my sister. They would fly them through the air, just as they do with frisbees today.

Some of the performances at VOGF were various orchestras, such as Sammy and his Gang, Gus Power, Mrs. Little, Laura Blackmore, Miss O'Reilly, and Tom Howell, as well as many more performers and recordings.

We operated for about four years. Due to pressure and dependence on his job, and it being a heavy financial obligation, coupled with some lack of support, father closed the station down.

I never did go into broadcasting after that, but I do have the distinction of being the first female announcer in Newfoundland.

I met and married a singer and piano player who performed many times on VOGF. Last year we celebrated our 60th anniversary. Gus Power is still playing and singing at the age of 87!



advertised	bulletin	frequency	orchestra
anniversary	cardboard	frisbees	performers
announcements	dependence	gramophone	Postal Telegram
assigned	financial	obligation	reception
broadcast			



A Drastic Hunting Experience

J. Stewart Ralph

J. Stewart Ralph lives in Point Leamington, Newfoundland. He submitted this written story for other seniors to enjoy.

THERE WAS A TIME in my life when I considered myself to be quite a Nimrod. I owned a 12-gauge shotgun, a .303 rifle and a .22 multi-shot repeating rifle, among other weapons.

I never did get to shoot any big game because there were no moose or caribou in that part of the Avalon peninsula where I was born and raised.

One evening about mid-October in 1954, I went down to an inlet where I expected to see some geese or ducks. There was no wind blowing; the surface of the water was perfectly still. Not a ripple or a wave disturbed the perfect reflection of the sky.

The sun had gone down behind the mountains and the sky was a dozen shades of red. A few clouds were lit on the underside by the last rays of the sun.

It was a place of perfect beauty and peace.

Then, about half a kilometre away, I saw a V-shaped wave approaching the bushes where I was concealed. As it got closer I could see that the wave was produced by a little muskrat swimming towards my hiding spot.

I shall never forget the beauty of the occasion – the mirror sea, the reflected colours, the evidence of nature's life and activity all around me.

Then, as the muskrat approached, I aimed at its head and shot it.

I retrieved the body, took it home, skinned it, and put it on a board to stretch and dry. I forget what eventually happened to it. I know I did not sell it. But I have never forgotten the stupidity, the cruelty, and most of all, the unnecessary waste of my action.

I did hunt for game birds a time or two after that, but by the time I married in 1962, I had given away all my guns and I have never owned one since.

I pass no judgement on legitimate hunters who kill cleanly and use what they kill.

I just don't do it myself anymore.

Nimrod — In the Bible, a king who was a mighty hunter.

cruelty
judgement
kilometre

legitimate
muskrat
reflection

rifle
ripple

shotgun
stupidity



The Ghost of Aunt Sally Barker

Captain Johnny Russell

Captain Johnny Russell is from Bonavista Bay. In his eighties he wrote a story of his life: *Memories Of A Lifetime*. One day, a man he knew well told him how he met the ghost of a woman who was lost berrypicking.

THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN up in Open Hall, who left her house one evening in September. Aunt Sally Barker was her name. This is a true story. This happened in my day.

Her house was near the centre of the village. She said she was going into her garden to pick a few berries. The berries were just starting to get ripe, around late September. So she left her house with her jug or dipper to put her berries in, about three o'clock in the afternoon.

It was getting up in the fall of the year, so it got dark earlier. Anyway, she went on. Suppertime came with no sign of the old lady and she didn't come back that night.

She lived with her niece and nephew. They didn't know what to think of it. It was really too late to go look for her, but they went in where she was supposed to be. Of course, there was no sign of her. And from that day to this day it never was known what happened to Sally Barker.

Later in the fall, in November, we used to get our wood. We'd go in on Kings Cove Road and have a day cutting and sticking up. By the time we walked in it was almost time to boil the kettle.

This man went one fall morning. He had a spurt cutting and sticking up, as the saying used to be. He boiled his kettle and had a lunch. The days were getting short.

The outcome of the story was, he stayed down in the woods a little bit too long. When he walked up the woods path to the main road going from Kings Cove to Open Hall, he stopped. The road had a bit of a straight stretch to it.

He put down his axe to fill his pipe. He filled his pipe, and when he went to put his hand in his pocket to get a match, he looked. He saw a woman coming.

This is true. The man told me, sitting down in his own kitchen, these exact words. "I said to myself, now, I'll have a bit of company."

It was what we called duckish, dark. He said by the time he got his pipe lit, he figured she would be getting a little handier toward him. But he looked and she was still in the same place. She never moved.

He said, "I put my axe on my back and smoked my pipe and dodged on. When I started to walk, she started to walk, too. I walked up to what we called the cross road. When I got up on the hill at the cross road I looked around. She was stood up and she let out a loud roar. No, it was more like a screech, the screech of a woman."

And that's all he saw of her. She more or less vanished.

He began to realize that it was something unreal. He was a good two miles from home. He told me, "Buddy, it was the quickest time that ever I came out the Open Hall Road."

He always said, from that day until the day he passed away, that it was Sally Barker.

She had on the same kind of a dress she used to wear. The same kind of a rig.

Yes boy, he always claimed that he saw Sally Barker, whether it was her spirit or whether it was her in reality.

The man who told me this was Kenneth Hobbs.

berry picking
dodge
Kings Cove Road

nephew
niece

Open Hall
screech

spurt
vanish



The Gully

Enid Smith

Mrs. Enid Smith married Canon Tommy Smith, a minister for the Anglican Church. Their second parish was at Salvage, Bonavista Bay. Of all the places they lived, Salvage was Mrs. Smith's favourite. The Smiths moved to Salvage in 1948. It was a big change moving from a city church to an outport church.

WE WENT OVER to the rectory. The parishioners were all there. The fire was lit and it was enough to bake you.

The minister was always called "parson." One said, "Do you think we got everything for the parson?"

They all started to think and count up what they put in. They all got talking. They had food stored away. Everything had been cleaned and papered. They had our beds made.

Bejeepers was a term they used to use. Not everybody, but this old gentleman did. He piped up. "Bejeepers. We forgot the gully!"

I looked at Tommy and Tommy looked at me. What was a gully? We dared not go asking questions. We just pretended we knew.

The first thing in the morning, Tommy said, "Enid, have you been thinking what a gully is?"

I said, "I really don't know what it is."

Then the old gentleman came in.

He said, "Parson, I got the gully, but she got to be plimmed first. It will take about three days, but you will be all right until then. I got it plimmed, but she's got to dry out."

The next day, he came in and reported on the gully. He had the cover made. We still didn't know what it was.

The last thing was the "paint job."

Still, we couldn't figure it out. What had to be plimmed? What had to have paint?

After three days, he said, "I got her finished. She's out on the brudge."

That meant the "bridge," the steps outside the back door.

He said, "Come out and see what you think."

We nearly knocked each other down, getting out to the brudge. Lo and behold, what should be there, but a water barrel!

That was essential. Everybody had to have their water barrel. This water barrel would be kept filled. In the summertime it would be out of doors. Then it would be moved in on the steps. Then as it got colder, it would be moved into the back porch.

When it got cold and everything would freeze out there, it would be moved to the corner of the kitchen.

This was the gully.

He said, "My son will see that it is full all the time. You won't have to worry."

That was true enough. He used to come and chop our wood for us. He would bring the water and fill the gully. I could always depend on him.

bejeepers
brudge
canon

gully
parson
pipe

parishoner
plimmed

rectory
water barrel



Ray Stoodley

Raymond Stoodley's War Story

Thomas Stoodley

After retiring from driving a bus in Ontario, Thomas Stoodley moved to Hibbs Cove, Newfoundland. His father was a sailor in World War II when his ship was attacked.

FATHER WAS SHELLED BY A German raider on the 10th of July. This was in the Caribbean, 450 miles east of Barbados. They saw a ship on the horizon flying Swedish flags, but she was really the German ship *Narvick*. The first shot hit his ship, the *S.S. Davisian*, in the bow. The wires from the funnel came down around his head.

He got his lifejacket on and got into a lifeboat. The German ship made them climb aboard as prisoners of war. They were locked up with men who had already been there for one month, to the day.

The next day 40 more men were also locked up. It was very crowded down in the bottom of the German ship. They were locked in a place with heavy plank across the door, and a gunman with a machine gun outside.

On the 14th of July another ship came near and the Germans attacked that one, too. They were locked up right under the guns and it was very noisy.

When the noise stopped, they were marched to another room. They told them to put on their lifejackets and get ready to go in a lifeboat. They filled three lifeboats with prisoners and set them adrift. They were 269 miles from a French island. After a couple of nights they lost sight of the other boats, so they drifted on.

Father's ration was three Spillar's biscuits every 24 hours and about half a pint of water a day. They had to keep watches because the boat was full of shrapnel holes. They made landfall with only enough water for one more day. In the morning they decided to land on the beach to look for water. There was a reef about a quarter of a mile from shore. They got over it and reached the beach.

When they jumped out they were in water up to their throats. Some held onto the boat and others went for water. They got the fresh water but it was very hard trying to get off the beach again. The sea came in over the stern and half-filled the boat. Finally, they got outside the reef.

When they got out, they discovered that they had left a man on shore. It was too dangerous to go in over the reef again. Third Officer Victor Harrison tied a rope around his waist and leaped into the foaming sea and swam ashore. He tied the rope around the man and they pulled him on board the boat. Victor swam back to the lifeboat.

They were off the Republic of Dominica. They rowed around to look for a harbour, when they saw a ship coming up behind them. She altered her course and came to their assistance. It was the *S.S. Leif* and they told them they were 45 miles from a harbour. They climbed up the side of the ship by the ladder, all feeling very much exhausted. Some of them fell on the deck and within minutes were asleep.

Captain Wilson and his men were very kind to father and the others. They fitted them all with dry clothes, and after a bath and a good stiff drink of whisky, they were feeling much refreshed. At the *Leif's* next port of call there were hundreds of people lined up on the pier to see them land. It was the 20th of July, seven days after they were set adrift.

They were taken to a fort that night. The next day they took father and the others to Long Beach, where it was very comfortable under the shades of big tropical trees. He always remembered the nice cool breeze blowing right in from the sea.

There, in Porto Plata, the British Consulate made plans to get father home to Newfoundland.

assistance	foaming	lifejacket	Republic of Dominica
biscuit	funnel	Porto Plata	shelled
British Consulate	horizon	prisoner	shrapnel
comfortable	lifeboat	ration	



The IWA Strike

Stirling Thomas

Everyone in Grand Falls and Windsor, Newfoundland knows Stirling Thomas. He has been on the town council for many years and is a member of most of the service clubs. As a union man he had a front row seat to one of the most famous labour strikes in Newfoundland.

THE IWA (INTERNATIONAL WOODWORKERS OF AMERICA) came in here with the feeling they were going to organize everyone in the province.

One of their leaders even told me himself that he was a communist. "Carried a commie card." They were his words.

"Well," I said, "we don't go for that around here." At the time I was a vice-president of the Newfoundland Federation of Labour and I was president of the Trades and Labour Council.

He told me, "We're going to organize everything in Newfoundland. Even the domestic workers. And we're going to bring the government to their knees."

They came in here and went around to the camps and offered the loggers everything. There would be more money, better living conditions, more time off, and they fell for it, like they would. There was nothing wrong with what they were saying. The only thing was, their attitudes and their tactics were unbecoming to us people.

I was working with the finishing department in the mill. I was in the core room at the time, and none of the men wanted anything to do with a strike with violence. They didn't see any need of it.

The labour activities and the labour policies the IWA had didn't belong to us. They didn't belong to us at all. They were throwing people out of the camps, and throwing company property out of the camps, taking over everything.

The police had to turn the armouries into prison camps. One Sunday, the IWA got people to come in and visit, to bring in dinners to them. What they brought in was bags of nothing. It was just to put on a show.

They had another stunt up in Badger that they pulled off. They threw a handful of nickles around a garbage container and the youngsters went after the money. They said they were eating the garbage. They were a smart group.

They had the mounties in here. Sure, they couldn't do anything. Joey Smallwood took the bull by the horns and sent people in. If they didn't behave themselves, he'd decertify them, and kick them out altogether. As far as Smallwood was concerned, there wasn't room enough in Newfoundland for him and Landon Ladd.

If the IWA had come in here in a peaceful way and talked to us people, the union leaders, it would have been okay. If they were going to do this peacefully.

They should have kept clear of the company and the government. They should have gotten the goodwill of the men first, to get a united front. With all the workers of the Corner Brook mill, with all the workers of the A.N.D. Company mill, with the central and the west covered, the companies would have had no choice but do something.

There would have been a big income in union dues for the IWA.

I think they would have done well. The IWA could have worked with the officers of the Loggers Association. However, they didn't. It was "the hell with you" and "the hell with you." They brought in their own group and picked up some people that they thought would be of a great benefit to them, but they were no good to them.

There was a loss of life over this. There was a truck lost over on a river, and there was a man killed in Badger. They had a man taken up, but he wasn't convicted. It went to court but it was dismissed.

The government sent police to central Newfoundland to handle the labour unrest. On a picket line at Badger, Constable William Moss of the Newfoundland Constabulary was injured. He died two days later. To end the labour strife, Premier Smallwood outlawed the IWA and set up another union for the loggers.

A.N.D. Company	commandment	decertify	policies
armouries	communist	Federation of Labour	prison
attitudes	Constabulary	Loggers Association	tactics
avenue	convicted	police	violence



Shipwrecked On The *S.S. Bruce*

James S. Young

Sidney Bond Young left Twillingate Island to go to the mainland for work. The year was 1911. His son, James S. Young of Twillingate, tells the story of his father's trip aboard the *S.S. Bruce*, a passenger ferry on the Gulf.

FATHER WAS BORN IN 1894. He always got very seasick. He'd throw up until he couldn't stand up in the boat. That was the reason, at seventeen he left and went up to Toronto.

He had a half-brother, a construction foreman, living up in Toronto, and that's where he aimed to go. Father worked at that until he got enough money to change jobs and get in with the police.

He went with the Ontario Metro Police and remained with them for ten years, during which time he rose to the rank of Sergeant. At the time he was stationed in Windsor and it was here he accepted a position with General Motors as an assistant plant engineer. He remained with GM for the next thirty-one years until retirement in 1958.

Father was gone for years before he returned. He was seventeen when he left and he didn't come back until Come Home Year, 1966. He died at age 95.

An Account From Sidney Young, Twillingate

I was born in Twillingate, Newfoundland. I left Twillingate for Toronto on March 17, 1911, aged seventeen, with my parents' blessing. My half brother Louis Gillett, who lived in Toronto for seven years, begged my parents to let me come to Toronto.

We had to go by motorboat from Twillingate to Lewisporte, then by train to Port aux Basques. We left there at 11:30 P.M. on a steamer, *S.S. Bruce*, March 23, to cross the Gulf of St. Lawrence for North Sydney.

About 4:30 A.M., March 24, the steamer ran aground on the Scatteri Island, Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, eighteen miles from where we were supposed to go.

There was a high sea rolling and we had been going through broken ice all night. When the steamer hit the solid rock, all the lights went out and the passengers were thrown out of their beds. The steamer fell over on its side, exposed to the Gulf.

This allowed every sea to go over her. The steamer had four lifeboats. Two of these were smashed to pieces and two passengers were drowned in front of me.

The captain gave orders that women and children were to be taken off first. Due to the high sea, the other two lifeboats had to row four miles to land the passengers, and get word to the mainland for them to send a rescue boat.

Due to the fact that it took so long for a boat to row eight miles, four each way, a rescue steamer arrived before all the passengers had been taken off.

It was 4 P.M. when the steamer from Louisbourg came to take the rest of us off.

We were given dry clothing and lots to eat, then taken to North Sydney where I took the train for Toronto. I arrived in Toronto March 25, 1911.

assistant	foreman	motorboat	police
baggage	General Motors	North Sydney	Scatteri Island
construction	lifeboats	Nova Scotia	sergeant
engineer	Louisbourg	passengers	sixteen



Retired?

Kathleen Abbott

Kathleen Abbott of Port au Port West is a very active senior. She is the driving force behind the restoration of Our Lady Of Mercy Museum. She has big plans for the convent and Our Lady Of Mercy Church. But she wasn't always interested. I visited Kathleen at the museum.

I WASN'T ALL THAT INTERESTED AT FIRST. I started working on the museum project the year I retired from teaching, 1990. This museum used to be the rectory. It had been rented out several times and it was ready to be demolished.

I was called for a meeting and I said yes. I was voted in as chairperson and I've been here ever since. It was quite a challenge, and gets to be more of a challenge every year. I always had something to do, because I had four children and I had to raise them as a single parent. My husband died over forty-five years ago.

The Our Lady Of Mercy Museum

First of all, we started on the museum. The sun porch was falling down. Right away we had to look for project funding and there wasn't a lot of money.

We started sending out feelers through the church bulletin. We asked people to bring in information and pictures. And we got what we could from the schools.

Right now our high school is closing and we have made a deal with the principal that the trophies and the pictures will come here. There is always something coming in so we can freshen the displays, or develop new ones. Parishioners are taking a lot of pride in it now, especially since it has become a provincial heritage structure.

Each year we do something different to encourage visitors. We have a tea room which we will open next week. We serve tea in pots and we serve old-fashioned recipes.

Shower Of Roses

There was a lot of devotion to Saint Theresa with our traditional priests back in the late 1800s. She is one of our youngest saints because she died when she was twenty-four. In 1997, she was made a Doctor of the Church, and that is really something.

Doing the grotto was one of my goals, but it was really begun by Father Joy, because of a miracle that happened to him.

Father was kneeling, giving his thanksgiving one morning after mass, and he was sick at the time. He was praying, and all of a sudden he had a vision. In the vision, he got a perfume smell of roses and a shower of rose petals fell at his feet. When he described it to the parishioners the next Sunday, he told them he didn't know what the reason was.

He said it was either that St. Theresa wanted the people to pray more, or that she wanted something erected in her honour. Right away he took up a collection and he got a thousand dollars and put up a statue. The St. Theresa's statue in the church came from Rome. Devotions to St. Theresa continue to this day.

In my mind, if Father Joy thought it was important, we should also have something outside the church. So, we built a grotto to St. Theresa in front of the museum.

bulletin	devotion	museum	restoration
businessman	groceries	perfume	rose petals
challenge	grotto	provincial	status
complex	heritage	rectory	



I Survived The Wreck of The S.S. Caribou

John (Jack) T. Dominie

Jack Dominie was born at Cape La Hune, on the west coast of Newfoundland. Here is his story of the wreck of the Gulf ferry S.S. Caribou. She was struck by a torpedo in the early morning of October 14, 1942.

I JOINED THE *CARIBOU* on the first day of August, when she was in St. John's for a refit. We signed articles to sail on the 27th of September and picked up our run in North Sydney.

My job was seaman. We were on watch the night she got torpedoed. Those times you had four hours on and four off. Now, we were on at twelve o'clock that night; well, we had to get up and let the other watch go off. I went on watch on the starboard side of the bridge that night.

Captain Tavenor was coming and going all night, one place and the other. I don't know how many different men he sent up on the wheelhouse, to see if they could see the lights from the escort. He was an uncomfortable man.

We didn't get any warning. Two o'clock I went in and took the wheel, and that's where I was when she got torpedoed.

I left the wheel and started to go down on the starboard side. I couldn't see anything for steam. The lifeboats were all covered in with steam, where it struck the engine room, I suppose.

I got to the starboard side and met the bo'sun coming back. He said, "Boy, it's no good for you to go over there. Everything over there is all tangled up." He was excited. He was looking for his young fella and he was all excited.

But anyhow, I went on over. The lifeboat was there but I couldn't see it. There was a big crowd of people in the boats, and others trying to get in. We never had much time to do anything. There was a fella there, a passenger. I told him to hand me the axe. He handed me the axe and I chopped the belly bands on the lifeboat.

I didn't know what to do. You couldn't lower a boat that was full of people like that. Myself, I only had a last chance. I thought now I'll get into her myself. So I got into her, and I sang out to someone, if any of them had a knife aboard. They said they did. "Now, when I call out cut, you cut."

So that's what he did. And we made a great landing on the water. She dropped down even. A great landing on the water. This was No. 4 lifeboat. She was filled with people, with no standing room in her.

We were not very far when the *Caribou* sank. I would say, perhaps twenty yards. She filled full of water. It seemed like the water was running forward in her. That's how she settled, by the head and when she got down far enough, there she went, headlong.

The Plug Was Out Of Her

It was no time before the lifeboat was full of water. I went to check. Those times, the plug was supposed to be out of a boat when she was swung out from davits. Whoever made that rule, I don't know. Nobody would ever make that if they knew what they were doing, to keep plugs out of boats that were used for emergencies.

I daresay that might have been alright if she was just a cargo boat, with just the crew. But when you had a load of passengers, that was something else. I tried the best as I could to get the plug in, but I couldn't get it in.

Where she was loaded with people, the force of water would blow it back every time. So, before I'd get a chance to drive it down with my foot, it would be back out.

I did that, I don't know how many times, and I thought to myself, it's no good for me to do that, because she's filling with water.

So I took a bucket then. I started bailing. Well, that was foolishness, but we didn't know what to be doing, see. I said, well, that's it, it's no good for me at this. I wouldn't say we were in her ten minutes before she was filled with water and started to roll over.

So that's what happened. She filled full of water and rolled, and the people all went into the water, the poor women and children, all of them. It was dark. There was one woman alongside me, I could see her with a baby.

I don't know how many times she rolled over. When she finished rolling, there were just a few of us left in her. And when we were picked up there were only the four of us.

I stayed with it, lucky enough. I got knocked clear of her once, but not for long. I couldn't swim, but I propelled myself alongside of her again. She was rolling back and forth, face up and bottom up. There was a lot of wind, boy, that morning. A lot of wind.

Our second cook was one of the survivors. And I know one of the fellas belonged to Neils Harbour, Jack Hatcher. He was another one that survived it. The other fella was American, I think.

I knew all the crewmembers. They were all from Port aux Basques, pretty well. Israel Barrett was in the watch with me. He went to call the new watch, and he wasn't gone five minutes before Bang!

I figured that he never survived. He would be back in the galley, boiling the kettle for the crew coming on. I figured that on his way back he was handy to where the torpedo struck her.

Our escort, the *Grandmere*, took us aboard. They looked after us. They gave us dry clothing and everything we needed. They took us to Sydney where we stayed that night, and the next day we returned on the *S.S. Burgeo*.

Luck was with Jack Dominie in the years ahead. He served on two other Gulf ferries, the *William Carson*, and the *Patrick Morris*. These two also sank, but Jack was not on either of them at the time!

[I am sad to report that since I interviewed Jack Dominie in 1998, he has since passed away. - G. Cranford]

bo'sun	davits	knife	torpedoed
capsized	emergency	propelled	wheelhouse
crewmembers	foolishness	starboard	



Shipwreck At Piccadilly

Cyril DuBourdieu

Cyril DuBourdieu lives in Port au Port East. After a career in the Canadian Army, he returned home to retire. While going to school as a young man he often joined ships to act as a Newfoundland customs agent. On one occasion he was shipwrecked in the middle of winter

IT WAS NEW YEAR'S EVE, I think it was, when we drove ashore in Piccadilly. I joined the *S.S. Fernfield* in Sandy Point. I would get off her when she finished up in Port au Port Bay. From there she would leave to go on to Bonne Bay.

It was 1943. At that time there were no roads on the peninsula here at all. All the freight was delivered to the various stores around the peninsula. Abbott & Haliburton was the company that owned the stores.

It was before Confederation and everything had to be checked in, because of duty being paid. Fish and so on being exported had to be checked the same way. There was an export duty on it. For that reason you had to have a tidewaiter on the ship going around the peninsula, before she was cleared from port here to go to Bonne Bay.

I used to get out of school at that time to do the tidewaiting duties for Newfoundland customs. Twenty-five cents an hour. Of course you got it from the time you joined until you got off, twenty-four hours a day.

The Wind Came Up Pretty Heavy

We had left Cape St. George then, at Three Rock Cove. Then we went in to Piccadilly to land another bunch of freight - apples, flour, salt beef, and kerosene. We were unloading when the wind came up pretty heavy. The ship started to disintegrate at the pier that we tied up to.

We had to move away from the wharf. All the crew that were on the jetty just slipped our lines and let us back up to anchor. We went out and anchored. Once we anchored, everybody went down below to relax. Twenty minutes later the ship started to bounce on the bottom. We were right up on a shoal. By now it was midnight.

The bottom was sandy and the anchors didn't hold. She drove right up on what they call Piccadilly Head, a rocky shore. The biggest problem was the loss of power when the engine room got flooded.

In fact, I almost lost an arm in it. We were down in the galley getting a lunch after we anchored, and when she brought up on the bottom the partitions started to move inside. My elbow slipped in between the partition and the side of the ship. I had to wait for it to roll back again in order to get my jacket out of it.

The First Boat Smashed

The only way to get ashore was to lower a lifeboat on the capstan. There was enough steam left on the boilers to do that. The first boat went in and smashed up against the big ice wall on the shore.

They lowered the second one and that's how we came ashore. But I had to jump in the water up to my waist and claw at the ice pack. Everyone got ashore, but clear of a few bruises, nothing serious happened.

We were frozen when we got ashore. Of course all these ships carried a little bit of black rum. Everybody went up to a rooming house, the staff house, owned by Haliburton. Most of us stayed in there. Mrs. Duffy was the person looking after the establishment.

The ship didn't really break up that night, but later she started to founder, and fell apart. Afterward, there was an awful lot of pilfering because she was loaded with freight. Of course, it was all insured.

She was a total wreck.

capstan	kerosene	Picadilly	<i>S.S. Fernfield</i>
customs	partition	pilfering	tidewaiter
Haliburton	peninsula		



I Called The Wilderness Mother Wild

Norman Gabriel

Norman Gabriel is of Micmac Indian descent. He had a difficult time as a little boy. Now in his late eighties, he pauses and speaks in a hushed, hurt voice when he remembers the racial prejudice he lived with in Stephenville, Newfoundland.

MY FATHER, Alphonsus Gabriel, died young. I was five years old. I think he did a bit of fishing and a bit of farming. I was born in January, 1910, or 1911. My mother's family was from here. My mother was a March. Her grandmother was a Micmac, with the last name of White.

Because we were Indians, I was treated like the plague. When they'd talk about poor Dad, they would spit and say "Indian!" like it was a dirty word. Nobody wanted any part of me. I had no friend that would help me in any way.

I had a teacher up there I'll never forget. I was singled out by the teachers. They had a stick to hold up the windows. That's what they used to crack us on the knuckles.

Some of the boys used to pick on me and I used to fight back at them. I had no choice, I was all alone.

To people in those days, I was always Indian. As I got older, people respected me, and talked to me. The feeling of being alone and ashamed was not as bad.

An old man, Henry White, took me under his wing and taught me the ways of the world. He was fifty years old when he started trapping, in the woods. Trapping and hunting for big game, in the winter. Henry White treated me like a son. God rest that man. I hope he went up to Heaven, because he went for the underdog like I do today. He saved my life.

The year I went to go in the country in the winter, the trees opened their limbs and welcomed me. In the wilderness I was home. I called the wilderness Mother Wild.

Isolated by the rest of the world, I had to have somewhere to go. How many times I would sit in the nighttime and think, and there are still times it fills my eyes.

I would go by the river. I fished for salmon and I'd sit by the river. What was it like before the white man? I liked to think about the Beothucks.

There was a crowd in Corner Brook, like me in those days, when there was no hunting licence. We'd take a moose or two and we wouldn't waste anything.

If we went to the river and the river was full of salmon, we took one or two, whatever we ate ourselves. We didn't waste. We were our own conservationists.

Now my wilderness home is gone. I long for the trees and the days I was alone.

I witnessed prejudice all my life, because I'm Indian.

Alphonse Gabriel Beothuck	conservationist plague	racial prejudice underdog	wilderness witness
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I Joined The Navy

Ralph Harvey

Ralph Harvey was born at Boswarlos on the Port au Port Peninsula, in 1917. In 1939 he went to war by joining the navy. Here is his account of meeting the Wolf of the Atlantic.

THERE WASN'T MUCH WORK around here, very little. There were just a few months work at the limestone quarry. So I decided to join up and got in the navy. That was in 1939, the third draft.

I went with a horse and sleigh to Stephenville Crossing and from the Crossing went to St. John's by train. I boarded at a Mrs. Dawson's, until I got a ship and went over in convoy and landed at Liverpool.

The barracks were in Devonport. We did a good bit of training there and then we joined a ship. I joined her in Belfast, Ireland. The name of the ship was the *Laurentic*.

The second trip out, we were three hundred and ten miles off the northeast coast and got torpedoed. A sister ship to ours got torpedoed too, the *Patroclus*.

I was just turning in, undressed, and bang she went! That awful smell. I wasn't long getting out of my hammock. I grabbed an old army coat and put it on.

There was no warning whatsoever. Her gun went off and when we all rushed up on deck, there she was, right across from us, not very far. We couldn't get at it, because when we got the first torpedo our ship listed. She listed so much that we couldn't point our guns right to shoot at her. They had us alright.

The captain of the German U-boat was Otto Kretschmer. He was so successful sinking ships that he was nicknamed Wolf of the Atlantic. He was the first to get the Iron Cross, for sinking so many tons of British shipping.

Every hatch on our ship was full of empty drums. When she got the first torpedo, all the drums started to come up through the hold and floated all over the sea. She took a good while before she went down, because the drums were keeping her up.

We were in lifeboats. You lowered the lifeboat the best way you could and then went down the lifelines. I was in a leaky lifeboat, with five or six buckets going!

It wasn't blowing but there was an awful heavy swell on.

There were a good many of us in the boat, and there was a big steward there. He weighed eighteen stone. I caught the lifeline to haul the lifeboat in so he wouldn't drop in the water. But he let go about eight feet up and he came down hard. He struck my leg and he drove my leg back. Don't say I didn't have a bad leg. I was some mad.

I said, "My son, if there were only you and me in this boat, you'd never see the shore!"

Oh my, oh my, what a night, what a night!

That happened about ten to nine on Sunday night. It was a good while before the destroyer came to pick us up. It couldn't pick us up right away, because it had to make a broad circle, around and around, to make sure the submarine wasn't there, waiting. We were picked up just at the break of day.

There were two Newfoundlanders and one Englishman lost. Roy Beverley McLeod and Francis Roche were the Newfoundlanders lost.

They brought us in to Greenock, Scotland. When we got in there, the Salvation Army was there with clothes and everything for us. Boy, I was some grateful. They were really good people. The next boat I joined was the *Prince Leopold*, in combined operations for two years, doing hit and run raids. And I took part in the Dieppe raid.

Merchant Cruiser	draft	nickname	Stephenville
barracks	Greenock, Scotland	Otto Kretschmer	torpedo
barred	hammock	<i>Patroclus</i>	
combined operations	hatch	<i>Prince Leopold</i>	
convoy	<i>Laurentic</i>	quarry	
Dieppe	Liverpool	Salvation Army	



Campbell's Creek In the Forties And Fifties

Florence MacDonald

Florence MacDonald and her husband Mike wrested a good living from the sea and off the land. From early morning to late night, Mrs. MacDonald worked hard to raise her family, keep a good home and help in the gardens. It was a hard but healthy life.

I WAS BORN IN BOSWARLOS in 1919. Florence Janes. I married Mike MacDonald from Campbells Creek. His sister and her husband - a fisherman - had a nice-sized little farm and I used to work there. He used to come and visit his sister and that's how come I met up with him.

They had six milch cows. It was hard work to milk six cows morning and evening, and do housework too. I fed the calves and the pigs. There was a lot of outdoor work to be done.

They made their own hay. I helped at turning the hay over, and then helped in the house. There was a lot of hard work. You worked hard them days for five dollars a month.

Those days, when they were twenty or twenty-five years of age, young people built their own homes. Mike lived with his brother and his mother, so I suppose he figured some day he would move out and get married.

He had the house built ten years. It wasn't quite finished but it was liveable. It was good enough to live in. To build your house, you only needed the nails and your felt, because you cut all your own wood and got it sawed. You had everything, except glass and lime. It had wood shingles on it, and it wasn't painted for a long time.

Married Life

My husband Mike was a fisherman out of Campbells Creek. He was older than I was. He died about fifteen years ago. He was eighty-three.

He fished here, and we had a farm too. We owned all the land from here, way up to another field back there, and we kept cattle, sheep and cows. We had two cows, some sheep, and a horse for hauling the wood and ploughing the land.

We had two milch cows and we'd have their calves. We kept them over a winter and we'd kill them the next fall for our beef. We lived good. We didn't go to the store for too much, only for sugar, flour and tea.

In the fall we'd have one or two pigs to kill, and chickens. We would kill about 30 or 40 chickens, and we'd keep about ten or twelve for over winter. We had our own eggs and our fresh butter, we called it then, homemade butter.

To make butter, you had to have a separator to separate the cream from the milk. You saved up the cream, and then you used a churn. There were all kinds of churns. Some had a dasher churn and some others had churns that spun around, with a crank in them. You could make it by hand, too, with a spoon in a pan.

We had no fridges, but we had a nice cold spring of water. We could put the cream in that overnight to cool it in the hot summertime. I used to sell a nice bit of butter. Thirty cents a pound, I used to get for butter. Sometimes I would sell ten pounds a week. It was a lot of money, and that could help to buy the things that we couldn't grow.

We had our own vegetables. The only things we got from a merchant were flour and tea, sugar and molasses, and salt.

You could salt your own beef if you had your own cattle. You'd have a pig to kill and you'd have a yearling to kill and maybe one to sell. The cows would have their calves in the spring. You'd always keep two over winter. By the next fall they were a nice size. They would be two and three hundred pounds by the second fall. That way you always had something to kill for fresh beef and to make salt beef. We also had to bottle some because there were no freezers or no fridges then. You'd have to bottle it if you wanted it fresh, but when the cold weather was on, starting in November, your meat would be frozen until the spring, until April anyway.

My husband used to catch lobster, starting in April, and he fished salmon and a bit of codfish. There wasn't much price for anything then, but you had lots for yourself to eat. Then, around the last part of December, he would go at the smelt fishing, out at Piccadilly.

There was a big basin, and they would set nets there. When the harbour froze over, they would set nets through the ice, under the ice. He used to get ten cents a pound for them, not very much.

This was in the thirties and forties. They had to ship that away to Boston to get ten cents a pound. It was frozen. They had some kind of a cold place out to Piccadilly. Well, the winters were so cold then, you used to freeze them yourself. You'd spread them out and freeze them and pack them in boxes and they shipped them away.

In the summer, I would spread the fish for my husband, that's all. I was kept pretty busy in the house. We had eleven children! I had quite a busy day.

The cows were milked twice a day. You'd be out eight o'clock or earlier to milk them. There was no radio or TV and when it got dark, you couldn't work out of doors. You only had the lamplight

in the wintertime. I used to have to card my wool to knit the mitts and socks and sweaters and then I would spin the yarn in the nighttime. I never had much time in the day. It would take you pretty well the best part of your day to do washes, by the time you carried your water and you heated it on the stove and washed in a tub, using a scrub board. Well, you would have most of the day gone by then.

I would have to mix and bake nearly every day. They liked a lot of bread and molasses. Their father liked to have molasses on his bread and they all followed – molasses bread.

The children would pick the raspberries and partridge berries and blueberries. They were the main ones. Bakeapples were farther away. A few places, way back on the hills, we'd get a gallon or so, but at Shoal Point, now, that's where the bakeapples grew way out there. The children were good. They all kept busy. They all did their work. It's not like today. It's sad today. Children don't know how to do anything like that today.

We had three bedrooms and in the living room we would have a daybed that pulled out. Then according's they got older, eighteen and nineteen, they got out on their own.

But they keep coming back. They love to come back home. I kept some of them when they first got married, until they got out on their own. But they all got their own homes now. They're doing all right. I have six greatgrandchildren.

Wash Day

Nobody worked on Sunday. Except, you had to milk the cows. You'd rest up on Sunday a bit, except for meals and that.

Washday, you just got up in the morning and carried your water from this little spring. It took an hour or so to get that all heated up and poured into your tub. As soon as you got that in your tub, you'd start scrubbing on the board.

We had the Waterloo stove. It was a flat wood stove with a round oven on it.

The Waterloo was blocked with boilers. There wouldn't be any dinner cooked that day. After the pots were off, we could cook our supper. Supper we called it then. They call it dinner now.

We'd cook dinner on Sunday, and the pot liquor off your Sunday dinner, you'd save it. On Monday you'd make soup with it, probably for dinner. That was only easy to make. Tuesday we'd have meat again and Wednesday we would have fish.

On Thursday it was a meat day and on Friday was fish again. Saturday would be just something light, maybe make up hash or have some little stew or something. On Sunday we'd have the big dinner.

You'd have something light for supper on Mondays and Saturdays. Perhaps you'd have stew, in different ways.

It wasn't until the early 1950s when I got this stove with the fancy water tank on it. We did very good that summer. And I had a gasoline washer that same time. Until then I used the scrub board and wash tub.

We had the bare, white lumber floor at first. You had to get down on your hands and knees and scrub that with a brush once a week. That was hard to keep clean with a crowd of kids.

We also got a floor covering for the kitchen floor. We used to call it mill canvas. It was white, heavy stuff, and we painted that. When we got this mill canvas, we painted it a nice brown. It was pretty good too.

My husband never made any big money, but nobody went hungry. Things weren't good for people who didn't have a husband.

We used to eat a nice lot of potatoes. For sure we used thirty pounds a week or maybe more. We also had parsnip and other vegetables. Our cellar was under the house.

We bottled jams, we bottled meat and if we got any rabbit worthwhile, we'd bottle rabbit, and different things.

Sometimes we would bury turnip and cabbage. They kept good there, below the frost, and coming on the spring, we'd dig them out.

A lot of people had outside cellars dug in the side of a hill. We never used to have much for all year around, though. We would have ours pretty well eaten up by the spring, or the early part of the summer.

Sheep

We never had too much luck with sheep, seven or eight, that's all. They would find lambs in the spring, and we would kill them in the fall. That was a good treat then. We had the wool for knitting socks and mitts, and caps and sweaters.

The wool was washed then, scalded. You'd rig up boilers outside to scald your wool and then you had to pick that wool. Here in Campbell's Creek, we would go from house to house for what they called a picking spree. A crowd would come to my house one evening after supper and they'd all pick my wool. I'd make a lunch. Then probably a few nights later, we went to someone else's place. We had a nice lot of wool. In the first few years we didn't send it away. We could card it ourselves to make our rolls, and we would spin them.

Later we found a place where we could send it away and get the rolls made. In the latter years we found out we could send it out to Prince Edward Island and get blankets made. Oh, we got beautiful blankets from there, made out of the wool. And it didn't cost too much to get that done.

There's no one who keeps sheep any more around here.

I used to knit underwear, longjohns, bottom and top. I used to knit it in two pieces. You had to knit underwear because when they were smelt fishing on the ice it would be terrible cold. The winters were cold then and they would have to be out on that ice all day long, so they would have to have the woollen underwear. Let me tell you, I did some knitting.

You'd have to have a shift, two lots. I don't know how I did it, to tell the truth.

People still tell me they find the days long, but I never saw a day since I've been born that I found it a long day. I keep busy all the time, all the time. You get into that and you can't stop.

Making Clothes

I'll tell you now where I used to get my clothes. People that I knew, they were well to do, they would give me clothes. I had people, friends and relatives, far away and they would send me parcels. They would send me coats, real expensive mink coats, and seal coats, and all those kinds of things. I would cut them down, and make coats for my smaller children.

They never went out much in the cold when they were small. They had a sweater on, and a coat. You could buy a bit of material. It wasn't too expensive then. Windbreaker material, you'd call it, for coats.

We used flour sacks for sheets. You would bleach them and make them nice and sew them. That would be for sheets and pillow cases. Some of the flour sacks were dyed black, to make pants for the children. The children would wear knitted underwear underneath the black pants.

In the woods you could pick a certain kind of moss off a tree, a spruce tree. That would make a brown dye. It would stay. It was used for their socks. You even knit the girls' socks, right to the knee. You had to knit all year around to get caught up on it, to have something for everyone to wear.

My goodness, I knit hundreds of vamps. And mitts. The men in the woods would wear out a lot of mitts, and when fishing too.

Fishing Was Hard

When my husband started fishing first, he fished with a man called Danny. Daniel Campbell. He was sixteen when he first went fishing. There wasn't much work then. That would have been in 1916.

There were no motors. After they hauled their lobster pots, they would row them in to Abbott and Haliburton. They had to row all the way along the shore from here to there in those days. All that, and they only got a cent and a half a pound for their lobster. If the wind came up too rough, they had to stay there until the wind calmed down.

Then the two of them would row the boat back. 'Twas hard work. The pay they got for all that work wasn't very much.

Down here it's a real hard place for a fisherman.

Homemade Bleach

They use javex now for bleaching. We used to have a big iron boiler on the stove and we used lye, little flakes of powerful stuff. Shake some of that in your water and you would scald your clothes. You would wash in it, and scald it, and rinse it.

If we didn't have any of this canned lye we used to save our wood ashes from the wood stove. We would put the ashes into a boiler and steep it on the stove, and then we would take it off to cool. That's just as good as the canned lye. It'd be right clear.

Homemade Soap

When you killed your animals in the fall they would have a lot of fat on them. You'd trim all that off and save it. You'd boil that on the stove and put this canned lye into it. After it boiled for so long, there would be nothing left. The fat would be all boiled out. We dipped out any lumps and let the rest set in the pot. Then we'd cut it out in lumps and put it away. It would dry right hard to make beautiful soap.

We used to use only the animal fat, but now, a lot of people, like father and others, they also made it from a little seal fat. It had a terrible smell. And there's fat in the cod oil. We used to make soap out of that, but it was terrible. You'd rinse the clothes a lot, but the smell wouldn't come off.

But the fat from your meats didn't smell so bad.

Gardens

We put in potatoes, turnip, cabbage, beets and carrot, parsnips and grew pumpkins and zucchinis. I grew some very big pumpkins. Not that long ago, I think it was '88, I planted my garden, and then I went to Ontario. When I came back it was still July and there were only four plants. The rest didn't come.

By the last part of September I had four large pumpkins. I had a forty-five pound one, a fifty, a fifty-five and a sixty. They were the biggest ones I ever grew. The rest of the time I only had small ones. Ten or fifteen pounds would be the biggest.

We would grow cucumbers and cauliflower too and make up our own pickles. Bread and butter pickles, and mustard pickles. We'd make a nice bit of that. After we got a deep freeze, we would boil down our turnip tops. We grew our own onions too, you know.

My husband would plow the land. We used the horse in the garden. He would be busy at the fishing but he would help me to make the drills. I would have to do the planting, and as soon as the children were big enough, at six or seven, they would help to drop the potato seed.

Both of us did the weeding. That was the killer, when the weeds got out of hand. In the gardens we used stable manure, sheep manure. We also used herring. We set our potato seeds so that they were a herring-length apart. Later years we could buy fertilizer.

We would dig the potatoes, dry them and put them in bags and put them in the cellar for the winter. My husband did the lifting. After the potatoes were in the cellar, he would be cutting wood for the winter. When the snow came, he would haul the wood out with the horse.

We wouldn't have enough wood to do us all year round, because we had to keep our fire on for heating the pots of water, every day.

The Vinegar Plant

We used to have our own vinegar, too. We'd have our own vinegar plant growing in a bottle of water. The plant is a velum, almost like a jellyfish. You add sugar and the plant turns it into vinegar.

Home Remedies

You could make your own cough medicine out of white spruce. You took the bark off the tree and inside that was kind of a white velum. You boiled that on the stove. You put a bit of sugar with it and made your own cough medicine. I haven't made any for a long time now: I used to put something else in it, a bit of vinegar and sugar. Probably molasses. That would stop your cough a bit, especially if you had a real bad one.

You never heard tell of turkey much for Christmas. You would have a goose. You'd save that goose grease and you'd rub that on the children's chests and on their backs. You'd give them cod oil to drink for their cold.

You'd give the children cod oil all the time. A teaspoon in the morning. Some of them liked it, more of them didn't. One of my children, I'm not sure which one it was, loved it! I had to keep the bottle hidden from her. There were some more then who weren't too happy about having to take it.

Midwives Weren't Necessary

I had a doctor attend to me for most of my babies. The midwife would come with the doctor. I only had to go to the hospital twice. You only went then if it was an emergency.

Sarah March was a midwife. She died a long time ago. She was a relative of mine. After she was gone, my sister-in-law used to come in. Her name was Sarah MacDonald. She died a nice while back, too. Then there used to be another woman by the name of Mrs. Millie Campbell; she was here one time.

A lot used to say babies came from in under a stump. You also heard the doctor dropped them. I guess I was 10 or 12 years old before we figured that the doctor must have dropped them. Not today!

They'd say, if you were pregnant, you couldn't reach up to touch anything. Some would say if you saw food and if you liked to have that food, wherever you put your hand there would be a birthmark. You were wishing probably you'd have a certain kind of berry or some kind of meat, and if you put your hand on your face or your arms or wherever, there would be a birthmark left on the new baby.

I know children born with birthmarks alright, but I don't know for sure if it was from that or not. I know a relative of mine, she was about seven months pregnant. She was driving in the car with her husband, and she thought there was going to be an accident. She put her hands over her face and when her child was born, over half his face was a different colour.

Charmers And Remedies

If you had a bad toothache? There was one person, a seventh son, who lived next door. He was what you would call a charmer. If anyone got a bad toothache or a bad pain, they would take their child to him and he would make the sign of the cross and say a little prayer. He died young with cancer.

There was a cure older people had for people who had asthma bad, like children. They would cut a lock off their hair, bore a hole in a tree, and put it in there. They'd just leave it there, I suppose, and after so long the asthma would go away.

If you had a bad earache, some would slice an onion and put that over your ear. Some more would mix up mustard and flour to make a poultice. The poultice was put in a cloth and wrapped around your head to lodge it against your ear.

Some others would get a salt herring, if they had a real bad sore throat. They'd wrap it in a little cloth and tie it around the throat. I never tried it myself. My husband tried it. He said it worked. His sore throat went away.

Three children in my husband's family died of diphtheria, in one week. He was the baby of the family. The doctor used to come and give them something he called the "kill or cure." When he'd come back the next day they would be dead. Three died like that.

In those days, the grandmother was the boss in the house. When couples married, the grandmothers lived in. When children came, there would be three generations in one house at the same time.

They told my husband Mike this story when he got older. This time, the old grandmother was there when the doctor came. The doctor was going to give him the "kill or cure."

The grandmother grabbed the doctor and pushed him right out the door!

She said, "You've killed enough now. You get out!"

That was a long time ago. That was in 1900.

asthma	generation	partridge berries	toothache
bakeapples	javex	pregnant	underwear
birthmark	junk	pumpkins	vamps
bleach	lobster pot	raspberries	velum
blueberries	longjohns	scalded	vinegar
canvas	manure	separator	windbreaker
churn	medicine	shingles	woolen
crank	milch cows	spruce	yearling
fertilizer	molasses	throat	zucchini



The Cow Head Double Axe Murder

Amy Nicolle

Amy Nicolle is a retired teacher who has a wealth of knowledge on the local history of Bonne Bay. When I visited her, she told me the story that involved her great great grandfather and great great grandmother. They were witnesses at the trial of John Pelley, who was hanged for a double murder.

I CAN TELL YOU the story the way I heard it. Sarah Singleton, or Sarah Cross - we are not sure about her last name - was working with the Bird firm at Woody Point. Now, whether she was housemaid with the family, or what, I don't know. But she was working in there. The way the story went, she had a boyfriend, Joseph Randell, and a brother, Richard Cross.

Joseph and Richard went to Cow Head where they had a trapline out. But there was another fella in Cow Head as well. Joseph and Richard were gone a long time and Sarah got worried about them.

John Paine was an agent for the Bird firm out here in Rocky Harbour. She came here to Rocky Harbour to see if John Paine would go to Cow Head with her to look for her brother and her boyfriend.

The way the story goes, they snowshoed from Rocky Harbour to Cow Head. On their way down they came across a camp and this man was standing in the doorway. They spoke to him and Sarah told him that she was looking for her brother and her boyfriend, and asked if he had seen them.

Now, this man's name was John Pelley. So he said yes, he saw them. They had been there but they were gone in on the trapline. Now, of course, John and Sarah couldn't come back to Rocky Harbour that night, by snowshoe, so they stayed in the camp for the night.

During the night, Pelley went out and brought his gun in the camp. Sarah or John asked him why he was bringing the gun in, and he said there was a weasel in the camp.

In the meantime, Sarah was sitting over by the fire. She noticed a pair of mitts hanging up that she had knit for her brother. John and Sarah got a bit suspicious. The next morning they left and came back up again to Rocky Harbour and on into Bonne Bay. John Paine got some more men with him. They went down and looked behind the camp there and found the two bodies of the men.

Pelley confessed to the murder. One story states that they tied him to a tree, put birch rind around it and threatened to burn him.

They arrested Pelley and brought him back to whatever Justice was in Woody Point at that time, and then onto St. John's for trial.

Pelley was accused of murder and John and Sarah went in as witnesses. He was found guilty and hanged publicly on September 5th, 1809, while they watched. He was from Bay Bulls.

Sarah Cross's boyfriend was dead, and while they were in St. John's, Sarah and John Paine got married, eight days after Pelley was hanged.

They are my great great grandparents.



capture

housemaid

weasel

witness



An Adventure In The Merchant Marine

Harold Richards

Harold Richards was a member of the merchant marine during World War II. In 1941 he joined the ship *Kitty's Brook*. She was owned by the Bowater paper company when she crossed the path of a German submarine in 1942.

FIRST I WENT ON THE OLD STEAMER, the *Meigle*, firing, shovelling coal. She got off dry dock in Montreal, but we broke the cylinder head off her engine coming down through St. Lawrence River. We had to go in Sorel and we were there two months. We came back to St. John's, and she was all lopsided. She was never upright. I think she was built that way.

When we got in to St. John's, the *Kitty's Brook* was there. This was in 1941. My buddy and I went on board her. They wanted two deck hands. What was I going to do, deck hand, after working in the engine? Anyway, we went aboard of her, me and my buddy, Stan McKenzie.

You know, I learned the compass overnight! We came out of St. John's and I knew nothing about a compass, only what I learned in the Boy Scouts years ago. She was carrying paper most of the time, but if there was a chance to get a load to bring back you would get it.

This time, it was May 9, 1942, ten o'clock in the night. We left New York that morning and came down through Cape Cod Canal. We had a general cargo of sugar and 500 tons of cement and heavy equipment. The deck was loaded with heavy equipment. They had ladders going up on one side and coming down on the other, to get around.

Ten o'clock in the night we were coming across the Bay of Fundy when this sub came up. She came up on the port side and went across the bow. She was all lit up, too. She came down on the starboard side and let us have it!

I was in my room getting ready to go to bed. I had half my clothes off. I was carpenter on her and I used to be working day shift, all days.

There was another man sharing the room with me, the bo'sun. He was lying down on his bunk. He never had on any clothes, only just his shorts. He was in the top bunk. I was in the bottom one. I never had any time to put on any clothes. I had on a pair of pants and one boot, and a singlet.

I went up on deck. We used to have a raft on the afterdeck and all the crew back aft was up in this raft, sitting down, waiting for the boat to sink. She was going down by the head. She was almost up on end then. I said to my buddy, one of my nephews, from Corner Brook, Alfred Rose, "Come on Alfred, get down out of this. Let's go for the boats."

And he jumped on my back. Now, I don't know how far I carried him, but I went up over all those big crates and went down on the other deck and when I got there they were trying to untie this big knot which held the lifeboat in. I went and slipped the joint and the lifeboat went out.

There weren't many in our boat, only four at first.

Some of the men were in the boat when she was lowered. I had to go down the line. I know I burned my hands. So I don't know if I still had Alfred on my back or not!

When the *Kitty's Brook* sank, we were probably about a hundred yards or more away from her. It was seven minutes, from the time she struck until she went down. She didn't catch fire, but the oil was flowing right out of her, out of the stack. Everybody was covered with oil.

No Plug!

We got in the boat, but the boat didn't have the plug in, and she started to sink. Leak! She leaked like a basket.

Well, with the force of the water coming in, it was a hard job to get the plug in. But we managed to do it and get the water out. We picked up one fella. He went down with the raft. He said he went right to the bottom with the ship. Now, you don't know if he did or not, but he was holding onto a suitcase in under his knees and that suitcase come back with him. He hollered out, "I'm on a raft, all by myself."

We took him off the raft, and that made five in our boat. But the other boat got away before we did. There were two boats that got away. But we never saw the other lifeboat after, until we got ashore at Lockeport.

Rowing To Nova Scotia

They tell me we rowed fifty-two (52) miles. We were rowing from ten o'clock that night, that was Friday night, until Sunday noon, thirty-six hours I believe it was.

We rowed towards Lockeport, Nova Scotia. The weather was calm as it happened. There wasn't too much wind at all, but it snowed that night. That was bad. The tenth of May.

I had on one boot, a singlet and my pants. They had emergency blankets in the boat, so we cut them up and covered up. One fella, my buddy who was on the top bunk, he only had on his shorts. We had to make a suit for him.

The other lifeboat got picked up, but we rowed all the way to Lockeport.

We had one man injured. When I slipped the block on the deck, for the boat to swing out, the block hit the side of his foot, and tore the side off it. Every time I saw him, years after, he used to thank me, because he was getting a good disability pay.

We rowed into Lockeport. They took us ashore and they brought us to a big modern fish plant. There were all kinds of wash basins along by the wall, and mirrors and everything. We went there and washed up. We got the grease and oil off us. Then they gave us, I believe it was, two hours sleep. We went in and got in bunks and that was it. I think it was the best two hours sleep I ever had in my life.

They sent down a bus from Halifax. We got on the bus and they carried us up there and checked us out at the hospital. There were a few who stayed in hospital, but I got away. I never had any injuries or anything.

They sent us home and gave us a certain length of time off. Then they called as soon as there was a vacancy on another ship.

afterdeck	crate	Lockeport	singlet
Cape Cod Canal	injuries	Nova Scotia	starboard
carpenter	lifeboat	New York	suitcase
compass		S.S. <i>Meigle</i>	



The Cement Sink

Gordon Shears

Gordon Shears operated sawmills all his life. When something broke he fixed it himself. He was always making parts for engines and liked solving problems to make life easier in Rocky Harbour, Newfoundland. One day he decided to build a cement sink.

WE LIVED IN A LITTLE HOUSE that I'd bought. It was down here under the hill. A one-storey house. And we didn't have any water in it or anything. You heard about the *Raleigh* going ashore in Forteau, the big old warship. I bought some pipe from a man in Lance au Loup, that he got out of the *Raleigh*.

I bought a hundred feet of one-inch pipe out of the *Raleigh*. I think it was five dollars. And I brought it home to put water in the house. They were all cut off on the ends, broken off, so I sawed them off square and I threaded them with a hacksaw and file. I put three threads around each one, and forced a coupling on it.

There's a brook running down there now. I dammed off the brook to bring water in the house. So, I got that done, but I didn't have a sink. I couldn't afford to buy one. My brother Jim, he was used to using cement.

He said, "Make one out of cement."

I said, "I don't know how to make it."

He said, "We'll make one. I'll make the form for you."

So he helped me make the form. We made the sink with cement. A hundred and fifty pounds of cement I put into it. We were tickled to death. One end was big for washing clothes. My wife could put the scrub board down in the sink and wash the clothes in one end. The other end was for washing dishes.

So, everything was the best kind. Sometime in February, the weather was pretty cold.

We just had a stove in the house and we used to let the fire go out when we went to bed. So this night, it was so cold, it was about twenty below zero. I said, "They tell me you should let the water run, so it won't freeze. I think we had better let the water run tonight."

So we went to bed and left the water running.

Sometime in the daylight, I woke up. The water was stopped running. I jumped out of bed and when I went to the door I struck the ice.

The outlet in the sink froze up and then it overflowed. The water ran down over the sink onto the floor, and it froze. Over by the sink there was about two inches of ice and it spread over the floor and over to the hall door.

The floor was all one glare of ice. Almost five inches thick in places!

That was Sunday morning. We had to get up to get the axe and the shovel and chop the ice off the floor and shovel it out.



The cement sink

cement

Forteau

Lance aux Loup

overflowed



CORMACK, NEWFOUNDLAND PART ONE

Iris Shears

Iris Shears lives in Cormack, Newfoundland. In November of 1947, Iris, her husband and their little baby left Rocky Harbour to drive to their new home. Cormack is eighteen kilometres north of Deer Lake.

MY HUSBAND WAS an ex-serviceman, navy. Royal Navy. When they came home from overseas, veterans had choices. There were different projects that each one could choose. Cormack was built up as a farm settlement for veterans. Some more went fishing.

There were three of us in the cab of the pickup truck. And the road snowed in behind us as we were coming. The next day everything was snowed in. You couldn't get through the country. That was the last time we could have gotten through that winter. From here to Deer Lake the road was plowed. It was a dirt highway and icy as old heck. We came here the eleventh of November.

What they did was build up the shell of a house. Clapboard on the outside. There was nothing else done inside. No insulation. No basement. There were windows, but no storm windows, nothing like that. As a matter of fact you wouldn't even call it a cabin. A log cabin would have been a whole lot better.

They were shells, clapboard on posts. There was a cement chimney which cracked. There was no basement under the house. It used to heave, and of course, the chimney would crack and the flames came out through the sides. There were quite a few houses burned up here the first years that we were here.

The baby was six weeks old when we came here. And we had this little wood stove that burned only birch rind. I had nails in the ceiling. I would hook the quilts in them and I would enclose the stove and get inside the quilts. That was the only place warm enough to give her a bath or change her diapers. Outside of that, it was cold. There was frost everywhere. But the thing was, she didn't have a cold the whole winter. That was the surprising part about it. Because she was so used to the cold. When she would wake up at night her hands would be blue.

A Poor Winter

You know, I've tried to think about how we lived. I don't know how we did. There was no income. Roland was cutting railway ties that winter. I remember that he had eighteen dollars. That's all the money that I remember having that winter. We stretched the eighteen dollars over the very basic things. Flour wasn't as expensive then as it is now. There just wasn't anything.

Roland would catch rabbits. We had rabbit, bottled rabbit. And I used to say then, if ever I get to the point where I don't have to eat rabbit, I'm not going to eat it. And I don't. I got so turned off rabbit I haven't eaten it since.

The next year we kept a pig. We'd kill it in the fall since by then it was cold. It was cold those winters. It wasn't like it is now. We had cold winters and hot summers. Summers were like it is now. In fact, there wasn't any water, because the wells would go dry. We had to dig the wells by hand. And we could only go down a bit below water level, so when the weather was like it is this summer, the well went dry.

And that is what it is all about. We didn't have anything.

When this settlement was originally planned, it was planned so that people were closer together. A house on either corner. But there was nothing like that done.

I had just come from a fishing village where all the people were together. Here there was no social life, no support, nothing. My parents were up at Daniel's Harbour and I was here, in the bush, in the woods.

There was nobody. There were no lights. And you didn't see anyone. So there was a lot of fear. As a matter of fact I built up a lot of fears and after a month or so, I couldn't go outside during the day.

That's when I learned to fight fear. We had a clothesline, but I got to the point where I couldn't go out and put clothes on the line during the day. Because this was all new to me. I wasn't used to living in the bush, with nobody around. I developed a fear of the unknown. It was a deep-seated fear that I had to fight. So I fought it, and it made me a stronger person.

CORMACK, NEWFOUNDLAND PART TWO

After a hard winter settling at Cormack, Newfoundland, Iris Shears got over her nervousness at being isolated. She then looked to the spring and the clearing of the land. It was difficult, with little money and little equipment. She was lucky that the farm was on a main road. By growing the right things, she could sell them at the roadside and in Deer Lake and make a living.

WE HAD TWO ACRES CLEARED around the house site, and then there were eight acres in on the back, cleared, but it's all grown over now.

We were supposed to be farming, but there wasn't anything to do farming with. We were given a couple of pieces of horse equipment, but no horse. I think in the next year they allotted you a few dollars for a horse, if you wanted.

We bought a little Cub tractor in 1948, with some little plows and things like that on it.

There was nothing cleared in '47. Our land was cleared the next year, in the spring of 1948. It was 1949 when we got the \$800, two years after we got here. We were growing a few vegetables by that time.

A lot of the hard times I've blocked from my memory. I don't want to remember. I can't remember because it was too harsh. Some of the things I survived made me stronger for it. There are a few other things I wouldn't put down on paper anyway.

We didn't know any different. It was a thing where ignorance is bliss. But it's only in these late years that I look back and see what happened. For four and a half years that Roland went overseas he got \$800. And this land, that was nothing.

Government cleared this ten acres of land with a bulldozer. They took all the topsoil off and pushed it all in the back. Beautiful raspberries grew there, but there was nothing left on the land but the sand and the pug. Now, build it up and try to get something growing in it!

Britain wasn't very nice. I've learned what the Canadian government did for their servicemen and it just makes me boil. We were here for eighteen years without electricity. We had kerosene lamps.

There was nothing. Try to get over the highroad if you could. It took a tow truck to get you out of the ruts.

Well, what I used to do, I fed the family off the gardens. I would market in Deer Lake and set up a highway sign here. A lot of people used to travel through here at that time, to go to Big Falls. It was a well-travelled highway. So anything that I had to sell, I'd put a sign up on the side of the road and sell it.

Most of the farmers were down on the byroads, but I had the main road to myself. So anything that I could grow, I could sell it.

I grew things for the early-market garden. Greens and rhubarb, lettuce - some things that I could sell early in the spring.

I grew a lot of strawberry rhubarb, sometimes three pounds to a stalk. It was huge. Colemans in Deer Lake used to take it. It was surprising how much you made.

We built a barn and we kept hens. We went into the hens five years after.

Potatoes and the rough crops were only for our own consumption. We didn't have it for sale.

And then I had the strawberries. They came when Rodney and Joy were big enough to go in the fields with me. They must have been ten or twelve, when I started with the strawberries.

Pansy, our first child, was six when we had two more right together. There were only fourteen months in the difference between Rodney and Joy. But there wasn't any school, not out this way. There was a school five miles inside. Pansy started school when she was seven. I taught her kindergarten and grade one and she just took her exams in the spring. By the time she was seven there was a school two miles in the road, so she went to grade two. But she had to walk the two miles. The year she took grade nine was the first year we got the buses.

I was born with this gift of sewing. I passed the genes on to my two daughters as well. I was born with it. I could take anything as a small child and cut a pattern out of it. When I was ten I made myself a Princess style coat. I would do sewing for my sisters.

I had an old treadle sewing machine that an aunt in Corner Brook gave me. I used to take in things from other people, like a coat or dress, rip it down and make clothes for their children. I would make a few dollars that way. As I go talking now, things like this come to mind.

When I think back, sometimes I say why did I stay here this long? It wasn't fun living here, but we learned to survive. I'm a stronger person for it and I think the children are, also.

They really didn't know any of the tough times. They didn't realize it, because children didn't ask for money. They ask for security and love. Quality time, that was the thing that my children had. That was all they had. The first three years of Pansy's life, she spent in her playpen, out in the garden with me.

But it built a strong back. If I could go back to those years, with some of the knowledge that I have now, I would go back. I would change a lot of things. The possibilities and the opportunities were there. All you had to do was take it, but you needed help. It's the same thing today. There are opportunities, but you have to go for them.

After the children got older and went to school, I got a job at Deer Lake. So, I did gardening here, and worked in hotels in Deer Lake, until I left in 1977.

Iris Shears moved to Fredericton, New Brunswick, in 1977, where she worked as matron of a senior citizens' home. At the same time she owned and managed her own tailoring shop and bought several townhouses and became a landlady. Since then she has returned to Cormack where she lives with her daughter Joy.

acres	project	doze	matron
birch rind	quilt	equipment	playpen
cement chimney	rabbits	garden	Princess
clapboard	railway	genes	raspberries
diaper	settlement	highway	rough
income	social	horse	security
insulation	support	kerosene	servicemen
originally	veterans	kindergarten	signs
overseas	byroad	lamps	townhouse
pickup truck	consumption	landlady	topsail



The Lumberwoods, 1930

George Snow

In 1930, George Snow was fifteen years old. He was living in Rocky Harbour, Bonne Bay. In June he went with his father to cut pulpwood for the Bowater mill at Corner Brook.

THAT WAS THE ONLY WORK there was at that time. You had to go in the lumber woods or you went fishing. If you made a dollar in the woods, you got a dollar. But if you made a dollar fishing, you didn't get it. You traded it. That was the difference.

I went in with my father, Edgar Snow. The camps were in Lomond area, Bonne Bay. You had to walk then. You just took your clothes in a pack on your back. You walked because there were no roads those times, only trails.

Field Bunks

The camps were just log buildings. You had a centre area about eight to ten feet wide. Each side of the camp was just one straight field bunk, almost like a fish flake. All on one level. There was a longer for a rail between you and the next man.

You would go and pick your boughs and make your bunk with a blanket. There were anywhere from twenty-five to forty men in a camp.

There was everything in them. At any given time you never knew what you were going to run into: lice, bed bugs, crabs. You mention it, it was there. Sometimes you'd have it fairly good. There wouldn't be too much of it, but other times it would be drastic. It didn't matter what time of the year, winter or summer.

They'd dump all the food. All the trash from the camp was dumped out there about a few feet from the door. Nothing was buried, and the rats, there would be millions of them.

Usually the camp would be built by the side of a brook. That's how they'd get the water. If you had thirty or forty men, you'd have a cook and a helper. The helper cut firewood for the stove, cut it up in stove lengths and hauled water.

Anything you wanted such as tobacco and clothes, or anything like that you had to buy separately. They had what they called a van. It was a little room where you could buy stuff.

Food

Breakfast was beans, bread and tea. You'd have to take a lunch. It depended on the distance you had to walk. Sometimes you took beans, or salt beef and bread. They had that cooked. Some boiled the kettle, and have tea and sugar and that sort of thing. Any brook you'd drink out of it. Or any hole with water anywhere, you would drink out of it.

In The Woods

We had a bucksaw and one axe each. They were coming in with the smaller blades, about one inch wide. Before that, they used the Simon saw, or cross-cut saw, the two-handers. It depended on the type of wood you had but we usually cut around three cords a day. Our pay was around \$2.50 or \$2.60 a cord. That was just before the Depression. Then it dropped down to a dollar a cord. Our board cost sixty cents a day.

You'd get up at six o'clock. Breakfast was at seven o'clock to be ready to go in the woods by eight. You'd work until seven or eight o'clock at night.

Sometimes, on Sundays, we would play horseshoes or more or less lie around. You might go up the brook for fishing, trouting, or something like that to pass away the day.

Flies

The most difficult thing for us, youngsters first going in the woods, was the flies. You had nothing to keep the flies off. You'd mix something up. A mixture of Stockholm tar and one thing and another but it was useless. In the summertime the weather would be so hot. You'd sweat so much, if you put it on, the sweat washed it off again. And the sandflies, they were in swarms, the no-see-ums, just like clouds.

After a while, you'd be sweating. With so much salt, your underwear could stand alone after it dried.

The Bucksaw

A lot of them used to make their own wooden frames, but most used metal frames. The company used to supply the frames. You'd buy your own saws.

You'd buy the saw and the file. The teeth were formed, but you couldn't use it until it was filed. You had to file the saw first before you could use it. It's an art in itself. It's something that you had to learn. If the saw is not cutting, you work that much harder trying to cut pulpwood.

A blade would last for months, provided you didn't break it. But it was such a narrow, thin steel. If you nipped it somehow, or if the tree dropped on you, you'd bust it off, because it was tight in those bow frames.

Changes After The War

There were no changes until after the war. I went back in the lumberwoods again after I came back from the war, for a while. There was a certain amount of change, because the companies bought a lot of bedding left over from the war years. Most camps had mattresses and had metal bunks. Double bunks, one on top.

After the war, they got that DDT. That cleaned up the lice and that sort of thing in the camps. You didn't have to go through so much misery that way.

They either had oil or coal in the wood camps, another change. You didn't have to cut wood for the stoves and that sort of thing.

Promotion to Second Hand

I took over the duties of the foreman when he wasn't there. That was after the war.

You'd go in the woods and place men. You would probably start off at a bog somewhere. You'd have a road so many feet wide, to the end of the cutting. The woods roads were all blocked out. Every man had a block to cut.

You also placed men in the woods when they came into the camp. If a man came in, if the camp wasn't full, you took him on. That was it. You filled up the camp, but after that there was no more hiring.

It Was Slavery

It was slavery. It was the worst job in the world. Because it was all contract work, or piece-work, whatever you mind to call it. If you didn't earn it, you didn't have it.

At that time, too, you had to go to the doctor. If he turned you down you didn't get in the woods. You had to have a doctor's recommendation to get hired in the camps.

Doctor Greene was always there in Deer Lake, far as I know, during the years I was there. He was a pretty good old rascal. You'd have to be pretty far gone before he'd turn you down. He knew there was nothing else for people to do.

Only the fittest survived. TB was a big problem, as well as back problems, strains and hernias.

At first, when you were using the bucksaws and that sort of thing, you had to use an axe for trimming. A lot of people got some bad cuts with axes.

But it didn't seem to bother me that much.

blanket	doctor	metal	stain
boughs	firewood	millions	Stockholm tar
bucksaw	flake	no-see-ums	summertime
bunks	hernias	piece-work	swarms
camp	horseshoes	rascal	tobacco
contract	lice	recommendations	trouting
crabs	mattresses	sandflies	underwear
depended			



Port au Port Midwife

Millie Young

Millie Young learned the skills of a midwife the old way. She learned by going with another midwife on her visits to pregnant women. Mrs. Young had a full, busy life, raising a large family. At the same time, she helped to deliver hundreds of babies in western Newfoundland.

THEY DID CALL ME MILLIE all the time, but my right name is Mildred. Victor T. Young and Rose Anne Felix were my parents. I was born out in Lourdes. They used to call it Clam Bank Cove before it got named Lourdes.

I helped deliver 550 babies. In Lourdes, Three Rock Cove. Black Duck Brook. Winterhouse and down to Cape St. George.

First I went around with Mrs. Henry Skinner. She was a very good midwife. Every time there was a baby born I'd always be with her, so I learned from that. Then I went around with a doctor.

I started when I was in my early thirties. I had eleven children myself. I was pregnant the first trip I went on a maternity case. I even delivered four of my sister's children. The last baby I delivered was in West Bay. In the fifties.

Back then there were no cars. In the summer when you had to go, they used to have a horse and cart, and in the wintertime it was by horse and sleigh. If I was called out on a stormy day, I had to go. I wrapped up in blankets. I went out in bad days, big storms.

After the baby was born, probably, if it was far away, like Three Rock Cove or Black Duck Brook, I always stayed three to five days, until the woman got up. I'd wash the baby and the baby's clothes, and if she had children, wash their clothes and cook meals for them. I'd do all that. For women who lived closer to me, I'd visit every morning.

I had eleven children myself, and I made all their clothes on a sewing machine. I still got the sewing machine in there, an antique Singer. And I used to wash all their clothes. I only had a big galvanized tub, and a wash board.

I baked our bread and pies. I used to make wedding cakes for people.

I was pretty poor off until I started to get my baby bonus. I used to do all that work for ten dollars, on a case like that. Ten dollars to work there for five days' work. It came to nothing. I worked hard all my lifetime. I'll never forget it.

The hardest part was getting up all hours of the night. I'd be so tired of working all day, out in the garden. But I loved the job, though.





Inge Barth's Story

Many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians had hard lives. Mrs. Inge Barth had a hard life, but it was different from that of most people. She sent along a story of her life for other seniors to read. Here is a part of what she wrote about her life, and starting out in Labrador.

I WAS BORN IN Germany in 1928. My father was called Fritz Schreiber and my mother was called Mimi. We had three farms: An animal farm, an agricultural farm and a farm to grow food for the animals.

Life was wonderful! I began to train Saint Bernard dogs. There was much work, and I earned very much money. My day began at 5 o'clock when I got up. At the first farm I trained horses for the German Army. Then my father died and I was in charge of three big farms, a herd of sheep, and I had 400 workers. They treated me very well. At first I was afraid they would not take my orders, because I was only 15 years old.

This all happened during the Second World War. We provided food for the German Army. It was a very bad time. At the same time, the Russians invaded Eastern Germany and they took all the animals. I was captured and they sent me to the camps in Russia.

I worked in the mines for about 12 hours every day of the week. This happened in Siberia, to the north of Russia. During my capture there, I received only 2 hours of rest per day, no money, no food and no shoes. I wore two bags on my feet. After a certain time, I met two German soldiers, one of whom suggested to me an escape route. I agreed. In Siberia it was very, very cold. We decided to wait until it was warmer. It was time to go home.

We began our trip. It took us 5 months without food. We were so tired, and we travelled always in silence. We were very frightened. Often, during our escape, we had to hide. When we arrived in Germany, the two soldiers stopped and I continued the trip home. It was a terrible situation at my home. No one knew me. I was excessively thin. I spoke only Russian. I was not able to speak German, but later, the language came back to me.

My mother, my two little sisters and I went to West Germany. We took the animals, two tractors and other things which the Germans left at the house. The trip lasted two full nights and one full day. We had no passports. If we had been captured, the soldiers would have killed us.

After two years there, I met a girl who was going to Canada. She asked me if I would like to go and certainly I said yes. My mother and my sisters decided to stay in Germany, but I decided to go.

I eventually travelled to Montreal and got a job with a Jewish family. After a while I met a young man from Germany. We married and then honeymooned in Florida. When we got back there were very many worries. The Quebecois wanted to be the separatists of Canada. We were Germans and in Quebec during this time, if one was not able to speak French, then one lost his employment.

Immediately, my husband Albert received his pink slip. His employment had been terminated. Albert went to the Department of National Defense and found work in Goose Bay. We looked for a house, found it on Green Street and bought it. Albert had already begun his work with snow removal with the American forces.

We didn't like to live in the town because the people were afraid of our two big dogs. There was a big house on an island known as Eskimo Island. Only one family lived there. We bought the big house and moved to the island to raise a family. I was pregnant with my first child. Unfortunately, our son Nicky died in a boating accident. Our son Roland was born four years later. He is in the Canadian military.

I was always a very active woman. One night I went to bed after working a very hard and long day. In the morning, I woke up paralyzed. It was very difficult to accept. A few years later I moved to the Paddon Home in Happy Valley. Here they have a very good staff, but there is too much work for them.

My life is very different. Generally I am very happy, but as usual it is very difficult to accept that I am handicapped. I have no idea of the future, but I hope that everything goes well.

agricultural	excessively	Lake Melville	Saint Bernard
American	Fritz Schreiber	languages	separatists
East Germany	handicapped	Quebecois	
employment	honeymooned	Russians	



My Labrador Life

Ruby Budgell

Ruby Budgell now lives in Northwest River, Labrador. She spent her early days in a small camp on a river. Her father used the river to get to his fur traps in the interior. When his children were old enough, they moved to a village with a school.

I WAS BORN IN Nascopie River, January 5, 1924. That's where my parents were living at the time. My dad was a trapper, so I was born at the Nascopie River camp near the mouth of the river.

Father grew up in Kenemish which is across the bay. He fished for salmon and logged, working at that sort of thing all summer. Then in the fall he went in the country. He went up to Nascopie River. My mother went with him after they were married.

There were only two families there: My mother, brother and myself and my aunt and her children. My aunt brought me into the world. She was a midwife to mother.

My aunt used to look after trade with the Indians when they came out in the wintertime. She was Aunt Annie McLean, married to Gilbert Blake. She was my dad's sister.

So we were the only two families up there.

We lived there until my brother and I were old enough to go to school. That was about 1929.

We had to come down the lake, that big, long lake. Grand Lake is over forty miles long. We came down before the ice went out in the spring. I can remember, vaguely, coming down around the last year we were up there.

My dad never ever kept a dog team in his life. He didn't like driving dogs. They always built their own catamaran. It was strong, because it had to carry everything, but it really was the frame of a komatik.

He put the family in the canoe on the catamaran and pulled it down. If we had to go in water on the ice or anything, we kept dry. We were quite young, and my mother would walk with him.

It certainly was not hard that time of the year. We were on smooth ice. We had the canoe for protection in case of holes. That lake is an extremely deep lake, so they used to pull them down that way.

We came down that spring and went over to Kenemish. We had a cabin over there.

That fall we came back here to Northwest River and bought a little log house down by the river. We stayed here that winter because my brother and I were old enough to go to school. My mother and father both were determined that we were going to go to school until we were finished, for which we can be thankful.

To me it was a break to go to school. I preferred it to a lot of other things I had to do. I really appreciated it. My mother needed help as much as anyone in this community did, with a big family. But we helped to do the work after school and on weekends.

I enjoyed school a lot. Being the eldest of the family, I had very little childhood, because there was always lots for me to go out and work at when I got home from school.

Aunt Annie McLean canoe	catamaran Gilbert Blake	Kenemish komatik	Nascopie River trapper
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Blackberry Wine And Ranger Mercer

Gladys Burdett

Gladys Burdett was born in a small town called Aillik, Labrador. Her father was a fisherman and caught and traded in fur. Gladys and her father James Chard always did things together. She told this story in Cartwright, Labrador, where she now lives.

ONE TIME, IN A COOKBOOK belonging to my grandmother, father and I found a recipe. It was for table wine made out of blackberries. Well now, we had to try that. I picked the blackberries and squat the juice out of them. We put five pounds of brown sugar with it, and so much water.

We had to put it in a tub for six weeks and bottle it off for three months. We had twelve rum bottles full. We had them sealed and put upstairs. One night, about twelve o'clock, we heard a noise.

Bang. Bang!

I said, "Father, what is that?"

"That's your bottles."

Sure enough. Some blew up. We took them out of that and we poured them in some more bottles. If you drank an inch and a half in a glass you would feel the effect.

When people came in from the cold, father gave them a shot of this wine. It would warm them up.

In the winter my brother was going up to Makkovik. I said to Sam, "When you go up, ask for a couple of gallons of blackberries. I want to make some more wine."

He went up and came back with the berries.

Later, I went over to Makkovik. Someone came along and said, "Gladys, Mr. Mercer wants you in his office."

Frank Mercer, from Bay Roberts, was the ranger.

I thought, what does he want me for? He must want a date or something.

I went down to his office. "Want do you want me for?"

He said, "You're making moonshine."

"Moonshine? Where did you get that from?"

"Uncle Billy Edmunds. I asked him what your brother wanted the berries for. He said you were making moonshine. I'm coming over tonight to test it. Have you got any?"

"Yes," I said, "I can get out a bottle. Come on over."

After I left, I said to my driver, "Bill, let's go over as quick as we can go. Frank Mercer is coming and he's after my wine."

When I got home, I said, "Father, we're in trouble."

He said, "What is the matter?"

"Someone told the Ranger I'm making moonshine."

"Give me a full one and an empty bottle."

He took a full one and tipped out half the wine. Then he filled it up with strong, strong tea. Can you imagine what that tasted like?

He said, "Take the half bottle and the full ones. Go and put them in that house over there. If Mr. Mercer speaks about it, you bring out this bottle with half tea in to it."

He came to our house. He sat down and said to father, "Mr. Chard, I hear Gladys is making moonshine."

"Probably she is. I don't know what she does. Gladdy, you got any of that wine left? Get a glass for Mr. Mercer."

I brought him a glass and he poured it out. I can see him now. He took the glass and he tipped it back. "Ah, not bad, not bad."

Father said, "That's what Gladdie is making. For some old woman who got the tummy ache."

Ranger Mercer said, "Got any more?"

"Yes, Mr. Mercer. Would you like to have a bottle? You could have it if you want it."

"Oh no. You keep it, I don't want it."

That was all right. He went on and never said any more about it.

Later, the Hudson Bay Company fella came and I gave him a good bottle. I knew he would never tell.

I put this story in *Them Days* a few years ago. Frank gets *Them Days* all the time. I wonder what he thought when he read it.

Aillik bang blackberries	cookbook Makkovik	ranger recipe	squat tummy ache
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Trapper From Paradise River

Howard Lethbridge

Howard Lethbridge lived the hard life of a fur trapper. It was a beautiful, sunny day when I visited him in Cartwright, Labrador. It was late in August, but already you could feel that the fall weather was very near. It would soon be winter, the best time to trap for fur.

MY FATHER, PHILLIP LETHBRIDGE, trapped for forty years. I learned from my father. Of course, I started off very young. I wasn't quite ten years old the first time I made a short trip in the country. That trip was about two nights long, in November. It was cold then, with quite a lot of ice. There wasn't much snow but there was quite a lot of ice around. The frost comes in November down here, sometimes in October.

Father had his trapping line in from Paradise River, where we lived. We started right from the house. In a day, we walked four miles to our first cabin.

I was just a little over fourteen when I took off on my own, trapping. I trapped on my father's trap ground. He was just about giving it up. I did a lot of trapping alone, but some years I had a buddy, or perhaps one of my brothers.

The Trapline

We had our first trap a half hour walk from home. That's where we'd start setting traps, and we continued on up our trapline, with traps so far apart.

Around four hours was the average walk to where the cabin was. That's as much as you could make in a short day in the winter when tending your traps, setting your traps, and resetting.

We didn't start trapping until around the middle of October. That was when the season was open, and we'd trap until the first part of April, most of the time. After that, furs weren't much good because they would be shedding.

Where I would end up trapping, it would be 70 and 80 miles to walk. It was not that far, walking in a straight line. But you would crook around a lot, and go in different directions. The nearest mountains where I would turn back was the Hawk's Mountain.

The average trip would be four or five weeks, but some trips were seven and eight. About eight weeks was the longest I was trapping, away from home for a long time.

Cabins and Tents

We only had two cabins, on the fall trapping ground we called it. When the wintertime came, when we could haul all our luggage, we'd have a canvas tent. We'd haul our tent and stove and all our food on a sled. We wouldn't have any cabins in the winter at all, but set up our camp every night.

We had a little stove about two feet long, and eight or nine inches square. We'd have plenty of heat with that set up in the middle of the tent.

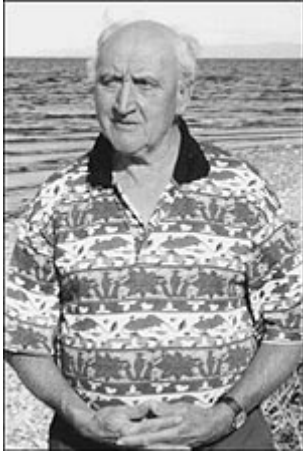
In bad weather you'd spread your fly over the ridge pole. That would keep your camp from getting wet, when it was snowing. If you didn't have that, sometimes you'd have a lot of leaking, where the snow melted directly on your tent.

We used to haul a little sled and we sometimes had a couple of dogs pulling a small komatik.

If you killed caribou to haul home, perhaps you'd have four to six dogs. You would have quite a large komatik then of course, loaded up with caribou.

I guess I was trapping around twenty-five years. After a while I got kind of crippled up. I wasn't so good at it, so I had to give it up. You had to be quite tough to trap like that.

average	fourteen	mountains	ridge pole
canvas tent	Hawk's Mountain	November	shedding
caribou	komatik	October	square
directions	luggage	Paradise River	



Father Showed Me Everything

Max McLean

Max McLean is one of the best-known seniors in Northwest River, Labrador. He is very active as a volunteer in his community. A man of many skills, he fondly remembers his days in the woods trapping for furs.

FATHER'S NAME WAS Murdoch McLean. His home was in Kenemish which is thirteen miles across the bay there.

In my day trapping was a living, and when you became fourteen, you helped to make money for the family. I was fourteen when I went trapping. You were compelled. I went to school in Northwest to grade nine and then I went trapping.

Father showed me everything I had to know. He was a great old fella to travel with. He never got excited, but was very cool about everything.

I found that the fall, up until Christmas, was the best time to get around. We had part of it in canoe, and part of it walking. We used the canoe until we had to give it up. We watched our chance, and used the canoe because it was faster.

Father and I got dumped once. We were running down Seal Lake and one of those flash storms caught us. We had to watch the wind, because it was usually stormy in the fall. This happened in November, with a real cold wind.

We were a good half mile offshore when she started taking water. He just kept her straight and got in around the lake. She didn't sink. We were taking on water but we didn't tip over. When we got ashore the pots and pans were floating around in the canoe.

Fresh water can come up awfully fast. We never did it after that.

The only way I could keep up walking with father was when he'd light his pipe. He was always ahead of me, a real fast walker on snowshoes. Then he'd stop and he'd light his pipe. I'd catch up with him, but not in time to have a spell.

I would hope he'd light his pipe again!

Father Was Tough

Tilts were just logs, trees squared on the inside. We took the axe and squared them up. That would make it lighter inside. Outside, the bark was still on it. Sometimes the roof was moss. If you were in a place where you could get good birch bark, you'd use that to keep the roof tight.

We had a log bed with brush on top of it. Father never used a sleeping bag in his life. He never covered up in his life, not even in tent. He used a caribou skin and a blanket to lie on, that's all. And his clothes. You didn't see too many people like that.

He kept a fire going all night. Father would wake up when the fire was almost out, put more wood in, and light his pipe. Then he'd lie down and sleep while the fire was going. He had a routine there that he would do all night.



blanket	Kenemish	offshore	sleeping bag
caribou skin	Murdock McLean	Seal Lake	squared



Going Through The Ice

Cyril Michelin

Cyril Michelin is an old-time trapper and fisherman from Northwest River, Labrador. He has dozens of stories to tell about his Labrador life.

I WENT THROUGH the ice one morning. They said on the radio before I left my cabin it was twenty below zero. I had to go across the Churchill River. The ice was driving awful thick.

Father told us that when we go to cross the river, to be awful careful. There's only one place there you could get through. So I went across that morning.

I got over all right. I turned the canoe over. I was running up across the bight, a big cove. My dog Mooney was coming behind me with my sealskin. We used to take a sealskin in the country, for a dog to pull. You put all your stuff in that, and tied it up. Wherever you could walk with snowshoes, he could go, among the trees and everything.

I had my snowshoes hooked over my gun, across my shoulder. I was running as hard as I could. I didn't know a thing until I went right down to my neck. I thought I was done. I told Mooney to come to me. When he did, I grabbed hold of his sealskin and I told him to go. He went and hauled me right out.

Then I ran down to my canoe and turned her over and got across to my cabin. She was still warm, from when I had the fire on. The next day I stayed there. And the next day I went up to set some more traps on the river.

I'll be darned if I didn't fall in again! That morning I was going across a brook and the brook gave out. The ice broke off and down I went. I couldn't believe it.

I lost my gun, but I got it again the next day. I could see it through the clear water. I got a long stick and tied a snare onto it. I hooked the gun with the snare and hauled it up off the bottom.

canoe
Churchill River

Mooney
sealskin

snare

snowshoe



Grenfell Mission Nurse From Northwest River

Florence Michelin

Florence (Goudie) Michelin was born in Northwest River, Labrador. After work as a nurse's aide, she became a Registered Nurse. She married trapper and fisherman Cyril Michelin of Northwest River.

EXCEPT FOR SEVEN YEARS, I lived here all my life. My parents died when I was really young. We were sort of under the Grenfell Mission. They took us in the boarding school. We could only go to grade six. Old Dr. Harry Paddon said that he wanted me to go on from there. So I had to go out to St. Anthony to finish school.

Out to St. Anthony it was really poor. It was the Depression then and they were on the dole, a lot of them. A lot of them had TB. If the father got TB, he went in the sanatorium. The mother would come to the orphanage with the kids, and work.

I went to the St. Anthony Orphan School for two years. I had an allergy and they sent me back home. So then I worked in the hospital here for a while. I was a nurse's aide, but I learned everything because Dr. Paddon taught us everything, in this small hospital.

Dr. Paddon asked me once, "What do you want to be?"

Because I worked in the hospital, I said, "I want to be a nurse." He tried hard to get me in different nursing schools. The year before he died he got me into St. Catherine's, Ontario. They had fundraising for me. He raised the funds outside. His wife Mina Paddon looked after the arrangements after he died.

On To Nursing School

I left here. I went down to Rigolet and got on the *Kyle*. I had to wait there for a while, before we got away. We had to wait for the boats a lot, you know. Then I went to St. Anthony and on out to St. John's. Then we drove right across the island on the train. It was the first time I was ever on a train in my life.

We weren't joined with Canada then, so we had to cross from Port aux Basques to North Sydney. Then we had to go through immigration.

I had over three years' training, plus making up some sick time. When the base started in Goose Bay, they paid good wages. Everybody went for the big wages, so they had a hard job to get anybody to work in the hospital. This was 1943. They couldn't get a nurse, so Mrs. Paddon asked me to come back here to Northwest River.

Nursing In Northwest River

I didn't have my midwifery training, but I had to go and do the best I could. I had been ward aide for five years before, and I had helped with that all the time. So I had to do the best I could. If we had an emergency, we got hold of the doctors up at the air force, or the Americans.

One time a girl broke her leg. I had just come back from down around the little settlements, inoculating all the people for diphtheria. I got back in the evening. I met Mrs. Paddon on the steps. She said this little girl slipped down on the steps and broke her leg.

I went and measured her and knew her leg was broken, because it was shorter. I got them to make a splint, from the hip down, with wood. I stretched out her leg, and padded it all around. Then I sent her up to the Goose Bay hospital by dog team. You always managed. You would be surprised. You think you can't do something, but when you're faced with it, you can do it.

I fixed up somebody's leg one time. Another person I looked after was Marguerite Michelin. Dogs bit her and I had to shave her head and stitch her.

Grenfell couldn't pay very much. The first year I got \$350.00. That was 1943. But I didn't mind that. I got all my training and all that.

But then I was on call, twenty-four hours a day all the year. You never got off at all.



Aunt Emily Falls In

Myrtle Morris

Myrtle Morris grew up on Spotted Island, Labrador. In the winter months people on the island moved to the mainland to be near wood and shelter. Here is one of her recollections of life on Spotted Island.

AUNT EMILY CLARK, my mother's sister, was going across Domino Run, in the spring. They were going over to Spotted Island, shifting out in the spring of the year. It was late when they came out. The old run used to break through and open up, whenever we used to get a bit of a sea. When the dogs heard the ice cracking they scattered. Some of them turned back. The children were in the coachie box, and there was Aunt Emily, hanging fast to the end, and she went down in clear water.

Her brother, Uncle Alec was driving. He lost sight of her, but he couldn't let the komatik go because it was tipping out to the clear drop of water with the children in the box. The children would have fallen out in the water.

When Aunt Emily would come up, she'd break the surface and she'd blow. Uncle Alec told her to catch the traces under the komatik. She caught one and the trace she caught belonged to his leader. When he bawled at that dog to go, it whipped her right out of the water. Here she was, on a piece of ice then, and she was hanging fast to the box. He finally got her straightened up.

With her help they uprighted the komatik and the dogs started to move. But that was only taking off from shore. Then they got out on the middle. They didn't know what time that the ice was going to break up. They might have gone on to the bottom, but anyway, they got across.

That was really a narrow escape. Poor Aunt Emily! She was some cold when she got over to the island, I tell you. There have been so many people who fell in the water in that old run, but there never was anybody drowned there yet. And I suppose there's more pots and pans and guns and axes down in that run. With people shifting out in the spring or going up in the winter, there were some hard scrapes out in the tuckle.

coachie box

Domino Run

komatik

trace



Northwest River
Trapper's Monument

Storytelling

Florence Oliver

Florence Oliver was born at Northwest River, Labrador and grew up with many stories about her family. Today she lives in Happy Valley.

I GUESS A LOT OF stories were around. I remember we used to go up to our Aunt Betsy Baikie's house. She was Aunt Jessie Goudie's mother-in-law. There being no radios or televisions or much around, we used to go there and listen to her talking about when they were growing up. The stories that they used to tell us were about the animals and stuff like that. How fierce the animals were.

The men would be gone trapping and there would be only the women and the children home. One particular story this old lady used to tell us was about the wolves that used to come so close to the houses. The homes were all built from logs. They never had very big windows in them because they were warmer without them. This time the wolves came around. The women could shoot a gun just as good as any man. Of course, they survived by that. She shot those wolves through the window. She shot them to protect her family.

My brother was killed during the war. Them times you didn't lock your door. There was no need for it. One night, during the war, we were gone to bed. First of all there was a knock on the door. Then we heard someone open the porch door. Dad heard the door open and thought he heard someone come in. He was wondering what was going on, so he got up. He looked, but there was nobody there.

He said to Mom it was nothing, not to be concerned. They didn't seem to be bothered by it. But a few days after that, they got the message that my brother was killed.

Them days, if they heard things like that, they assumed it was a ghost or token. They said it was my brother coming back to say goodbye and to let them know he was at peace. That was one of the stories I grew up with.

arouse
fierce

radio
television

wartime

wolves



Grenfell Mission Nurse

Sheila Paddon

Miss Sheila Fortescue came from England to Labrador as a volunteer nurse in 1949. Two years later she came on salary to the Grenfell Mission at Northwest River. She later married Doctor Anthony Paddon of Labrador. They are well-known in the province as Lieutenant-Governor the Honourable Anthony Paddon and Mrs. Paddon.

I FINISHED SCHOOL IN 1938, just before the war. The war started in 1939 and at that time you were given several options. You could go into the forces, make munitions, join the land army, or go into nursing. I went into the land army for a year, before the war, but I started nursing in January, 1940.

I wanted to take a diploma at an agricultural college, but the day the war was declared it was closed down and there was no more training. Many of the different training schools were closed for the duration, so you couldn't just do any particular thing that you fancied. You had to do something that was useful.

I trained at the Prince of Wales Hospital and in those days it was four years' training. Midwifery was added on. You had to become a registered nurse first, and then you took another year of midwifery training. At the end of that time if you passed all the exams you were a certified midwife.

Then I came to St. Anthony. I'd heard about the Grenfell Mission all my life. If you were a little girl in England, growing up in the twenties and thirties you had a little box that you put your money in for Doctor Grenfell. There was always a missionary box. That was Dr. Grenfell's Box.

I went away to boarding school when I was eleven, and there was another Grenfell Box! So I had been putting my pennies in for Grenfell for years.

Then when I was in training in London, there was a doctor there, Dr. Denley Clark. He had been working on the Labrador coast before the war, at Mary's River. Now it is called Mary's Harbour, near Cartwright. He used to tell me about it. He said, "When this war is over you should go out to Labrador. You'd enjoy it there."

He was always mentioning it. Finally, the war was over, so I thought I would go and see what it's like.

The Grenfell Mission had an office in London, where you would apply and go for an interview. They told me that a nurse was needed at St. Anthony. You could either go as a volunteer, for six months, in which case you paid your passage over and you didn't receive any salary. Or you could sign a contract, I think it was for four years. So I decided to go as a volunteer.

You were given a clothing list, a list of sensible clothes to take, and off you went. They told me in London to go to Liverpool and find the right ship and go to St. John's. It was the old *S.S. Newfoundland*. It was very casual. It was just, "they need you in St. Anthony, and you should go in June. It'll take you about a week crossing and there should be somebody to meet you at the other end."

Welcome To St. John's

It was very informal. I arrived in Liverpool without any money for the voyage. We weren't allowed to take money out of England anyway, and I was a volunteer so I wasn't going to receive a salary.

Unfortunately, when I got to St. John's, there wasn't anyone to meet me. My contact thought it was the next day I was coming. So I just sat there on the wharf by myself for a long time. I went back on the ship, and managed to get my cabin back for another night. It was all very, very easygoing.

The plan was that I would get the *Kyle* to St. Anthony, but the *Kyle* was ice-bound off St. Anthony. The ice was so long coming out that year, so I waited in the Newfoundland Hotel for many days. They gave me a little money from the office on Water Street, in St. John's.

The Flight To St. Anthony

Then I heard of a young man who was going to fly a small plane up to St. Anthony, with a part for the fishing plant there. I found him and asked him if he would take me and he said, well, alright. We took off from Quidi Vidi Lake in a very small plane. He had an enormous piece of machinery that he had to deliver to St. Anthony. It was quite a flight.

We only got as far as Gander Lake and he had a hole in his pontoon. I sat by the side of the lake while he walked into Gander. Then he came back and fixed it up and we went off again and got to Roddickton. We stayed the night there, my first real taste of a Newfoundland outpost. The dogs howled outside the window, that night I remember, I had no idea what the noise was. I supposed they were dogs, but they could have been wolves for all I knew. No one ever told you anything.

We got to St. Anthony eventually. Trouble was, we were on floats and the harbour was ice-bound. Where was he going to land? There wasn't any water.

He landed in the Bight. The big harbour was full of floating ice, but there was the Bight next to it with just enough open water there to bring the plane down, very skilfully.

The St. Anthony Experience

You were never treated as if you were a newcomer. The Grenfell Mission took for granted that you were trained to be sensible. You were an adult. You arrived, you put on your uniform, and you worked.

The organization realized that you were a highly trained professional person. They expected a great deal from you. That's what you gave.

Well, you see, I had nursed right through the war and we had a great deal of responsibility. So, I was very experienced, because nursing through the air raids in North London, you really had a very good training. At St. Anthony you had a great deal of responsibility too. There were only four nurses and over a hundred beds. There were no war wounds of course, no air raid casualties, but it was very busy. And a great deal of TB of course, in those days. Dr. Curtis was in charge, and Dr. Thomas worked with him. They operated every day, a great deal of surgery.

I was in the hospital there for six months and then I went home again to England. They had asked me to come back to the coast and I said I would but I needed to do some extra midwifery. I knew if I came back I'd be alone and I had to be really experienced in midwifery then. So I did an extra year's midwifery in England.

When I came back, they sent me to Northwest River.

Arrival In Goose Bay

In those days it was quite remarkable, because you could fly from Heathrow, London, to Goose Bay. That Air Canada flight used to come down here en route to Montreal. It didn't last long, but in that particular year, 1951, you could land here.

I landed at Goose in the middle of the night. There was no one to meet me of course. I stumbled around for a while in the dark. There's a graveyard up there at Goose, right at the end of the old runway where there's a number of graves of aircrew - pilots who had crashed, and others. I seemed to find that quite easily. I found a barracks and went in there and they gave me eggs and bacon. It was lovely. Then in the morning, I think one of the Mounties turned up.

We had a little nursing station in the Valley then, with two beds. Dr. Paddon, who later became my husband, had started it in a tiny building and they took me down there to Happy Valley. Later in the day, the Mission sent a boat up for me and I came down here to Northwest River.

The day after I got here, Doctor Paddon left, so I was alone here for quite a while. That's when I really needed to know my midwifery. Then I went to Harrington Harbour which is down on the North Shore, where the Grenfell Mission had a hospital. It was actually in Quebec. I was there all winter, then I came back here.

Doctor Paddon and I were planning to get married. I went home to England to get a few things, like a wedding dress, said goodbye to my family, and came back. We were planning to get

married in June, but the nurse left, so naturally, I ended up doing the nursing all summer, because they didn't send anyone else until the fall. I wasn't really on staff, but there was no one else, so my future husband, Doctor Paddon said, "You'll do the nursing, won't you?" "Yes." You know, you did what you had to do in those days. That was fine. I didn't mind.

We were finally married in September.

But after that, I didn't really nurse because Grenfell always supplied one. Sometimes there was a nurse who was not a midwife, so I would fill in, but not often. And sometimes there was a gap between one nurse leaving and another one coming, so I would assist then.

agricultural college	Harrington Harbour	munitions	responsibility
barracks	interview	organization	Roddickton
certified	machinery	pontoon	unfortunately
diplomas	midwife	professional	volunteer
graveyard	missionary	Quidi Vidi	war wounds



The Fox Bait

Leslie Pardy

Leslie Pardy is a fur trapper and fisherman from Cartwright. He also worked for many years for the Hudson Bay Company there. He has hundreds of stories to tell about his interesting life. Here is one amusing tale about the Hudson Bay fox bait.

I REMEMBER ONE TIME, I was working up there at the Hudson Bay store. They had some bottles of this fox lure come in. I'd never seen it before. I looked and thought, "By gee, it might work."

I unscrewed the top and took a sniff. I figured if I could smell it at half a mile, the fox ought to be able trace that down for five miles, at least.

So I got a bottle. I came back from working and I jumped on the skidoo. I went down on the hills here and put a drop to each of my traps and shoved the bottle back in my pocket.

When I came home, they told me there was a good show playing here. I wanted to see that movie bad, so after supper, I hauled on my parka. It was fairly new. I struck off for the place they were having the movie. By God, the guy who was sitting next to me, didn't he stink. It got me so bad I moved up two rows of seats and sat down. And God, it was worse there.

I put my hand in my pocket to get a handkerchief or some darn thing and my hand was wet! This was the fox bait. The stopper was slack on the bottle of the darn stuff, and it was me who was stinking all this time. I thought it was the other guy who was smelling, not me.

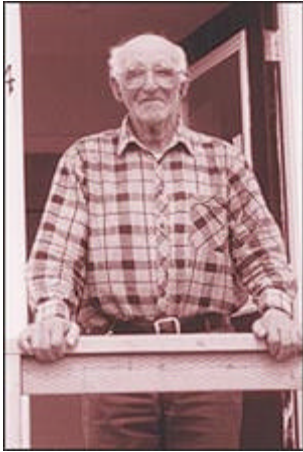
I never found it any good at all, on traps. I think it drove the animals away.

handkerchief
lure
parka

skidoo
slack

sniff
stink

stopper
unscrew



The Dirty Lynx

Absalom (Uncle Aps) Williams

Uncle Aps Williams was born in Porcupine Bay, Labrador. He spent all his life fishing and fur trapping. He was living in Cartwright when he told this story. Since then he has moved to Goose Bay.

I NEVER GOT IN ANY TROUBLE with very many wild animals, clear of a lynx one time. Natives claim he's a mountain cat. But lynx is the right name.

You would get so anxious to get back to your stopping place. Well, you had to get wood for the night and all kinds of stuff like that. Perhaps you were hungry, after all day with nothing to eat.

You might take something in your game bag to eat, perhaps, but it was so miserable cold. It was all frozen up anyhow. If you had food it was all frozen too hard and it was hardly any use to start a fire outdoors. You wouldn't have time to thaw that up in the fire. You'd only burn it up. So you waited until you got back, in the night. But you had to be careful not to rush too much, or you could get in trouble.

They get around in families, the lynx. If they had a brood one year, the young stayed on to the next year. They might have ten or twelve into a family. I caught one of them little fellas over across the river on the other side. I was just about a mile from home camp.

It was getting dark. The sun was gone down. When I got over there to the bank, I got up over it, and here was a lynx peeking out around a stick at me, and another one in that trap. A big one, too.

The old one in the trap was lying down. I scavelled up and took it out, a great big old cat. In a hurry, I just slung it alongside. I hooked out the trap, and tailed it again. I got the bedding put over it.

I slewed around, and I grabbed my cat by the back of the neck. I was going to pick him up. I thought he was dead. But he started drawing right up! My gosh, I didn't know what to make of it. I put both my hands onto him, and grabbed him hold, but his old legs were so long, and the old claws so merciless. They were kicking but they were away from me.

I didn't know what to do. The gun was there up against the tree. At last I hove him down and jumped on him with both feet. I had one foot on his neck and one on his back, behind his shoulders.

It was something to keep up, and he was nearly beating me. He was nearly getting out from under me, but I grabbed my gun. It was only a single shot .22 and you know it was a hard job to get the bullet to go in the chamber.

So I thought about it. I took my gun and I started tapping him on the head, but I was afraid to hit too hard. I thought I'd break my gunstock. But I gave him quite a whack, though, and kind of dazed him a little bit. But you know, their heads are some hard. The lynx's skull is some hard.

So I got a cartridge in, and I put the muzzle of the gun to his head. But you know what happened? Their heads are kind of flat and the bullet went up over. It never went in! It just bounced up over. That's the only time that I ever thought I was in trouble.

I had a guy with me one time. I used to be trapping with him a lot. He was a Williams fella, a cousin of mine. He told me he did the very same thing one time by himself.

He caught a cat that he thought was dead. He had his snowshoes on. When he discovered he was alive, he hove him down, and jumped on him with the snowshoes. His gun was hung up and it was hard to load, trying to keep the cat from getting away. The snow was quite soft and the lynx kept working his way out. Just like my lynx.

I'll never forget that one. That was about the only dirty one ever I had.

anxious	cousin	mountain cat	skull
bullet	dazed	muzzle	slewed around
cartridge	gunstock	scravelled	snowshoes
chamber	merciless	single shot	whack

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