

OUR TREASURE



The Life Stories of Postville's
Treasured Seniors

Dedication:

This book is dedicated to the seniors of Postville- many of whom have passed on without their stories ever having been recorded. They have worked hard and endured many hardships to settle the community of Postville. Their resilience and fortitude are why Postville is here today.

Acknowledgements

The publication of this book would not have been possible without immense collaboration between all involved. This book has arisen out of partnerships between the Postville Inuit Community Government, the Department of Education and Economic Development of the Nunatsiavut Government, and Frontier College. Each institution remains committed to honoring the knowledge and life stories that make up the living history of Nunatsiavut.

First and foremost, we offer profound thanks to the fifteen seniors who have chosen to share their knowledge and life stories with us. We recognise their contributions are invaluable and we appreciate their generosity in sharing their knowledge. It is without a doubt that their memories, advice and enduring good humour will be appreciated for generations to come.

Although only fifteen of Postville's seniors have been included in this volume, we also recognize the wealth of knowledge held by those who we were not able to interview. Seniors whose stories were included were selected on the basis of age, with Postville's most elderly residents being interviewed first. It is our hope that the tradition of transcribing this knowledge will continue into the future.

We offer thanks to the many individuals who have contributed to this project; Ruth Jacque, who proposed the book during her time in the role of Community Economic Development Officer with the Postville Inuit Community Government and Carla Colbourne, who collected a number of interviews contained in the book. Immense thanks are also owed to Samantha Jacque, whose dedication to preserving and honoring the stories of Postville's Elders is commendable. We recognize and appreciate the countless hours spent by Samantha in collecting, transcribing and editing the interviews held within this book. Samantha also created the beautiful cover, as well as the photographs featured in this book. We also recognize the contributions of Brenna McIntyre, who contributed to this project on behalf of Frontier College.

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We sincerely hope that the readers of this book will be moved by the wisdom, understanding and humour held within. Perhaps you will recognize a family member, loved one, or familiar face in the pages of this book. Regardless, it is our intention that through these stories, readers will reflect upon their own lives, and be inspired to further the literary tradition of Nunatsiavut.



Literacy:
Learning for Life.
L'alphabétisation,
Une leçon pour la vie.



Cecil Jacque



“If I Wasn’t a Reader”

INTERVIEWED APRIL 1, 2021

Cecil’s Parents

Cecil was born August 3, 1945 in Makkovik to Lillian and William Jacque. Lilly was from Big Bay and was a Lane before she got married. Bill was from English River. Lilly and Bill had five children: Cecil, Diane, Fred, Clarice and Harold.

Lilly never went to school, but Susan Igloliorte taught her to read and write. Lilly was good at sewing skin boots and mitts. Cecil still has a pair of long mitts that his mother made for him once when he was going caribou hunting. Lilly was always bothered with her heart. Seemed like after a while she got over that, but then she got brain cancer. Her husband Bill also had cancer.

Bill never got to go to school and couldn’t even write his own name. “What it was I guess was they had to move Makkovik if they wanted to go to school, eh,” Cecil says, “Because that was the handiest place.” Bill was a fisherman and he also worked with Pastor Gillette at the logs.

Bill was well known for bringing through nets and filling snowshoes. “He loved that stuff,” Cecil says. “He used to try to learn me but I was too stubborn,” Cecil says with a laugh. “I watched him bringing through nets and stuff but, b’y, I could never catch on to that. Not interested hey. If you don’t have interest, it’s no good to go at it.” In the summers Bill would always be mending nets for people or bringing through new ones. “He was good at that stuff,” Cecil recalls.

School Days

Cecil was five years old when the family moved up from English River to Postville. Pastor Gillette had work for people and he used to saw logs and build houses for people.

Cecil got up to grade eight at school in Postville. He was promoted to grade nine, but he couldn't go back to school because his father got sick. Cecil says the teachers were very strict. "Get a strap every morning I used to I think," Cecil says with a laugh. In those days you didn't start school until you were seven years old, and you were allowed to get out of school when you turned fifteen. When he got out of school his first job was making a road in Postville with a pick and shovel. "Man, they made sure you worked too" he says.

Cecil had his first skidoo when he was 17 or 18 years old. It was an 8 or 10 horsepower. Roy Pilgrim had a skidoo come from his brother Roderick in Northwest River. Cecil got some practice by driving Roy's skidoo around and around in Roy's yard on the grass.

Hunting and Trapping

Cecil went on many caribou hunting trips. Every year a group of men would get together and go north. On one trip in 1980 Cecil remembers that it came smothering rough when they were away from the tent looking for caribou. The skidoos that were in the lead went down over a bank. Cecil jumped off his skidoo when he saw the others go out over the bank. The skidoos landed on top of Max Tiller. It was a long time before he could talk or get up. He was a little beat up, but he was okay. They all had to stay in a small patch of trees all day and all night until noon the next day because of the storm. Afterward, the skidoos were froze up and they had to walk a couple of kilometers back to the tents. Cecil had to go to the hospital when he got back to Nain because he froze his foot. He had to stay there a week. Peter Lyall drove his skidoo back from Nain for him and Cecil flew home.

They used to hunt caribou in around Ghost Lake and Micmac Lake too. Cecil remembers the caribou they used to get in there were really big caribou. But he says after Brinex* started and it got noisy the caribou left.

Cecil got caught out in another storm one time when he and Max Lane were up in English River in a dory with a three-horsepower motor on it. They got out to the tickle and a big wave came aboard and they swamped. They drove ashore on the little island next to the mainland. Cecil took the tent out of the boat, and they found some shelter by a rock and put the tent over them. The water used to come right up to their feet in the night. They were soaking wet and cold. They stayed there all-day Saturday, and on Sunday a boat came and picked them up. Their dory was right up on top of the island from the high tide. Max had bad legs after that for a long time.

Cecil did a lot of trapping with Uncle George Sheppard. They would walk right from the head of the bay to Postville sometimes, if there was a lot of slob* in the bay. And sometimes they would put on a fire at the Rapids for someone to pick them up. Cecil didn't set traps of his own back then; he just helped Uncle George, who would pay him one third of his earnings. They would catch a lot of lynxes. Uncle George told him about a time when he saw six or seven cats walking ahead of him on the river and he heard them bawling in the night. Uncle George said he caught 16 cats that winter even though he had a late start to trapping because he wasn't well.

Cecil was with Uncle George when he had his last skin of fur—a martin. Uncle George was 91 years old then. He had cancer and couldn't walk very far, so he sat down on a rock and Cecil went on ahead to check the trap for him and there was a martin in it.

Eventually, Cecil started setting traps in Brown's Brook. Uncle George told him that Rupert McNeil and Harry Andersen from Makkovik used to set traps in there. They had a cabin in Betney's Brook. Cecil caught martins mostly—cats were more scarce then; he still puts out a few traps in the fall.

Cecil never had a dog team of his own, but he used his father's dogs sometimes. One time George Rose needed to go to Makkovik to get a skidoo part from Uncle Bill Andersen. Cecil and George left Postville at 12 o'clock in the night, thinking it wouldn't take long to get to Makkovik. Cecil remembers, "The minute the old man got off the komatic, the dogs knew he was gone, they wouldn't listen to us." They didn't get to Makkovik until the next morning! They were going in around Indian Head and there were dog teams coming out around in a race. When they were going in the harbour the dogs got the smell of the slob banks and they started to run fast. George Rose said, "Them tarmentin' things, they should have run all night like that!"

A Life of Hard Work

Cecil and his father fished with Uncle Fred Decker at Ailik and Uncle Johnny Edmunds at Bar Harbour. "I remember we used to just row out off the point there in punt* and load her down—lots of cod fish!" Cecil recalls. "I liked it while I was at it. We had a crew. Uncle Clifford was with us too...and Keith (Decker) was there and Uncle Fred. There was four or five of us fishing in one boat." Cecil remembers looking out toward Ailik Islands from Bar Harbour when it was calm and seeing fish breaching all over the water!

Cecil worked at Brinex after he gave up fishing. In 1967 he worked with a French company at Churchill Falls cutting lines and digging down to the bedrock to see how deep it was. The last few years Cecil worked for Brinex he worked all winter in around Michelin Lake. He salmon fished for a few years too. In 1985 Cecil went to work as a labourer in the fish plant in Postville. For that job, he had to go to the college in Goose Bay to do some courses. Then he became the manager at the plant, and he did that for 17 years. When they closed the plant, he went to work with Postmill Lumber making core boxes. He retired when he was 68 years old. He had to retire then because he had diabetic foot problems. It took years for his foot to get better.

Cecil also had heart trouble. In 2005 he was feeling really tired all the time. Then one evening when he and his wife Tilly were out for a walk, he got a bad pain in his chest. In April he went to St. John's and found out he had three blockages. The doctor gave him the option of taking pills, getting stints, or having open heart surgery. Cecil decided to have open heart surgery. He had the surgery on April 22. That summer, he went back to work in the fish plant doing book work and then in September he went to Makkovik to work in the fish plant to get the rest of his hours.

Cecil felt good and was able to continue working for a long time. Then another problem arose: during the last few years Cecil has had several mini strokes. He had one last summer when he was checking the net with his son Dennis. He got really stomach sick and lost his vision. Dennis brought him home and they medivacked him out to Goose Bay.

Cecil is unable to do much work now because of his health. He finds it hard not being able to haul wood and go hunting like he used to: "All that fine weather, eh, everybody hauling wood and stuff, I'd look out and I'd see everybody coming back with loads of wood—there's nothing any worse than that when you're used to going. And same thing with partridge hunting...that's how I used to be one time. But now for me to put on a pair of snowshoes and walk the length of the house I'm done." Cecil is thankful that he likes to read. "If I wasn't a reader, I'd say I'd be gone crazy by now," he says, "But I does a lot of reading."

Matilda Jacque



"I Liked Growing Up My Children"

INTERVIEWED APRIL 1, 2020

Home and Family

Matilda (Tilly) Jacque was born at Alkami on September 27, 1946. Her mother, Mary, was raised by the Mitchells in Makkovik. Her father, Tom Sheppard, was from Postville. There were six children in the family: Wilson, Edward, a baby boy that died at 10 months old, Tilly, Norma, and Carl.

Tilly's mother was clever. She used to make things out of flour bags, and she cleaned sealskins. She was also a good cook. When she was old enough, Tilly helped her mother with work around the house. She washed clothes, did dishes and cleaned the floors. She made her first bread when she was just 12 years old. She also had some free time and enjoyed picking berries.

Tilly has good memories of school. She went to school in Postville and got her grade eight. She had lots of friends and she would take them to her mom's for bread and molasses at recess time. They would also go to John Bishop's on their break, and he would play the flute for them.

The family always moved out to Ailik in the summers, which Tilly loved. She remembers her mom was always busy cooking for the crew. There were other families living at Ailik, too: Aunt Marg and Uncle Fred Decker; Tom Lane and Violet; Aunt Evangeline's family was on the other side; and the Edmunds at Edmunds' Cove.

Tilly had tuberculosis when she was 16 years old and had to go to the sanitorium in St. Anthony for six months. Her mother initially went with her because her mother had cancer and had to go out to the hospital as well. Later, Tilly stayed at St. Anthony by herself when her mom went to St. John's for treatment. She made a lot of friends there. She says she washed her own clothes and cleaned her own room while she was there. When she came back to Postville, she stayed with Wilson and Elna because her parents were out to Ailik fishing.

Life with Cecil

Tilly says her parents were very strict. When she was in her twenties, she still had to be in by nine o'clock! When Cecil first asked if he could marry her, her parents said no. But the second time he asked, they said yes.

Tilly and her husband Cecil have been married for over 50 years. They got married on April 7, 1969 and had five children together: Darren, Gloria, Derrick, Laura, and Dennis. All her children were born in North West River.

Tilly remembers that when Derrick was around seven years old, he went out to Black Island with his father. The men were repairing the stage with Uncle George Sheppard. There must have been a loose board and Derrick fell off the stage and onto the rocks below. He was knocked unconscious. Ron Gear brought Cecil and Derrick back to Postville and a helicopter came in that night and took Derrick to North West River. It was a day or so before he came around.

Dennis also had a bad accident when he was only three or four years old. He snuck away from the house and went down to the wharf. Somehow, he fell into the water. Ricky Edmunds jumped in saved him when he was going under for the third time.

Tilly says she looks back at it now and wonders how she did it all. Back then, you had to haul water from the brook and warm it up. You had to hang out all your clothes. "Sometimes I'd have a line or two lines of just diapers because I never had Pampers until Dennis was a baby." She says you would go out in the dead of the winter when there was deep snow, almost up to your knees, and bring in your clothes. They wouldn't be proper dry, so you would have to hang it all around the house. She would have to make bread probably two or three times a week because the boys ate a lot. "But I wouldn't exchange it though," she says. "I liked growing up my children."

After the Children Were Grown

When the children were young, it was hard making ends meet because only Cecil worked. Tilly got her first job as a Teacher's Aide after the children were older. Then she worked as a Home Support Worker with Department of Health and Social Development for 14 years. She retired when she turned 65.

Tilly has diabetes and struggles with keeping her sugars under control. A lot of times she has no energy, and she finds it depressing. Not getting out for walks in the winter is bad. She does some embroidery work to pass the time. And she and Cecil always get out for rides on the Ski-Doo in the winter and on four-wheeler in the summer.

Dennis is the only one of the five children who lives in Postville. He did a lot of work for his mother and father this winter because Cecil's health is not good. Darren left Postville when he was 18 to go to college in Goose Bay, then went on to Ontario and that is where he still lives. Derrick lives in Goose Bay and the two girls live in Newfoundland. Tilly and Cecil went to Newfoundland for a trip one year and their children get home for a visit when they can.

Harold Goudie



"We Lived It Right"
INTERVIEWED NOVEMBER 28, 2019

Early Life

Harold Goudie was born at Alkami on May 30, 1942, to Donald and Mary Goudie. Donald came from the Mud Lake area. Donald's father, Charlie Goudie, married a Flowers from Rigolet and moved to this area for trapping. Mary was born in Shungo Bay to parents Wilson and Susan Sheppard. Susan was a Winters from Hopedale. And, as far as Harold knows, Wilson came from Norway. The family moved to Alkami from Shungo Bay.

Harold's father, Donald, was a trapper and a fisherman. Donald fished at Ailik and Eastern Island, but he got sick when Harold was only a baby. He had to go to St. John's and he never returned. Mary Goudie was left to raise the children on her own. Harold had two siblings but, sadly, they died with diphtheria. The first one died at Alkami when she was only a baby.

School Years and Early Work Life

Harold remembers wanting to go to school because his older siblings were going. The teacher at the time was Max Sparks. Harold was only four years old, and they kicked him out for being too saucy he says, laughing. He was crawling under the desks and would not listen. He went back the next year when he was five.

Harold remembers having to light the fire in the school at seven o'clock in the morning. All the boys had to take turns. You would have to take your own wood on a little komatik* he says. But we used to have a problem with the dogs when we were walking to school: "The dogs would come up to you and step on your snowshoes and knock you down. You'd fall down and get up again," he says. "But they'd never bother you." There was a lot of dogs. You would go to school playing with the dogs. "We weren't afraid of them. They were big dogs. Not like the dogs now. They was huskies."

Harold also remembers being taken out of school to unload the boat in the fall when he was old enough. "I was waiting for that day: for the boat to come," he says.

Harold and his mother stayed with his uncle Tom Sheppard and family. There were a lot of people living in one house, so Harold's mom said they needed to get out on their own. When Harold was only 11 years old, they were towing down Grieves' old house from up the bay for him and his mom to live in, when his coat got caught in the engine and he broke his arm. The American Air Force flew him out to Montreal that night. He says it was scary in Montreal because everything was lighted up. There were only lamps in Postville at that time. Harold was admitted to St. Catherine's Hospital. He was in the Jewish department he remembers, and, he adds, they were some good people. One of the nurses said she was going to bring him to a hockey game but, Harold says with disappointment, she never came back. Harold is a big hockey fan. "Boom Boom Geoffrion and all them fellers were playing for Montreal then," Harold says. While he was in Montreal, he did get to see a television for the first time.

The Americans brought him back, but only as far as Goose Bay. He had to wait there until freeze up. He stayed with his uncle, Sid Goudie, for two months waiting to get home and even went to school there. His grandfather, Charlie Goudie, gave him a sled for Christmas. Harold was very proud of his sled and brought it home with him. All the children in Postville were amazed at Harold's sled because they only had wooden komatiks.

The following year they got the old house down from up the bay. It is still standing next to the house Harold lives in now. Harold and his mother were finally on their own. At 12 years old, Harold was now responsible to haul wood for the house. He got three dogs from Carl Gillette and Hans Andersen. "They was good dogs from up north, big dogs," Harold says. He had a komatik with wood horns on it and a buck saw. Harold would go to school during the week and haul wood on Saturday. "You just imagine now," he says, "cut wood Saturday and go play ball after. Play soccer all night!" Harold still has his bucksaw hanging on the wall out in his shed.

Bill Manak helped him haul wood too. "They helped you out a lot, the old people, them days," Harold says. Amos Jacque and Tom Sheppard would kill seals and give them meat. Sometimes they would get deer meat. Harold doesn't remember ever being without food. He says you would run out of tea, sugar, and butter before the winter was over. But he remembers his mother used to order food from Sears.

Harold's mother did a lot of dickie* work. She also made boots and cuffs*. She used to make all their clothes. "She was like her mother," Harold says. "Her mother was Inuit." Mary Goudie also learned to be a midwife from her mother. She borned a lot of children here in Postville, Harold says. And almost all the Shugloos in Hopedale. She also borned a child for Mrs. Mulrooney and one for Mrs. White. Harold's mother died of cancer when Harold was in his thirties, in the Makkovik hospital. Harold was there with her until she died.

Harold's first job was making roads in Postville with a pick and shovel for 35 cents an hour. Walter Broomfield was the foreman. Harold also fished with Tom Sheppard when he was 14 until he was 16. There were four of them on the crew. Then he went to work with Brinex as a cookie (cook's helper). After that, they called him up and told him he had to go in the bush with Freeman Baikie cutting lines and blasting. Freeman's partner had drowned, and he needed another person to work with him.

One summer Harold worked for a French company. They could not get anybody to work for them because they did not speak English. Harold didn't know until he got to Seal Lake that they were all French. He says the pilot didn't tell him until they were unloading the supplies. Harold says he couldn't understand them, but he liked them. And they paid good and gave him a bonus when he was finished. That was the year he bought his first Ski-Doo and had it flown in on a charter.

Defying Death

That summer, they crashed in a Cessna 180. The piston went and they came down at the rapids. The plane came down on her side and one pontoon touched the water, but the pilot managed to get the plane upright, so no one was hurt. People in Postville saw the smoke from the plane and knew it went down, so they went up in boat to get them. "I been come down a lot you know, in helicopter too," Harold says with a laugh. He recalls a time when him and a pilot were flying a load of rods in a bubble chopper and the pilot couldn't keep the chopper up. Another time, when the forest fire was burning, they left Kit's Pond to go to Makkovik, but the smoke was so thick they couldn't see anything. They had the two doors taken off. The pilot didn't think they were going to make it because it was so hot. But they made it. Harold says it took them four or five hours to find Makkovik.

Harold remembers another close call when he volunteered to help take a boat to Hopedale from Ailik. Edward Sheppard also volunteered, and Johnny Jacque was the engineer. Ruddle Ledstone, the store manager, was with them as well. It was late in the fall, probably November, and a blizzard struck. They had to crawl up on the deck of the boat to put the anchor out. But the anchor didn't hold. The boat came ashore on a rock at Black Island. "If she didn't get hung up there, she'd have went on out," Harold says. The sea was foaming. They had to jump overboard to get ashore. They tied together and got ashore, but when Harold looked back Ruddle was gone. Harold went back to the boat, which was down on her side, and Ruddle was just clung on. Harold managed to get him ashore too. They were stuck on Black Island for seven days. Harold recalls that the snow was "up to your armpits." Two boats came out looking for them after the storm.

Another time Harold got caught out in a winter storm. They did a lot of caribou hunting inside Davis Inlet in those days. On this trip a group of them left Davis Inlet to go to Hopedale, but they only made it as far as Windy Tickle when the blizzard struck. "Couldn't see nothing, not a Ski-Doo, nothing," Harold says. There was a little house there, but it blew apart. They put up a tent, but when they woke up in the morning the tent was on top of them and they were buried up. They crawled out and boiled the kettle out on the landwash* and cooked some deer meat. The weather had cleared and their Ski-Doos were right on the Ski-Doo track! They were not off course because one of the men was using a compass. They could only get one 12 horsepower running, so the three of them travelled on to Hopedale on one machine: two sitting and one standing. Just as they got to Hopedale there was a helicopter flying over to look for them. "Hard times boy," Harold says with a laugh. "I don't know why I'm surviving."

A Good Life

When Harold was working for Brinex, he was good friends with Leonard McNeil from Makkovik. Leonard wanted to go to Makkovik for a party, so Harold took him out. He met Shirley McNeil that night. Harold and Shirley were married on June 27, 1970. They have five boys and one girl, and they now have 11 grandkids.

Harold's fondest memories of growing up are his school years: the Christmas drop and all that. "That was a really happy time for us right. We never had nothing, no pencils, no crayons," Harold says. One time that really stands out in his memory was before the Christmas drop, before planes and radios even. There was a teacher in Postville named Mrs. McKenney and she was friends with the American Base Commander in Goose Bay. They used to stop into Postville to bring food to her when they were going out to the Cape in their big helicopter. One night the kids were playing hockey out on the ice and they saw lights coming. It was a big plane. "By and by she circled," Harold remembers. "They started shoving boxes out; there was toys and candy going everywhere. We were all evening picking up toys, and the next day."

"You wouldn't believe it, but it was, we lived it right. But it's all gone now: Ailik... there was a store there...Sam Chard, Newfoundlanders. We used to play ball with the Newfoundlanders in the evening when it was blowing: when it was rough and you couldn't get out [fishing]."

Harold worked at cutting lines and blasting for 12 years until he got a job with Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro as a diesel plant operator. He stayed with that job for 30 years and then retired.

Harold still cuts firewood. He always loved the wood and still loves it. He goes hunting and does work around the house. He also goes for a walk every day to keep in shape.

Harold says he had a good life. It was tough when he was growing up, but it was a good life. Life is almost too easy now, he says, "We used to go to Hopedale on dog team and run halfway back!"

His advice for young people today is, "Keep in shape; keep walking; do physical work. If you walk and keep in good shape, it keeps your mind good too." Harold says when you are active you don't be thinking about what's going to happen tomorrow. "If you start thinking about what's going to happen tomorrow, you're dead. You'll go down the drain." You've just got to let it go. If it happens there is nothing you can do about it. Take one day at a time.

Wilson Sheppard



“Always Looked Forward to Fishing”

INTERVIEWED DECEMBER 10, 2019

Good Times

Wilson Sheppard was born on October 7, 1939 in Makkovik to parents Mary and Tom Sheppard.

His family lived in Makkovik and fished at Ailik. They eventually moved to Alkami and then to Postville. “I can hardly remember about Makkovik,” Wilson says. “I was really small when we was in Makkovik.”

Wilson’s father was a fisherman and Wilson began fishing, too, when he was 15. They fished with a cod trap until the fish slacked off and then they would go all over the place by motorboat. The family would move out to Ailik in the spring and then come back in the bay at the end of September or the beginning of October. “Used to be some good to come back in the bay from outside,” Wilson recalls. “Good times though.”

They never had much them days, Wilson says. They used to go to Makkovik to buy food once a week when they were in Ailik. In Postville, Pastor Gillette had a small store on the end of the parsonage. He used to have a little bit of supplies come on the Kyle, and he had to go out to Ailik to pick it up. Wilson remembers when he was about 10, he used to help Pastor Gillette unload the freight: There would be barrels of apples come and Pastor Gillette would give him apples for helping. “They was some good too...right sweet,” Wilson says. Food was scarce. “Wasn’t very much, I tell you. That had to be enough for all winter.” And over the winter what they had would run out.

One spring, Wilson’s family ran out of butter and flour, and there was none to get in Makkovik. His father and Uncle George had to go to Hopedale to get some. His father came back with two pounds of butter; that was all he could get. That had to last the family of seven the rest of the spring! “That was hard times, tough,” Wilson says.

They ate a lot of wild food back then: partridges, rabbits, ducks. They used to hunt a bit

in the spring, but they weren’t really allowed. They weren’t allowed to get eggs either. Bill Andersen was the game warden in Makkovik then, and sometimes he would come to Postville.

Getting Married

On February 2, 1963, Wilson married Elna Ivany. Elna, a schoolteacher from English Harbour, Newfoundland, first came to Labrador with Pastor Gillette at the age of 17. Elna lived in Postville except for one year when she went to Southern Labrador to teach. The year after Elna came back to Postville, she and Wilson got married. Wilson says it was snowing thick the day they got married in February, and the next day it was pouring down rain. “We used to get the coldest kind of weather, and then we’d get the biggest kind of a mild right on the end of it,” Wilson remembers. “I’ve been seen it up here in January; you could skate from one end to the another on the bay up here. We had a mild that lasted two weeks one time, you could almost go out to Makkovik skating!”

When he was first married, Wilson used to cut wood with a bucksaw in back of the town—it was all woods then. He had a small komatik, only about three feet long with wood horns on it, that he used to haul wood out onto the road. Them times people only cut green wood. But Wilson remembers when he was still in school and Greeves went bankrupt, there was a lot of pulp wood left in the woods. Everyone was going up to Big Point to get the wood because it was dry. Wilson used to go up after school with his father’s three dogs and get back after dark.

It wasn’t long after Wilson and Elna were married that they started a small store in a little room in their house where they sold Ski-Doo parts. After a while Wilson built a small building to use as the store, and they started to stock a wider variety of items. They couldn’t have much, Wilson says, because they had nowhere to store anything. When their son, Wilson, was old enough, he took over the store they have now, which Elna’s brother, Leon Ivany built. The store supplies just about everything the people in Postville need. Thank goodness Wilson and Elna started that little store in the ‘60s because it is now the only grocery store in the community.

Fishing Adventures

Wilson got a job working at the government store the year he got married and he fished salmon at the same time. He used to have a couple of nets at Salmon Bight. He would get up early in the morning, before daylight, and haul his nets. He would come back, split the fish, salt them, put them in barrels, and be ready to go to work at nine o’clock! One morning he went up and it was so foggy you could hardly see anything—the fog was right down. When he got back, he could hear a plane on the water. It had landed out the bay because of the fog and taxied in the rest of the way. It came into the beach, and when the pilot saw Wilson’s 10 salmon he asked if he could weigh the two biggest ones: one was 25 pounds and the other was 29 pounds! There was a lot of salmon back then, Wilson says.

Early on, Wilson would salt the salmon and send them to Max and Emily Powell in Carbonear. Then they started taking fresh fish. Wilson had a big freezer that he used to fill right up. Max would send him wooden boxes to put the fish in. When Wilson would see the boat coming in the bay, he would start to pack the fish; by the time the boat arrived, he would have it ready. The boat was either the Bonavista or the Nonia then, and it used to go right to St. John’s. The price was pretty low them days but then everything was cheap. You could buy a whole drum of gas for fifteen dollars! Food was cheap too: a pound of butter was 15 cents. There have been a lot of changes; the price of food is the biggest. Wilson thinks transportation has gone backwards a bit, too.

Wilson went back to fishing with Job Edmunds full-time after working at the government store for nine years.. They would leave Postville in the morning, getting daylight. He would go out on the north side of the bay as far as Cape Point and Job would go out on the south side of the bay as far as Long Island, checking their salmon nets; cod fish was scarce then. Wilson's father and George Sheppard were fishing at Black Island at that time, and they started to get some cod fish there. Wilson and Job decided to go out and set a gill net at East Turnaviks to try their luck. When they went back to check their 50-fathom net, it was floating with the great big fish—they had a boatful! So, they started fishing cod fish again. They would go out every day when the weather was fine, checking their salmon nets on the way, and come back to Postville in the evening. Eventually, the government built a house at Turnaviks, so they had a place to stay. After that, they would go out for about three days before returning to Postville. Wilson says he, "used to like that out there to Turnaviks fishing." They had a CB radio, and they would hear people talking from Black Island, Bar Harbour, Makkovik, and sometimes Hopedale. They would hear the long-liners as well. "Uncle George used to call every single evening to see what the fishing was like," Wilson recalls.

On one of their trips out of the bay, Wilson was at Cape Point and he could hear Job coming across from Long Island. There was an iceberg there and it had two high parts to it, with water in the middle. Wilson says he kept looking for Job, but he couldn't see him because he was right in line with that iceberg. "And what he was doing, he was bailing out his boat, not looking, and when he looked up it was too late, and he come right on through [the middle of the iceberg]!"

They used to have some stormy times out there hauling the nets out of East Turnaviks. Wilson remembers one time when him and Job got caught out in a big wind. They were bringing their fresh fish in from Turnaviks to sell to the plant. Wilson says he could see the wind coming from Jacko's Bight. He knew it was going to be bad and he would have turned back but him and Job were too far apart, so he had to come on. He made it to the shoal on this side of Punchin Island and put out a grapnel with an extra rope on it. Wilson waited there for about four hours, and just before dark the wind dropped out. "That was the worst time I think I was out. I've been out in some winds but not that bad."

The cod fishery closed and eventually the salmon fishery too. So, Wilson fished rock cods in the bay for a few years. He was around 62 when he retired after after 37 years of fishing. "I missed it first when I give up fishing," he says. "The first two or three years was kind of hard." Ron Gear was still fishing, so Wilson would go down on the wharf and chat to Ron and see how the fishing was going.

Trapping

Wilson also trapped with Johnny Edmunds in his younger years. They would walk from Postville to Beaver River, where they had a tent, with snowshoes and sealskin boots on. The second day they would walk to their traps and walk home again on the third day. They trapped scattered fur: minks, some otters, but not much. Wilson says he used to get tired, and his legs would get sore. They did that for years.

Another time he went in on dog team with Johnny Jacque and George Sheppard. They went in through Beaver River and camped at the upper end of Ghost Lake. They left the dogs to the tent and walked to the lower end of the lake. It was noisy walking and they drove the deer. They kept walking and chased the tracks through the woods. "And by and by we come out on an open place and we caught them...we was gaining on them too, only walking. So, then we started walking a little bit faster." The men got so warm that they took off their parkas, which Wilson offered to carry. He told the men to go on and he would catch up to them. He followed their tracks, but he couldn't see them. After a long

time, he heard them shooting. They killed six or seven deer that time. They paunched* them and left everything there except for the livers and hearts because they had to walk back to the tent. When they got back it was some late, must have been about 10 o'clock in the night. The next morning Wilson says he could hardly move his muscles were so sore. They got the dogs ready then and went and got the deer. That took all day, too. They made it back to the tent after dark. The next day they started back to Postville. Wilson says everything was hard them days. "You'd never do it now."

Snowmobiles

Eventually, people started to get snowmobiles. Hank Shouse used to sell them. Wilson remembers when Peter Berg had an Autoboggan: "When we was in school we used to see him coming up the bay up here, and we'd take off, hey, out to him. We'd all go out and run alongside of him, and he was going full speed then! We used to have some fun."

The store manager brought in a seven horsepower from North West River. The next year he was moving away, so Wilson bought it from him. A few years later Wilson bought a 10 horsepower. It cost him \$775.00. "That was a good one," he says. "Then we had it good for in the woods then! After we had the forest fire down here to Goulou, we was all set then."

Wilson was well known for hauling a lot of dry wood. It was something to do to pass away the winter, he says. "The winters was so long it seemed like." He would sell the wood to Nain and Hopedale mostly. The most he ever hauled in one winter was 3000 sticks. He would go almost over to Big Brook in the end. "Used to be at it steady, all the time, in all kinds of weather. Didn't mind the cold weather them days. I can't stand it now though." He still hauls a bit of wood in the spring for something to do.

Looking Back

Wilson says the best times in his life were when he was fishing. He says he never ever liked working in the store, even when he worked in his own store. "It wasn't my thing seemed like." But he always looked forward to going fishing. He had some bad years and some not so bad years. Fishing is up and down. "Once you get used to it, it's different, hey, outdoors—different than anything else." He remembers going up the bay to fish rock cods: "When it was southwest wind and warm, the air was so good, hey. You could smell like the green stuff. Job used to say the same thing."

In 2009 Wilson was diagnosed with prostate cancer. But the next year, when he went back for a check up, they didn't find anything. He has a teleconference with his doctor every six months now and is doing well.

Hope Sheppard



“It Was Lonesome in Boarding School”

INTERVIEWED DECEMBER 5, 2019

Boarding School and Home

Hope Sheppard (nee Jacque) was born on May 17, 1942 in Makkovik. Hope’s father was Johnny Jacque and her mother was Caroline Andersen.

Hope’s family lived in Makkovik and she went to boarding school there. While she was attending boarding school she had to live there, even though her family lived in Makkovik. Her brother Torsten went to the school as well. “It was alright, but it was lonesome,” she says. It was a help to people with big families and little income. She learned to knit in school, and she was learning to make boots when she left. She attended until she was 16 years old.

Hope was the oldest of 10 children, so when she was out of boarding school for the summer, she had to help her mother with the younger children. She had to wash clothes. She washed the men’s jeans with a scrubbing brush! Sometimes, when her father was busy, she also had to get water and lug in wood.

Her father worked for the mission in Makkovik, taking care of the generators and cleaning up around the place. He was busy all the time because he had dogs to look after, and he had to get wood and fish and hunt. Hope’s mom always did a lot of cooking. She cleaned sealskins and made boots. She made winter clothes for the children out of material she got from the mission and also made dolls, which she sold. Hope never learned these crafts from her mother because her mother was always so busy.

Hope’s fondest memories are of Christmastime when the family would all be together, and they would go to church and Santa would come. She would usually get a doll, and when she was older, she always got Elizabeth Arden perfume. Hope remembers that people used to order items from Sears, Eatons, and Economy.

The family moved to Julie’s Harbour in 1959, when Hope was 17 years old, because her father had a job working for Brinex. He would walk in over the hill there to go to work. They were only there for a summer and then they moved in the bay to Postville.

Adult Life: Hard Work and Family

Hope met Herman Sheppard while the family was living at Julie’s Harbour. They got married the following year on September 28. They had three children: Glen, Karen, and Linda. They have been married for 59 years now, with 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Hope did housework for Elna Sheppard when she first moved to Postville. When Herman was fishing at Black Island, they would move out there for the summer. “It used to be a lot of work moving out there. We used to have to pack up everything like moving away,” Hope recalls. They had to take wood, the dogs—everything!

After that, Hope had a job as an operator for Newfoundland Telephone. She also worked for the Grenfell Mission, having a sort of hospital in her home. She handed out medications to people and she had a radio to call out if someone needed to be sent out to the hospital. Her last job was working at the daycare as a cook and cleaner.

She retired when she was almost 65. She was not well at the time and found out a little later that she had cancer. The doctors did not want to give her surgery because she was such a small woman. They were able to treat her with pills and the cancer shrunk. Today, she is doing really well. She says she misses baking though. She used to do a lot of baking but doesn’t do it anymore because she gets dizzy. She used to enjoy berry picking, too. She always went bakeapple picking and used to pick blackberries up on the hill at Black Island.

The biggest changes Hope notices are all the computers and that. And you don’t see people going house to house visiting like you used to. People don’t even call, she says.

Hope’s advice for the young people today is that they should try to get their education. That’s the main thing.

Herman Sheppard



“Self-Reliance and Hard Work”

INTERVIEWED DECEMBER 5, 2019

Family and Childhood

Herman Sheppard was born in Makkovik on November 20, 1938. He is 81 now and says, “You’re not the same when you gets that age.”

Herman’s father was George Sheppard, a well-known trapper. George’s parents were Wes and Susan Sheppard. They lived at Shungo Bay. Herman’s mother was Violet Flowers, daughter of David and Clara Flowers. They lived in Flowers’ Bay.

George and Violet moved to Postville because Pastor Gillette was here building up the place. People moved here then and got a house built. People were living here and there in old shacks, living on wildlife mostly, so they moved to Postville.

George and Violet had seven children: Myrtle, Sheila, Claude, Piercy, Herman, and two other children that died of diphtheria. Herman says he and Piercy had diphtheria as well, and Piercy almost died too.

When asked what he remembers about his childhood, Herman says he was saucy. “I’m not much better yet I don’t think,” he says with a laugh. He remembers that he had to do his work around the house before he was allowed to go play soccer.

Work Life

Herman’s father, George, was a fisherman and a trapper all his life. “That’s what he liked doing to,” Herman says. Herman was taken out of school to help his father make a living in the country. But Herman didn’t like it in the country: “I found it quiet in there, lonely. Nothing—only trees cracking. My father didn’t mind that a bit,” he says. “I used to go in with him...Hauling a small komatik and snowshoes on, deep snow, snow up to your knees, I was beat right out sometimes. Worked like a dog. I’ll never forget that. I thinks about

that a lot, how I worked when I was young.” They had one dog one time, but he wasn’t any good when the going was bad. He could hardly get along himself in the deep snow. He was alright when the going was good; he would haul the komatik sometimes.

Herman says he didn’t trap with his father for very long. His brother Piercy went in a couple of times and then his father got someone else to go with him. Herman worked in the woods with George Lane after that. There was a mill here then. He was only about 15 years old. They would cut logs with a bucksaw, limb them out with an axe, and haul them to the mill with dogs. “It wasn’t easy, I tell you. I used to be sore all over my body...After I got used to it, it wasn’t so bad.”

Herman met Hopie Jacque when she moved to Julie’s Harbour with her family from Makkovik. They never got married right away. Hopie went to Black Island with Herman and his family fishing for the summer. They got married the next year.

Herman fished with his father until he was married and then he went on his own. “I used to fish by my bare self in motorboat,” Herman says. He even built his own stage* at Black Island. “Some lot of work I tell you. I don’t forget about it. I’ll never forget about it.” “When I see young people doing nothing, I thinks about how I growed up at that age. I had to work like a slave. Some young people live off their parents.” Herman says he couldn’t do that, “When I was with my father, I had to pay board until I got on my own.”

There was nothing else, Herman says: “That’s all you could do is fish. There was nothing else ahead of you, only go fishing.” It was rough weather too sometimes. “Stormy, awful stormy. Foggy, too. I used to come in sometimes blowing ugly, just like I thought I wasn’t going to make it,” Herman recalls. The boat was deep too, loaded with fish. “I used to risk some lot when I was young. It’s a wonder I never got drowned.”

Herman remembers leaving Postville once with his son Glen. Glen was only 16 and it was blowing a gale of wind. They had to stay tied onto the net at Jacko’s Point all day. When it was getting close to dark, Herman said they had to go on, they couldn’t stay there all night. So, they went on to Black Island. “It was nasty I tell you. The motor wasn’t working all the best neither: she was jumping out of gear or something, right in the height of it! If we’d’ve ever broke down, we would never have survived. Ugly times.” When they got to Black Island, Herman’s father said, “I didn’t think there was a boat on the water today.”

There was a lot of fish, but the price went down. You didn’t make enough at fishing some years to qualify for unemployment, so you had to try to find work after you were done fishing. Sometimes you could get a job, sometimes you couldn’t. There was some salmon for a few years. In the end people had to give it up because you couldn’t make a living at it. The government bought the fisherman’s licenses from them and that was the end the fishing.

Herman worked at carpentry after that, building houses in Postville. He was also a foreman one year, teaching people to build boats. They built three boats over the winter. Herman learned to build boats by watching his father. He built flats too. He built one big flat, 12 or 14 feet long, with two sets of oars on it. Someone in Makkovik wanted it for hauling nets.

Herman had a dog team once. He used to row up to the rapids in a flat to hunt and fish for them. He says he didn’t like having dogs. They were tormenting. He used to have a lot of trouble with the dogs fighting, getting tangled up, and cutting up their traces. He used his dog team to haul a lot of wood. “They used to get stubborn on me too...turn back after I hauled a couple of loads,” Herman recalls. He says when he got a 10 horsepower Ski-Doo, “That was some good.”

Longevity Runs in the Family

Herman remembers visiting his father once when his father was up in age. His father asked him how old he was, and Herman told him, "Sixty." His father replied, "That's not old." No wonder George didn't think 60 was old; he went caribou hunting down to Nain when he was 70 years old; fished rock cods when he was 80; and walked to Makkovik from Postville when he was 81 to raise money for the Janeway! George lived into his nineties.

Herman's mother died when she was sixty-six. "She was a woman that never stopped working," Herman says. "Worked when she could hardly stand up, that's what kind of woman she was." Herman remembers her heading and gutting fish in the stage at Black Island.

There is a lot more stuff to do now, Herman says, a lot of jobs. His advice to young people is to get a job if they can. And to get all the education they can get.

Torsten Jacque



"That's Your Life"

INTERVIEWED DECEMBER 11, 2019

Torsten Jacque was born on November 12, 1943 at Three Rapids, at a place known as the Depot. His family lived in Makkovik, and Torsten had to go to boarding school there until he was 12 or 13.

In 1956, the family moved to Postville and Torsten got a job working for Brinex. He used to do all kinds of work for them, even driving their Muskeg tractors. He worked all over the place: Kit's Pond, Michelins, Inda Lake, and Three Rapids. He worked year-round and he had to work for three months straight before he was allowed to go home for a week's break! He worked at that for eight years and then he got a job with the government, now Hydro, operating the diesel generators that powered the community.

Torsten and his father hauled logs from Rocky Point and and built a small house by the brook across the bay. Johnny Jacque died when he was in his 50s and Torsten took over his trapping places. Torsten mostly trapped and hunted by himself, but sometimes he would go goose or duck hunting with Amos Jacque or his brother Sam. He says the ducks were handy back them. One time they only had to go as far as Groundy Island and they had over twenty ducks! He also remembers going to Salt Water Pond in Island Harbour Bay with Max and Irvin Lane in the Miss Makkovik.

Doris Noble was born in Middle Arm, Green Bay, Newfoundland. She moved to Postville in 1968 with her parents, who came here as pastors. Doris met Torsten and they were married on March 20, 1970. They had two children, Walter and Leanne, and they now have five grandkids and two great-grandkids.

After he retired from Hydro, Torsten did a lot of hunting and trapping. Him and David Gear trapped from here right over to Double Mer. Torsten says, "It was hard ole going, some deep snow." Torsten made a good many trips over there by himself too. He goes around by himself a lot. You'll often see him going out the bay in the fall berry picking or jigging, just himself. Being outdoors, that's your life, he says, "It's hard sometimes, but

that's it, hey boy."

When asked if he had a good life Torsten says that once he got older it was a good life. "Never had a good life when I was young, when I was going to school—wasn't a life, I didn't call it a life." But you had to go and that was it.

Torsten notices big changes in the weather. It seems like the weather is more severe now. He says when it rains, it rains hard; and when it snows, it snows hard; and when it's windy, it's really windy.

Torsten wasn't feeling well a few years ago, and it took the doctors three years to find out what was wrong with him: he had an extra valve in his heart. It had to be burned with a laser. He said his heart would race and his blood pressure would go high. "The last time I got bad I thought I wasn't going to make it," he says. He had to have the valve burned a second time. He had a check-up this past summer and everything is good now. He also suffered with bad arthritis. It went away for years but it seems to be coming back again now. Even so, he is going trapping this winter. "Monkey around this year, hopefully."

**The information and excerpts below were taken from an interview that Douglas Jacque did with Myrtle Groves in 2013. Used with permission.*

Douglas Jacque



"We Made That Community"

INTERVIEWED 2013

Childhood

Douglas Jacque was born at Long Island Tickle to parents Harry and Sarah Jacque on October 24, 1931. After that, the family moved to English River and, when Douglas was around 15 years old, to Postville. Douglas says people left the old places and moved to Postville when Pastor Gillette arrived. "There was groups down the bay and up the bay, everywhere, eh. But when the community started building, we all shift up and made that community."

Times were hard back then when people fished for a living. There was no unemployment or nothing. Whatever money you made in the summer, that was all you had to live on. "But when you go back [to your winter place] in the fall you know, you go on the land—try to live off the land, yuh... trapping and hunting. Whatever we could get, you know," Douglas says. "In the winter we'd always stay home, you know, down English River... but in the summer we'd shift out to our summer place, in Ailik there, and go fishing, see, and come back again in the fall."

Douglas fished with his father when he was just a small boy. After his father died, Douglas went shareman with Max Jacque and his crew for a few years. There was a merchant at Ailik named Sam Chard. He was a fish and fur buyer.

Fish All Over the Place

There was a lot of fish back then, but it started to get scarce after a while. Douglas blames the fish getting scarce on the schooners* with their traps and the longliners with their gill nets. "But that was the best, the few years that I was out there, big enough to help with the fish.... The fish used to come right in the cove where they had the boats anchored," Douglas recalls. "And in the evening when we'd be finished, you look out towards the

islands, not too far'; they was just like wind on the water. First, I thought it was blowing hard, but they told me, 'That's fish and capelin.' All over the place!"

Douglas and the other fisherman would be working all day. They would start early in the morning, just getting daylight, and work until late in the evening. Sometimes they would work by lamplight putting away the fish. Douglas says, "We jigged all our fish, mostly, till I went with Max. They had a trap, a fish trap, eh. But all my growing up, we used the jigger*, yuh, the old fashioned jigger." You had to work hard but you haven't got to work hard now. "I'd like to be working yet but they won't take me on, eh. They told me I'm too old, yuh. No, not too old yet. I think I'd hold with them yet, more than some younger ones, eh."

The Importance of Planning Ahead

Sam Chard had a store in Ailik and you could buy anything at all in the summertime. "He had everything there," Douglas says, "rubber clothes and hard bread... pork, beef, and gace and everything, eh. Some people lived out there all the winter, ut we never. Cold o' place in the wintertime, you know. Sam Chard, the merchant there, he lived there in the wintertime... he had a big house there, see. He was married to one of the teachers from Makkovik there. Polly Shaw, her name was. And that was my teacher, you know."

Douglas says that, in those days, they were allowed to put a net in the pond at English River to get some big salmon. His dad used to salt them for the winter. They had a two-hundred-pound barrel one time, salted for the winter. That's beside the other fish they had for cooking. They would take up their nets when it was almost freeze-up time. Then they went trapping, but, Douglas says, they couldn't get much, not like now, because there were so many people trapping. "We grew up in the hard times, we call it the hard times, you know. You couldn't have everything like we got now. Sometimes we'd have no milk, eh. Only a scattered time, Sundays. The most time we had milk was Christmastime. Always keep a couple of cans for Christmas, yuh. The most thing we had was molasses. There was plenty molasses out Ailik, eh. You could go get that for free sometimes or sell something for some molasses."

Eventually, the store at Ailik closed down and the handiest place to go for supplies was Hopedale. Douglas remembers having to go to Hopedale for supplies: "I went down there when I was only a teenager. My dad told me how to go about it, yuh. If it get bad, go ashore and put the tent up, eh. And cold too, not like now. No Ski-Doo pants, nothing, them times, see. Only o' dungarees (jeans), we used to call, eh. But it wasn't bad on dog team because you could get off and run, eh? I done that, I hauled food from down there, yuh... They had a big store Hopedale, see."

Taking Care of Each Other and the Importance of Trusting Your Team

Douglas remembers one time when he was going to Hopedale and he wasn't sure of the way. He knew there were people in Island Harbour, so he decided to go in there. "The old man was there then. Leonard and Rupert and them was all gone, see. They wasn't there. The old man...told me to stay for the night now. He told me which way to keep going down, you know. Don't go up no bays, he told me. Only a straight line, he told me. So that night, the old woman, she wrote a letter. They had nothing in the house. I believe I give them some grub that time, what I had. And she wrote a letter. Them times the welfare officer was the Ranger, see. And she wrote a letter and she told me, 'Be sure and give it to the Ranger when you get there.'" When Douglas arrived in Hopedale he gave the letter to the Ranger. "Them times they had a Marconi station down there, see. They could Marconi

back to Makkovik on radio, eh. And that's what he done, yuh." Douglas was in a church service some time after that and the old woman was there. She went to Douglas and said, "Boy, Doug, you was a good guy that time. If you wouldn't have come that time, we'd have starved!" "So that was a very good story," Douglas says, "because I saved them from starving, you know.... No phones or nothing them times."

Another time Douglas remembers was when he and a crippled fella, Finlay Shugloo, went down to Hopedale. They put their two dog teams together, but Finlay's dogs gave out before they got there. Doug's dogs were better than Finlay's because Finlay never went nowhere. But when they were ready to head back, Finlay decided to borrow a komatik. He figured he could keep up with Doug if he used the sledge. "I knowed he wasn't gonna keep up...I'd be stopping all time, because he couldn't get off the komatik, see," Douglas says. Douglas couldn't leave Finlay, so he told him to put his komatik on an island and they joined their dogs together again. They had such a load that they couldn't get along very fast and they got caught in a storm. They had left their stove another place and couldn't get back to get it because it was too rough. "I froze my foot that night...But next morning I got out and start walking about," Douglas recalls. It was too rough to keep going so they decided to go back to Island Harbour. Douglas believed they could find it. He had a good leader and she had been there before. "And if they been there before they'll know where to go," he says. Finlay told him he was keeping out too far. "It seemed a long time because we was cold. He was cold, too, eh? I told him the leader is going all right. I tried to turn the leader but the leader wouldn't turn, nope...we went and went, and...like a great big rock come in sight." It was the old store down Island Harbour there, in the landwash there. "He said, 'Boy, can't be. We couldn't see yet but it wasn't very far. The old house, yuh. The dog took us right up to the house." They went in and fried up some seal meat. The next morning the weather was good again.

Survival

Another time Douglas left for Hopedale by himself to get some seal fat, and a storm came on. "You know the worst time them times was in March, eh," Douglas says. "Boy, I said when I come back, I'll never go again in March. I was caught there from Friday till Monday. Only I had plenty grub, eh? And Monday morning, I could see the bright sky, eh? So I left then. I was Hopedale dinner time, yuh. Yup, that was a rough time too, really rough, but I didn't mind because I had tent and stove, see? I seen some hard times, yuh... but every time I survived, though. I been everywhere with dog team too. I been Voisey's Bay, Nain, everywhere by dog team. Dad used to go down, too, caribou hunting, eh. Long ways, though, yuh..."

About three years ago, the doctors told Douglas there was something wrong with him. "No, I told him, I don't think there's anything wrong with me," Douglas recalls. "But he put a light down and he said, sorry to tell you, Mr. Jacque, you've got cancer... right where your food goes down. We looked it up, a tumour, yup. Well, I said, I suppose I'm gone now, then." The doctor advised him not to take the operation because, he said, it's going be too big. He told him he would have to go to St. John's for six weeks of radiation. But when the results went out, the specialist said, "They must have made a mistake in Goose Bay; we can't see a sign of a thing!" "And they called me up again, 'Yes,' they said, 'we got the pictures and everything.' Put another light down. 'Boy, he said, 'tis gone! Not a sign now.' It went away, yuh. Perfect, yuh. Three years now. Best kind."

They called it a miracle. "Yeah, I might be a miracle too, yuh....I'm here a little while yet. I'll be here another year or two, maybe longer, perhaps. I think that's about all I got to say."

Evangeline Jacque



“That’s Where I Gets My Laughing From”

INTERVIEWED AUGUST 10, 2018

Early Life

Evangeline Jacque was born on August 22, 1939 on the mainland side of Bar Harbour. Evangeline’s mother, Clara Piercy, was from Hebron, and her father, Amos Jacque, was from Long Island Tickle. Clara was first married to Johnny Andersen from Island Harbour Bay; they had five children. When Johnny passed away, Clara married Amos Jacque and had a second family: Evangeline, Bill, and Lavinia.

Evangeline grew up at Long Island Tickle. Sometimes the family would go to Postville and sometimes they would go to Makkovik, because that’s where the store was. They would pick redberries and bakeapples on the hills in the Tickle. They were the only people who lived there.

When Evangeline was eight the family moved to Postville. “We got to Postville late in the night,” Evangeline remembers. Pastor Gillette was the Pastor here then. We had a house where the old government store is now. Postville was all trees then and there was only footpaths. You had to walk everywhere you went.

Evangeline’s father was a trapper until he got sick. He got a blood clot in his leg and it moved, which is how he died. He had the song service at church in the morning and died that night.

Evangeline says her mother was fluent in Inuktitut. She used to do a lot of sewing. She would sew clothes for her children: dresses for the girls and boots for Bill. She was always cooking and baking, Evangeline remembers. “That’s why I like partridges now,” she says, “because she was always cooking partridges.” She baked them in the oven and put a big duff* on them.

Evangeline’s mother used to knit socks and mitts, and Evangeline used to watch her. But Evangeline didn’t learn to knit from her mother, although she did eventually learn.

Evangeline is well known in Postville for the beautiful wool socks she knits; she must have knit hundreds of pairs of socks in her lifetime.

Evangeline says her mother taught her to be good to people and listen to her elders. “A lot of people tells me my mother looked like me. She was short and fat like me,” Evangeline says with her cheerful laugh. “My parents liked to laugh,” she says, “I guess that’s where I gets my laughing from.”

When she was young, Evangeline had chores to do such as cleaning the floors, doing the dishes, and lugging water to help out the family. In the mornings she had to light the fire before school started. The boys and girls took turns. She remembers her teachers: Max Sparks, Allen Pilgrim, Clarice Edmunds, and Elna Sheppard. They played games like tally over and skipping. She can’t remember ever having toys. “I don’t think there was much back then,” she says.

Evangeline only got to go as far as grade six in school because her mother got sick, so she had to stay home and do the work around the house.

Family Life

When she was 17, Evangeline got married to Douglas Jacque on March 18, 1956. They had 10 children: Marjorie, Phylis (died at one-day-old), Mary, Amos, Lavinia, Bill, Jessie, Maurice, Harvey, and Clara. They recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary!

Amos, Bill, and Clara were all born in Postville because Evangeline did not want to go to North West River. Aunt Mary Goudie and Aunt Margaret Dicker were the midwives. The day Evangeline gave birth to Clara, her sister also had a baby one hour later!

Lavinia was born in Makkovik. Evangeline went to the nurse out there instead of going to North West River. She took baby Amos with her and stayed out there for a few weeks. Jessie was also born in North West River. After she was born, they flew back to Postville, but the ice was too bad for them to land, so they had to go on to Makkovik instead. They were out there for almost a week until the store manager, Rudy Ledstone, and Uncle Bill Jacque went to Makkovik by dog team to take Evangeline and her new baby Jessie back to Postville, with mother and child sitting in the flat. It was the 21st of May and when they got to Goulou, they came right across the bay, right into the cove. From Postville to the Rapids it was all open water.

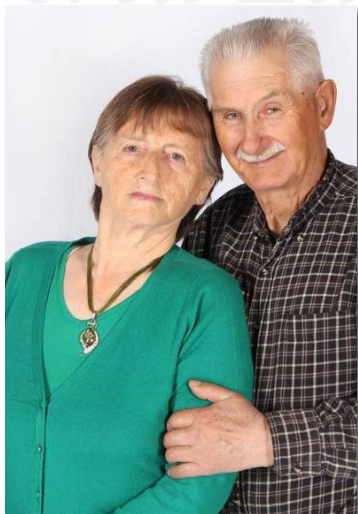
When Evangeline went to North West River to have Maurice, she remembers they had to go across the river on the cable car* to Goose Bay and then fly home.

Evangeline says it was a lot of work raising a big family: “Never stop, keep going all the time.” There were no Pampers, only cotton diapers that she had to wash every day. Some days the clothesline was full of just diapers. The older kids would help with the little ones.

Every summer, just after school was out, the family went fishing. For the first few years they fished at Ailik (on the other side). After that, they went to Bar Harbour. They would stay at the fishing place until it was time for the kids to go back to school. The children seemed to like it out there. They never complained.

Evangeline says she would go down to the stage and help out when they had a lot of fish. “It wasn’t too hard work,” she says.

Roberta Edmunds



“A Kind and Friendly Person”

INTERVIEWED OCTOBER 26, 2017

Roberta’s Parents

Roberta Edmunds was born on December 5, 1947 at Rapid Point, to parents Johnny and Caroline (nee Andersen) Jacque.

Roberta’s mother, Caroline Andersen, was born in Hopedale in 1912. Caroline was just two years old when her mother passed away, and so she was taken in and raised by her Aunt Ellen Morgan. One day, not long after her mother passed away, Roberta remembers looking out the window and seeing a woman walk by wearing a bandana. She thought the woman was her mommy. She was too young to understand her mistake, but the incident helped her get over the loss of her mother.

Roberta says with a laugh, “She (Caroline) was kind of spoiled by Aunt Ellen. She went to school in Makkovik but her Aunt Ellen took her out because she heard they left the windows open in the night.” As a teenager Caroline snowshoed, hunted, and picked berries.

Roberta describes Caroline as “small, very intelligent, could read like everything. Her Aunt Bertha taught her to read. She loved to read, and she loved nature. She loved anything to do like berry picking. Nobody could beat her at that I don’t think. She could hunt. When she got married and moved back to Makkovik she didn’t hunt anymore. Only when she lived up the rapid and dad used to be gone. She was small and strong.”

Roberta also remembers that her mother was a good cook. “My favorite meal was partridge soup. She would even use bits of stale bread in her soup. It was some good,” Roberta recalls. Caroline was also artistic. She could make Inuit seal skin dolls, hook rugs, and sealskin boots. She could play the organ by ear.

Roberta’s father, Johnny Jacque was born at English River, February 16, 1912 or 1913. Not as much is known about his younger years as he had a hard childhood, and he didn’t talk

about it. “Dad was sorta knocked around because he was an orphan for a while. He went to the orphanage in St. Anthony for a while.” When his mother married Simon Lucy and had another baby, Johnny came back home. Uncle Jim Jacque took him in. When Simon died, Johnny ended up with the Morgans.

The Morgans were the same Morgans that had raised Roberta’s mom, Caroline. That’s how Roberta’s parents met. “Mommy used to say that her Aunt Ellen didn’t want her to marry Johnny,” Roberta says. But they did marry and have ten children: Hope, Christine, Torsten, Roberta, Janet, Daphne, and Sam (and three that passed away: Byron, Sylvia, and Bertha).

Johnny Jacque was a humble man who had a lot of friends and enjoyed the company of other people. He was a fisherman and worked hard to support his large family. He was actively involved in the community and often called upon if someone was sick or if someone died.

Roberta remembers, “Dad always liked wearing a captain’s hat—I don’t know why—and he liked wearing pins. He was always dressed up. On Sunday he would always dress up nice with a tie and he always had a tie pin, and back then that was different. And some other things like that and I always thought that was his Inuit side coming out. For some reason, I thought that.”

Childhood Games and Going to School

Roberta’s childhood began in Makkovik. The community was basically a long row of houses that people referred to as “up-along” or “down-along.” “The house we lived in out Makkovik, I thought it was awful big, but I don’t think it was. It had an upstairs. The loft couldn’t have been that big I suppose but I loved it upstairs. I can remember when Sam was being born, trying to peek down through the chimney, through the stove pipe hole, because it was down in the living room where she was having him. We were all sent upstairs to be quiet.”

Roberta’s earliest childhood memory is that of going to school for the first time. She was six years old and felt scared and excited at the same time. She remembers not being able to read a word in her reader and the teacher kept her in after school. “I can’t believe that now,” Roberta says. “I enjoyed school once I got over not knowing the word. My best subject was reading, and my worst subject was arithmetic. I had a teacher who let me stay in after school and read other kids’ books. I was in grade one and read grade two and three books.”

As a child, Roberta played tally over*, baseball rounder, snakes and ladders, and house. “I was a tomboy. I used to do any ol’ thing, every ol’ thing: play out in the flat*—I almost drove away one time—play down in the beach, go berry picking.”

Roberta loved to spend time with her brothers and sisters. They would have a lot of fun together and also fought a lot. She especially loved to be around Torsten. “I was a tomboy. I used to try to hang around with Torsten a lot, my big brother. I tried to go in the boat with him too, but he wouldn’t let me. Torsten used to get tormented with me.”

As a girl Roberta was expected to help with work around the house. She had to sweep, help with the dishes, and carry water. “I used to always get up early....and I had a little can with a wire string put on it, and I didn’t have to do it, but I would go lugging water from the brook.”

Roberta enjoyed boil-ups, walks, and berry picking with her parents and brothers and sisters. “I was thinking about how we used to go berry picking, and Sam was just a little baby. We used to take him along with us... that was out in Makkovik then... and we used

to plunk him down on a blanket on the ground and just keep an eye on him and make sure he didn't eat or swallow anything."

Christmas in Makkovik would be celebrated with a church service, where Santa would visit, on Christmas Eve and supper at home with family. On Christmas morning there would be a service at the Moravian church where Roberta would go with her dad. They would usually have ducks for Christmas dinner. Roberta and her siblings would always get a gift for Christmas, even if it was just something small.

Roberta recalls that her favourite toy was a doll that came in a Christmas drop in Makkovik. "Every time I smell a plastic tablecloth it reminds me of that doll. I can just remember getting it in church. They used to have Santa Claus in church, and I was scared stiff. I can even remember what the weather was like when we walked home and the snow scrunching under our feet."

Bonfire Night was a big event in Makkovik but Roberta was "scared stiff of the fire." There would be a big fire on the beach in front of their house. "I can remember everybody else was out there, mommy and all, but I stayed in the porch and watched through the window. I was scared stiff of fire." There would always be a Guy Fawkes made with gunpowder inside.

Roberta fondly remembers her summers spent on Black Island. She would roam the island with her sisters picking blueberries and blackberries and combing the beach. One summer her dad found and kept a young seagull as a pet. She kept him in a pen until he was big enough to fly. "We had a pigeon too, but Sam got mad and stamped on him and killed him. Perry Mason was his name."

"Every fall we'd go berry picking. That was good too, berry picking, hey. In the summer, in August, we'd go bakeapple picking in motorboat. We all went for the day one time on a Sunday, over to the next Black Island, we never used to do it on Sunday before. We got in very good picking, a lot of bakeapples, and all of a sudden, the biggest thunderstorm I ever seen came along. It hailed and everything, Dad had to light a fire. We said, "That's what we get for going berry picking on Sunday."

Roberta lived in Makkovik until she was nine. That summer, after the fishing season was over, the family moved to Postville. "What happened was dad went to work for Brinex and we wanted to be with him for the summer... that was over Kitt's Pond. So, we went around the cape and went to Julie's Harbour for the summer, lived in a frame with a tent put over like a roof. And when the fall came mom was too afraid and didn't want to go around the cape with a sea on, so we ended up coming here. So that was good."

School

Roberta remembers that there were a lot of trees in Postville when she first moved here as a nine-year-old girl. Aunt Margaret Decker's house was the school. It was a one-room school, and the students would go outdoors to the outhouse to use the bathroom.

When Roberta got to grade nine, she had to go to North West River to attend school. She lived in the dormitory and had to stay for the year. She spent Christmas there but was able to call home to wish her family a Merry Christmas. "We had a good Christmas," she said, "The boiler in the furnace broke so we had a good time. We had the fireplace going. And we had more freedom than than if the heat had been on. We used to get together and share the beds with the girls to stay warm because it was cold in the nights."

Meeting and Marrying Job Edmunds

Roberta met Job Edmunds at Aunt Berdie's house. "The first time I met him proper was out in a boat. We were coming in from Black Island in a bigger boat, and he was one of the ones driving it. And I picked some blueberries and give him. He never forgot that one! I thinks about that, when I give him blueberries."

Roberta and Job were married on May 29, 1964. Their wedding was a quiet one. Since Job is shy, they had a church ceremony but no wedding reception. Roberta advises that the key to a happy marriage is communication: "Talk, talk, talk."

Roberta and Job had six children: Peggy, Jean, Paul, Michael, Barbara, and Sharon. Roberta's fondest memories are the births of her children even though she had to go to North West River for two weeks to a month and stay with family while she waited to have them.

Roberta played games with her children and read to them. She enjoyed rocking them and made sure they said their prayers when they went to bed. As a family they liked going off and boiling up the kettle, going for walks, and berry picking. "With my own kids I can remember every spring we'd go up to Old House Point and have a boil-up and take Mary Rose with us too. One time when we were doing that... cause your komatik was full of kids... we ran over Barbara. She was big then, too! I don't think she forgot that one."

Another time, when Barbara was around five years old, she had to go to the hospital in St. Anthony all by herself to get her tonsils out. "I wasn't allowed to go on the plane with her," Roberta remembers. "That was scary to think about now. She sat up by the pilot. I remember I was crying when she left. All by herself!"

When Roberta's family was growing up, she used to mix a bread every day and everyone loved it. She was self-taught; she didn't have a recipe. "I don't remember ever making a dunchy* bread. I learned from watching but never been taught."

Roberta shared many traditions with her family. Christmas was a special holiday. The family would enjoy a special Christmas Eve supper of fried fish and potatoes until the town started having a community supper, which they attended each year. They would open their gifts on Christmas morning and go for a snowmobile ride in the afternoon.

Easter was also important. There would be a few eggs for Easter but and no baskets. Roberta and the girls would go to the Easter service.

In preparation for Valentine's Day Roberta's children would make valentines, put a little hole through the valentine and tie a string on, hang it on the doorknob of someone's house, knock on the door, and run away. This was a tradition that Roberta also enjoyed as a girl.

Work Life and Afterward

Roberta was a stay-at-home mom until her youngest, Sharon, was old enough, and then she went to work at the school. Roberta enjoyed the university courses. In her job she helped the teacher and worked one-on-one with students. She also did photocopying and laminating and taught religion and social studies classes. Roberta worked at B.L. Morrison for more than 20 years. She decided it was time to retire when she didn't want to get up in the morning! She also felt that things were changing, modernizing, and she couldn't keep up with it.

Roberta's proudest accomplishment is her children: "Growing them up and seeing them

do their own things, having their own families.” A proud moment for Roberta was when her daughter Peggy graduated grade nine in Postville.

Roberta has experienced hardship and death. Roberta’s father, Johnny Jacque, died November 10, 42 years ago. Her father’s death was the saddest event in Roberta’s life. It was her first experience with seeing someone die. Roberta’s mother died January 13, 2011. While her dad died young, her mom lived to be 94 years old. She welcomed death in a way, Roberta says. Her old friends were all gone and all the older people she knew were gone. There was no one to talk to about “them days.” Roberta has also experienced the loss of her brother Sam and sister Janet.

Times have changed since Roberta was a girl. She is happy that communication is easier; telephones, the internet, and computers help friends and family stay in contact. Roberta wishes, however, that families didn’t have to be separated by distance as so many people have moved away. Most of Roberta’s children and grandchildren live away. Roberta also wishes that people attended church as they did years ago, when almost everyone respected Sunday as a day of rest and went to church.

After reflecting on and sharing moments from her life, her accomplishments, joys, struggles and changes Roberta was asked what she would like to be remembered for. She replied, “being a friendly and kind person.” This too could be added to her list of accomplishments as it is safe to say that the people who cross paths with her each day would say that Roberta is indeed a friendly and kind person.

Job Edmunds



“I’d Like to Feel Like That Now

INTERVIEWED NOVEMBER 27, 2019

Childhood on the Move

Job Edmunds was born at Ragged Islands on February 25, 1936. Although his birthplace is officially listed as Makkovik, Job remembers being on dog team with his father, and his father pointing out the islands to him and telling him that’s where he was born. Job’s father was William (Bill) Edmunds and his mother was Elizabeth (Lizzie) Bradbury. His father was born at Zoar and his mother came to Labrador as a cook on a fishing schooner from Newfoundland. They were married at West Turnavik and had 14 children: Jim, Curtis, Job, Bob, Tom, Dave, Johnny, Mavis, Della, Nancy, Jane, Mary, and Lavinia. One baby died.

Job’s father worked with the reindeer in St. Anthony. He was also an interpreter for Dr. Grenfell for a while. And he was an Orangeman. Job recalls that the Orangeman knew each other when they would see each other, although he doesn’t know how. He remembers his father pointing out a man and saying, “He’s an Orangeman.”

Job lived with his family at Tuchiaic until he was maybe eight or nine years old, then moved to Edmunds’ Cove at Ailik. Sam Chard, who was a merchant, built a house for them there and called it Edmunds’ Cove. They would sell all their fish to Sam Chard and then spend all their money to buy the necessities for the winter from him: things like flour, sugar, and tobacco. Once they went back to Tuchiaic they had to make do with what they had because there were no stores. Whatever they had, that was it for the winter.

Stuck in the Ice and Making Do

Job can remember lots of schooners at Ailik; there would be 17 or 18 anchored in the back harbour. They would fish there for so long and then go on north. You would see them going back to Newfoundland in the fall. A lot of the schooners never had motors, just sails. Sometimes you would see a motorboat towing a schooner when there was no wind. One time a schooner called the Iris was bringing supplies to the Tuchiaic Base. It ran up

on a shoal and that is where it stayed. In the winter people would go aboard and get food off the boat. Job was very young then and he was not allowed to go out to the boat.

Job also remembers schooners being stuck in the ice in the spring at Cape Harrison. He says that when he was a small boy they had to walk out to Cape Harrison because they only had a few scraps of food left: not just his family, but everyone. The schooners always had food and they would trade for skin boots and things like that. Job says families would get pretty low on food in the spring, before fishing time came, but they always had a little something to eat. "I can mind if you had butter on your bread, you had no sugar in your tea," he says. But you always had seal meat and stuff to eat like that, he adds.

For the first few years they lived at Ailik, they would go back to Tuchialic in the fall when they were done fishing. But after that they stayed at Edmunds' Cove year-round. The houses weren't much of it back then, Job says, they weren't even insulated. And the only way to get water was to go up to the pond and chop out pieces of ice and melt it.

Job remembers wanting to go out fishing with his father, but he was too small. When he was allowed to go, he was still just a little boy, only seven or eight years old. He remembers getting really tired while jigging, so he fished with a fish on his hook, pretending he wasn't getting any. He laughs as he tells this story, saying that his father knew the difference.

Job remembers his father's dogs. He says they were really big, strong dogs. They would put the dogs out on Ailik Island, but he said, sometimes they would swim ashore. "You'd get up in the morning and they'd be out around the door. You never tied on dogs in those days."

After a few years, Job's father moved the family in the bay to Old House Point so he could work for John Grieves cutting pulp wood. Grieves had buildings at Rapid Point. A ship came to get the pulp wood, but they only had a certain amount of time to load the wood onto the boat. They did not get all the wood on board and Grieves went broke.

Job's family then moved to Postville. Pastor Gillette was here then, and he was trying to get all the families to settle in one spot. They stayed in Ham Jacque's house at first. There were only a few families in Postville at that time: Bill Manak and Ham Jacque; George Sheppard moved in from Alkami and Amos Jacque moved in from the Tickle. Brothers Arnold and Walter Broomfield live up to Salmon Bight. The government started building houses after that. Job remembers the first government houses were built for George Lane and his brother Johnny Edmunds.

Trapping and Hunting

Job trapped in the river with Gordan Jacque and his son Herb. He says they would haul a flat in through the river in the fall. "Gordan used to have an old flat, leaky, all tar all over the bottom," he laughs. They would row to the upper end of Micmac Lake to a little cabin and stay there a night or two, and then come back out to the head of the bay checking their traps. "But then if you was in there and the lake froze over, you was there for a while then, might been there for three or four nights until the ice got thick enough to walk on. Then you'd walk out." Gordan and Herb had a team of dogs, and after freeze-up they would have it easier, going back and forth on the dogs. They would always kill a lot of spruce partridges to cook up in the nights, Job recalls. And the white partridges were like snowbirds, pitching up in the birch tress. Trapping was alright, he says, "but I couldn't make no hand of it. I used to get a bit, but nothing worthwhile."

Eventually, Job got his own dog team. He had six dogs. "They was good dogs too," he says. "I liked my dogs." If he wanted to, he could get his team to go right around in a circle.

He had a really good leader. The dogs would not move until he was on the komatik. "The minute I bawled, they was up and gone," Job says. But his dogs would only listen to him. They would not listen to anyone else. A good example of this is when him and his brother Johnny went seal hunting out to the shina* one fall after freeze-up. Job left Johnny with the dogs and started walking towards Ben's Cove seal hunting. After a while he looked back and he saw his dogs drifting away out on the broke up ice. Johnny was pushing the komatik and flat in toward Long Island. Johnny told him that he saw that the ice was starting to break up. He tried to get the dogs to go but they would not move. The only thing he saw to do was to slip the bridle*, let the dog's harnesses go, and keep the flat and komatik with him. Job said there was nothing he could do because, by then, the dogs were too far off. Bill Jacque was out there hunting too, so Job and Johnny got a ride back to Postville with him. About a week later Job heard that the Americans had his dogs at Ailik Cape where they had a site. Clifford Jacque took him out and he got his dogs back again. "I was some glad to see them," he says. "That's all the transportation we had back then. We had to have dogs; there were no Ski-Doos."

Another time, Job and Lewis Gillette went into Ghost Lake for deer hunting. The snow was deep, so Job was walking ahead with snowshoes on, breaking the trail. But Job's dogs wouldn't pull for Lewis. Poor Lewis had to pull the komatik, Job says with a chuckle. Bill Manak used to trap in around Ghost Lake. He would come back with deer or say he saw sign of deer and then we would go in, Job recalls, in January or February or so, on dog teams. They were some good caribou he says.

Job worked for Pastor Gillette for a while cutting logs in the winter. They would bring all the logs down from the head of the bay in the spring in a boom*. The tide had to be steady. Sometimes the logs would get jammed at the rapids. That business did not last either.

Fishing

Job felt he had to do something. There was no work, so he decided to build a motorboat to go fishing. The boat was 28 feet long and he had it ready by the time the cod fish came. The cod fish came in early June in those days, sometimes before they even had the stages out. They only fished with jiggers and Job says, "The fish were so thick you couldn't see down through them. They were just the same as capelin; thick, thick with fish." He fished alone that summer and caught 150 quintals* of fish.

After a couple of years of fishing by himself, Eddie Jacque fished with Job for two or three summers. When the cod fish started getting scarce, Job fished salmon in the bay at Goulou. Then, when the salmon started getting scarce in the bay, too, he moved out to the Tickle. He went back to fishing cod fish for a little while too. Him and Wilson buddied up for a couple of summers. The collector boat used to come from Makkovik to West Turnaviks to pick up their fresh fish.

They saw some pretty rough times, Job says. One time, when him and Wilson were coming in from West Turnaviks, the wind struck. It was feather white, drifting, and they had flat bottomed boats. Wilson got ashore on Punchin' Island and Job made it to Long Island. "That was some hard wind. If it would have got us about half-way across, we wouldn't have made it," Job says. It calmed down again that night and they made it home.

Job says you had to work hard at fishing to get anything out of it. "You'd get out probably around four o'clock in the morning, end up around ten o'clock in the night clearing away." And you had to make enough money to take you through the winter before you could give up. Job would make six to seven thousand dollars a summer. He would make sure he had enough. That was a lot of money back then. "A dollar back then was almost as good as a hundred now," he says. Job remembers the first time he got employment insurance

benefits: he was getting nine dollars a week!

Inevitably, the cod fish started to disappear, and the Moratorium Pension was introduced. Job lived on this until he got his old age pension. He was lucky to qualify; you had to have been at least 57 years old and you also had to have caught enough fish. Job didn't mind giving up fishing because the fish were getting so scarce that he was not making any money at it. But, he says, he did miss it.

Building Boats

Job must have had a natural ability for boat building. He built his first boat when he was still a teenager: a 16-foot speedboat. He remembers that David Noel laughed at him when he said he was going to build a boat. But he did it. And he did it by just looking at a boat belonging to Pastor Gillette. No one helped him except for his sister Nancy, who passed him a few timbers. He bought an outboard motor from Bill Andersen to put on the boat.

Job built many speedboats and flats after that, and sold most of them to Nain. Everything had to be done with a hand plane and he has a hard lump on his right hand from using it. He says he gets arthritis in it now. He remembers one spring when he built three speedboats! That was quite a feat. Two he sold to Nain and one he kept for himself. "I'd like to feel like that now," Job says. "The energy I had them days." He also remembers another time when he built a speedboat in just nine days!

The biggest boat Job ever built was a 40- or 48-foot longliner. He bought it and did it completely over. It took him a couple of years of course, to take it apart and make it new. He says he went up the bay in speedboat and cut a stem post, stern post, and a stick long enough for the keel. Job said he also had to find a deadwood—a tree with a long root on it, because you had to use the root too.

"Everything was hard starting off," he says. "When you'd go in the woods you had a bucksaw or axe, that's all you had." He adds with a chuckle, "Just like after I got a hold of a chainsaw it was only fun."

After fiberglass came out Job never built any more boats, but he still made flats. He built his last flat around five years ago. And it's made with root timbers he says. Sometimes you have to join two pieces to make the timbers, but this flat is made from a root that he used to cut the timbers all in one piece. A lot of people have asked to buy it, but Job says he wants to keep it because it's the last he built.

Marriage and Later Life

Job decided to live his life in Postville, even after Job's mother and father moved to Goose Bay with the youngest kids. He liked it there. "That's where I figured I'd stay," he says. And he did. Job married Roberta Jacque on May 29, 1964. When thinking about that time in their lives, Job says, "Roberta was pretty hardy then. We used to go out the bay in motorboat—just the two of us." And then when they had their first couple of children, they would take them along to Edmunds' Cove too. They had six children in all: Peggy, Jean, Paul, Michael, Barbara, and Sharon. Job's parents moved back when they were older but only for a few years because health problems forced them to move back to Goose Bay.

These days, Job cuts a lot of firewood. Around his house there are several piles and a couple of sheds that are stocked to the roof. He cuts mainly greenwood and he chips the bark off junk by junk in the spring. He has an electric log splitter, but he says he enjoys cleaving wood. "You got to do a little something to keep yourself in shape," he says.

Job's wife, Roberta, now lives in Goose Bay because she has dialysis three times a week. Job goes back and forth to Goose Bay to see her. He says he'll be able to spend more time up there in the summer when it's warm and he doesn't have to worry about the house. He is going to try it out for this year, staying in Postville, and see how he gets on. If he still feels good next year, he might do another year. He says Goose Bay is a boring place and it would be hard for him to live up there.

Tom Edmunds

April 19, 1929 – September 6, 2020



“The Secret to a Long Life”

INTERVIEWED DECEMBER 2, 2019

Cruelty at School and a Loving Family

Tom Edmunds was born at Tuchiaic on April 19, 1929. Fondly known as Uncle Tom to everyone in Postville, he was the oldest resident in the community at the time of this interview. Sadly, Uncle Tom since passed away and is dearly missed. We are grateful to be able to include his life story in this book.

Uncle Tom's father was William (Bill) Edmunds, and his mother was Elizabeth (Lizzie) Bradbury. They had 14 children: Jim, Curtis, Job, Bob, Tom, Dave, Johnny, Mavis, Della, Nancy, Jane, Mary, and Lavinia. One baby died.

Uncle Tom grew up at Tuchiaic. His Grandparents lived there too, as well as his dad's sister and the Lucy family. He went to boarding school in Makkovik with his brother Bob for a very short period. They were beaten and treated badly there, and when their father found out, he took them out of the school. Uncle Tom never went back to school after.

Uncle Tom's fondest childhood memories are of being on the ice, skating. His father would make skates for him by putting files on his boots. He made them for the girls too. Uncle Tom vividly remembered when he was just a toddler that he stepped in a pot of hot water and scalded his foot badly. He also remembered the American base at Tuchiaic; he was around 14 years old then.

He started fishing with his dad as soon as he was big enough, around nine years old. They would row—there were no motors back then. His hands would bleed from the jigger line. The women would fish too, he said. They would get four dollars for a quintal of fish.

The family moved from Tuchiaic to Ailik, and then to Postville. While living in Postville, Uncle Tom trapped with George Sheppard and Bill Manak. Him and Bill Manak walked to Goose Bay once just for fun! It only took them five days.

Another time, when a group of them were caribou hunting north of Nain in the spring, everything foundered and they got stuck in the country for about six days. The German air force, based in Goose Bay, came looking for them. Uncle Tom said they could not understand the Germans, but they flew them out of the country, their Ski-Doo's, deer, and everything, in chopper.

Marriage and Family

Uncle Tom met Silpa Sillett when he was working for the Americans in Hopedale. He said they left each other first but got back together again. “She was a nice woman,” he said, as he looked at a beautiful picture of Silpa as a young woman. They were married in Hopedale and had a big feast afterwards. “We had lots of ducks,” he said. “I wish I was back then.”

After they were married Uncle Tom and his wife went to Goose Bay in motorboat with Eric Webb. They had seven children: Joan, Jerry, John, Dave, Bobby, Gary, and Ricky. They also had three children that died. Sadly, Silpa passed away from cancer in February of 2015.

Uncle Tom worked for the Department of National Defence as a carpenter in Goose Bay for 18 years. He remembers winning a Ski-Doo at bingo once: a 12 horsepower! He sold it after a while and got a 300. He also had an old car in Goose Bay. It had no lights. He used to take the kids riding on the back roads in it.

Uncle Tom liked Goose Bay, but always wanted to be home. So, in July of 1975, he moved back to Postville with his family. Uncle Tom continued to work as a carpenter there. “I liked work,” he said. “Worked all my life.” He was also a member of the Canadian Rangers and has a certificate of appreciation hanging on his wall for his 14 years volunteering with them.

Uncle Tom really enjoyed going back to visit Tuchiaic one time in a speedboat with his sons. There were no houses left then, but he did find the wreckage of an old plane that had crashed there.

One night, Uncle Tom went to Makkovik on Ski-Doo to play bingo. On the returning trip home, he had a stroke. He was in the komatik box at the time. His son Bobby and Bobby's wife, Jessie, were on the Ski-Doo. When Bobby stopped and went to check on him, Uncle Tom was slumped over. They took him straight to the hospital when they got to Postville. The stroke had lasting effects: He had a hard time talking and could not get around without a walker. But Uncle Tom still lived a very independent life. In the summertime you would see him driving around town on his four-wheeler with his walker strapped on the back. And in the winter he still drove his Ski-Doo.

When asked, “What's the secret to living a long life?” Uncle Tom just laughed and said, “I can't tell you that.”

Ron Gear



“Trusting the Weather Glass”

INTERVIEWED DECEMBER 9, 2019

Early Life

Ron Gear was born on August 17, 1940, in Hopedale, to parents Gussie (nee Dicker) and Nat Gear, who lived in Adlatook. Unfortunately, Ron’s father died when Ron was only two years old. His other siblings, Norman, Tom, Calvin, and Alma were adopted out to other families, but because Ron was only a baby, he stayed with his mother. Ron and his mother moved to Cartwright where his mother had work. Two years later they moved to Ailik where Gussie got a job as a cook. It was at Ailik that Gussie met and married John Pilgrim and they moved to Postville.

Ron started fishing with John Pilgrim and his crew when he was just seven years old. That first summer he jigged seven quintals of fish himself! Ron says he remembers being out on the bawn* every morning splitting fish. The bawn was an area of tumbly rocks where you could lay the fish down and the wind could get under it. If you lay the fish down on the flat, smooth rocks, they would get hot and burn.

He used the money he earned that summer to buy clothes for school. He had to go to the boarding school in North West River. He remembers going to North West River on the boat, The Kyle: “They put me off in Goose Bay,” he says.

A Life Spent at Sea

John Pilgrim passed away when Ron was 15 years old. After that, Ron fished with Johnny Jacque at Black Island for two years and then he went on his own. He bought a motorboat from the government. You could pay so much a month on it. “You had to have a boat,” he says. There were no speedboats at that time, only motorboats. He remembers going duck hunting in a motorboat. You could steam right up alongside the ducks and shoot away he says. Saltwater Pond was a good place for ducks. He remembers a time when he and Max

Lane were there and the ducks were flying through thick: “They were coming through, we couldn’t shoot. We had enough; we had to give up shooting.”

Ron’s motorboat sits on the shore now and has been the subject of many photographs. He kept it up for many years and would launch it in the spring and anchor it off, even though he was never going to use it. That was an iconic image for Postville: the motorboat anchored in the cove.

Ron says he was never caught out in a bad storm in all his days fishing. He went by the weather glass (a glass instrument used for predicting the weather): “When the weather glass go down, just as well to bide home.” He was a fisherman all his life. He never sold his license, he says, because there was nothing else to do. He fished cod fish, then salmon, then rock cods. He was the last fisherman to fish rock cods here in Postville until they closed the plant down. He would still be fishing now if the plant was open, he says. “That was my life, out on the sea.”

In those days there were always older people around willing to teach you. Ron learned to bring through nets from Bill Jacque. And he learned to build flats from Fred Decker. He built at least three: one for his friend Victor Lyall and a couple for himself. He still has the last one he built. And he built a speedboat one year with his brother Roy.

Now Ron looks forward to setting his trout net in the spring at Cliff Cove. He says Cliff Cove has really good water from a little brook that runs out there. He digs out a place for the kettle. “I likes that: trout kicking in the net, kettle boiling, see a black bear coming along the shore.” He gets more fish than he needs and always enjoys sharing his catch with other people.

Hunting and Trapping

Like most men back then, Ron had a dog team for hunting and hauling wood. People said his team were half wolves. “I couldn’t handle them,” he says. “They were big, they could drag me around anywhere at all.” He remembers going partridge hunting up the bay with Jack Lane one time. He says they could leave the dogs and shoot at the partridges, and the dogs wouldn’t even get up. “We had a grub box full of partridges that time, and we ran out of cartridges.” Ron remembers another time when he saw a company of partridges into Second Rapid Pond. There were ten partridges, and he killed every one. “I sat down and took my time,” he says. “I always fired at the head one.”

Back then, everybody used to go to Makkovik for the Easter sports. Ron went in the dog team race once and came sixth out of 23 teams. He always stayed at Norman Broomfields. He only had five dogs and he needed six, so Norman lent him one of his; Ron came in ahead of Norman in the race. Ron and Norman used to go south of Makkovik to hunt, too. He remembers one time he brought back some tapes from Makkovik. There was no TV then, only tapes.

Ron also remembers his many deer-hunting trips down north. One trip stands out in his mind: when a group of them went inside Davis Inlet with George Gear. On the way back it got rough. It was drifting high and everyone’s Ski-Doos started freezing up except his. He asked George Gear, “Which way do we go now?” George told him to go straight for a certain star and he would hit the Ski-Doo track. “Sure enough, not long, we hit the track,” Ron says. You can still see the amazement in his expression. They almost made it to Hopedale when his Ski-Doo broke down too. But it wasn’t far to walk, he says.

Ron is also a trapper. He started trapping when he was still in school. He first trapped foxes and minks. You would get 50 dollars for a mink he says. That was a lot of money

back then. He only started trapping martens not too long ago. He had eighteen last year. But the price has really gone down. He doesn't mind going up the bay, late in the fall, when it's cold and windy because he enjoys checking his traps and hearing spruce partridges flying up. People say Ron has a farm because he always gets spruce partridges.

There are a lot of changes in the weather Ron says. It blows more now. And it doesn't freeze up as quickly. In the fall it would never be mild for a long time like it is now. It used to get mild in January for a couple of days. We don't get that anymore. And we don't get the frosts in the spring like we used to. It used to get sloppy ugly in the spring. It's not like that anymore.

Roy Pilgrim



“Never Idle”

INTERVIEWED MARCH 4, 2021

Mischievous Youth

Roy Pilgrim was born at Ailik, Labrador on August 17, 1946. His parents were Augusta Dicker and John Pilgrim. Augusta was born in Nain and John was from Griquet, Newfoundland. They met at Ailik and married on December 31, 1944. John was 20 years older than Augusta.

Augusta and John had seven children together: Roderick (Rod), Roy, Lillian, Rhoda, Bert, Wilfred, and Winnie. This was the second marriage and second family for both Augusta and John, whose previous partners had passed away.

Carl Gillette spoke of John Pilgrim as a strong hardworking man who always helped people. George Lane often told Roy the story of how John Pilgrim could tie a 15-pound grapnel to his wrist and write his name on the wall with timber chalk.

Growing up in Postville, Roy, his brother Rod, and friend Cecil Jacque got into a lot of mischief. One Sunday, there was a crowd of boys playing in Pastor Gillette's boat, the Gospel Messenger. The pastor saw them and left the church and chased them with a rubber hose.

Cecil was always tormenting Rod, and one particular time Rod got mad. As Cecil was running out through the fence Rod picked up a cake of Sunlight soap and let cut and hit him square between the shoulder blades. Cecil got the wind knocked out of him and fell face down. The boys started to cry, and Roy was saying, "Roderick killed Cecil!" Roy's mother, Aunt Gussie, picked Cecil up and he came around.

Boarding School

Roy was just 10 years old when his father passed away, so Augusta had to raise a big family on her own. When the children were all school-aged, she went to Goose Bay and North West River working. The children attended the dorm in North West River, but they would come home in the summers when school was out.

Roy remembers playing a lot of sports in the dorm. Bill Rompkey was the principal and he used to organize hockey and football (soccer) games against Robert Leckie High in Goose Bay. The dorm kids called Happy Valley-Goose Bay “Skunk Hollow” and anyone who came from there was a skunk, Roy says with a laugh. The dorm kids would also play baseball and basketball with the Americans who worked at North West Point. Roy says the Americans were always friendly. Roy also remembers having lots of snowball fights with the outsiders—the kids who did not stay in the dorm.

Boxing matches were also popular in the dorm. One time, Roy and Edward Allen were fighting the championship match. Roy punched Edward and knocked him down. He hit his head off the floor and was out cold. But they didn’t give Roy the championship because Edward hit his head. Roy laughs fondly as he remembers how they had to lug Edward up the stairs.

The dorm kids would get to go to the movies for free. They had hand-written tickets that said, “admit one dorm child.” They started making the tickets themselves on the end of it. Saturdays were great because the kids were always given 50 cents; a coke and a chocolate bar cost 25 cents. Then on Sunday they had to go for a walk.

There were no phones back then, so getting a letter or a parcel from home it was extra special.

The children at the dorm had to do chores like scrubbing the floors and doing dishes. One of the most fun chores was waxing the floor. The kids would all put cloths on their feet and skate around on the newly waxed floor to make it shiny.

Some of the kids would steal turnip from the garden and put them under their pillows and eat them raw. Roy remembers one time they got caught stealing from someone’s garden in North West River and they had to do work as punishment. “You didn’t get strapped or anything. Work was your punishment,” says Roy.

Life After School

Roy quit school when he finished grade eight, and at the age of 16 he went fishing with George Sheppard at Ailik for a year. After that they fished at Black Island for four or five years. Roy also fished with Max Lane and his brother Ron Gear for a summer. They rented a motorboat from Uncle Johnny Edmunds for 20 dollars for the summer. Roy remembers lifting a drum of fuel up onto the stag head and it fell back into the boat and put a hole in it! They had to haul the boat up on shore so Ron could put a new plank in it. They fished by hand at Ailik, but they had a trap when they fished at Black Island. At the end of the summer everyone worked together to ship their fish on the Prince Andrew.

Back in those days they used to play hockey in Postville. They would shovel off the rink. They even had lights hooked up. Everyone played together—the old with the young. Their team was called the Stingers and they would play against Makkovik. Roy says he shot the puck and hit Albert Ford in the head one time and knocked him out!

The young people would all gather in to Aunt Berdie’s and Uncle Johnny’s house. Their daughter Irene and Jack Lane would play the guitar. They would all play ringers. Everyone would be laughing and having good fun. Roy recalls how Jack would always drop in to visit him and Ron on his way home from Uncle Johnny’s house.

The Power Plant and The Clinic

On November 29, 1969, Roy married Janet Jacque of Postville. In January he got a job working at the diesel power plant and he had to go to the fisheries college in St. John’s and do a six-month diesel engineering course. He was out there for the first three months by himself and then Janet moved out there with him. Roy worked at the power plant for 31 years.

Janet worked for Labrador Airways and also took care of the clinic. Nurses and doctors would visit Postville and hold a clinic at their house. Roy remembers the dentist coming once as well. They had a radio at their house, there were no phones back then, and she would have to put different crystals in the radio to call either Labrador Airways or the hospital. Later, Janet worked as a Community Health Worker for the Department of Health and Social Development for many years.

A Life of Creation

Roy remembers when he first started building komatiks; he used to get Clifford Jacque to cut them out and he would lash them himself. George Rose used to run them off, which means to put a sort of bow in the bottom of the runner so it would slip better. They would bring the komatik into the house to work at in the lamp light. After watching the older men do the work a few times, Roy started doing it all himself. He has built many komatiks over the years, especially since he retired. They are nailed now, of course, not lashed. Roy has sold many komatik boxes in Postville and to other communities on the coast.

One year Roy was going to fix up an old wooden boat, but Job Edmunds offered to help him build a new one instead. They went into Bear Pond and cut a stem each. Uncle Tom Sheppard and Uncle Fred Decker also helped him. They had to saw and plane everything by hand in those days. After that Roy built many speedboats, 19 in all. He built three in one spring! He also built many flats and a John boat. Roy says he would work at it early in the mornings and then go to work at the power plant at 8 o’clock.

Roy says, “Every chance we got we went hunting.” He used to hunt with Henry Lane a lot. You didn’t have to go far back then: Rapid Point, Salmon Brook, Halfway Island. Years later we started going in the river.” There used to be a lot more birds back then, a lot more partridges and porcupines. Roy says he had a nine horsepower Ski-Doo and he painted it blue with a black spade on the side.

Roy and Henry got caught in a storm up in Island Harbour Bay one fall. They were there for five nights in a motorboat.

In 1978, Roy and his brother Ron got their own sawmill. They would saw logs for themselves and other people. Roy cut 410 logs to build the house he lives in now; he had to recut all the 2x6s on a table saw because the mill didn’t make perfect cuts. That spring they sawed logs for two other houses as well—100 logs a day! They hired Wayne Lane to take away the slabs for them. They also sawed a lot of boat plank one year when there was a boat-building project in Postville. Roy sawed a lot of logs for his son’s house as well.

Roy started welding just before he retired with Hydro. It proved to be a good pastime after he retired. It was a lot of work because he used scrap metal, which he had to cut up and then pound flat. He has made 24 wood stoves with ovens on them; 32 with no ovens on them; dozens of sets of towbars and many, many grapnels; in addition to welding mufflers and Ski-Doo bodies for people.

Roy is also a good mechanic and is often asked by residents of Postville to fix their Ski-Doods when they break down or to do oil changes. He is never idle. He is always busy doing something for himself or someone else.

Violet Flowers



“Her Mother’s Footsteps”

INTERVIEWED MARCH 4, 2021

No Such Thing as Baking Chicken

On January 8, 1943 Violet’s mother Doris was having a hard delivery. So at 12 o’clock in the night, Violet’s father, Tom Lane and her Uncle Ernold harnessed up the dogs in a blizzard and went to Makkovik to get Mrs. Hettish, who had a bit of nursing. When they returned the next day, January 9, Doris had already delivered baby Violet with the help of Aunt Violet Sheppard, who was a Flowers before she married Uncle George. When Violet grew up, she married Aunt Violet Sheppard’s younger brother Albert, so she also became Violet Flowers, taking the same name as the woman who was her nurse.

Doris Cove was born in Tuchialic and lived there with her parents until their tragic death; they were out checking their traps late in the fall and only had a rowboat. The wind came up and they tipped over and drowned. Doris then went to live with the Winters in Makkovik. She had to bring in wood and haul water and help with the youngest children, more or less, to pay for her room and board.

Violet says she fell in her mother’s footsteps; Doris loved to sew. “She used to make sealskin mitts and slippers and sealskin boots. She used to knit mitts and caps and socks. She used to even make jackets for us,” Violet remembers. That was her hobby, but it was also work she had to do to clothe her kids. She spent a lot of time cleaning sealskins and sewing with sealskin. Doris also used to do a lot of grass work. She was the one who taught Aunt Marg Decker and then Aunt Marg passed the skill on to Lavinia Worthman.

Doris could read and write and would help Violet with her homework. She was also a good cook. “When I was growing up, when mother was living, there was no such thing as baking chicken or frying pork chops or turkey or anything like that,” Violet says. “Most was partridges or porcupine, rabbit, caribou, or seal!”

A Quiet, Hard-Working Man

Tom Lane (1929-1998), was born in Bar Harbour and grew up there and at Salmon Bight. "Father was a quiet man," Violet Says. He loved to smoke his pipe. When he was busy with his hands, he chewed tobacco. Other times he rolled and smoked cigarettes. He would do all three in one day. Tom was always a fisherman, a shareman with different fishing crews out around Ailik. He also worked in the lumber woods when Pastor Gillette had his sawmill here. He did a lot of logging. "He wasn't a trapper, not as I can remember, no, and he wasn't really a hunter," Violet says. "He used to go caribou hunting. He killed partridges if he was out in the woods and there was a partridge in the way; he'd kill a partridge. But I can never recall father going out duck hunting or going off waiting for geese. Maybe he never had the time. I don't know."

Tom had no formal education and couldn't read or write. But he was very smart with numbers. "You couldn't trick him on figures," Violet says, "He could add and multiply almost without thinking."

Doris and Tom had five children: Violet, Jack, Max, Irven, and Mary.

Childhood Fun

Violet has a lot of fond memories from childhood. She remembers getting in trouble with her brother Jack a few times when they were fishing at Ailik. Their house was on the other side of Ailik—not where the houses are now, next to a pond. Her mother had a wooden barrel sawed off for washing clothes. If the barrel got too dry it would leak, so her mother put the tub in the pond and tied it on, so that it would plim*. Violet and Jack were playing around the pond and Violet told Jack to get in the tub. "So, he got in the tub and once he got in, I give a shove and he went out as far as the line would go, just about tipping over," Violet laughs. "I think Jack was making it worse than it was because he was screeching his head off and mother came out." Violet says she got a whipping that time. "When you was bad them times you got a lickin."

Violet tells another story of getting in trouble with Jack when they were playing copy house. She remembers there was a piece of tin with a hole in it for putting down over the chimney to keep it from touching the roof. They were playing with this piece of tin and Violet told Jack to hold it so she could put some rocks under it. "Jack wasn't doing it proper, and I got mad," Violet recalls, "So I took the piece of tin and put it down over his head!" It went down over his head fine, but it couldn't come off. "Jack was bawling to mother again and I got another lickin'. I think it was with the broom handle. I'm sure it was." They had to get Uncle Fred Decker to come down with his tin cutters and cut the piece of tin off Jack!

As a young girl Violet played soccer, baseball, and tally over. When she got older she would go skating on the pond. "I used to love doing that. It was a really fun time," Violet remembers. She couldn't wait to get her work done so she could go skating. "You had to get your jobs done first. Father made sure of that," she says.

Christmas Traditions

Violet has a lot of memories of Christmas when she was a little girl. She remembers getting her first doll and being terrified of it. Louis Gillette was dressed up as Santa Clause and giving out toys. "I can remember crying and crying when he came in, but they told me I was frightened to death of the doll."

Before the boats stopped running in the fall, the store would have Christmas things come in. They would put the things in the back of the store until Christmas Eve or a couple of days before Christmas, and then only the mothers and fathers were allowed in the store.

On Christmas Eve there would be a big Christmas tree in the school, and everybody would bring their gifts down there. "If you had gifts for your family and your sisters, you wouldn't take it to their house and give it to them, you'd put it all down there," Violet recalls.

Christmas dinner would be a partridge. You couldn't go to the store and buy a chicken or a turkey. Violet can remember a time when Roy Pilgrim's mother, Aunt Gussy, came from North West River and was visiting her sister Aunt Mable Manak. When Aunt Gussy was getting ready to go back to Goose Bay on the boat, Aunt Mable said to her, "I wish you didn't have to go back. I wish you could stay longer." Aunt Gussy replied, "I gotta go back. I can smell the pork chops frying now." Violet says she remembers wondering what a pork chop was.

Violet went to school in Postville as far as grade four. Max Sparks, from the Island, was her first teacher. Another of her teachers was Clarice Edmunds. "Miss Clarice, she was very strict," Violet remembers. "We was always getting the strap." If you were late for school you either got a strap, got put in the corner, or you had to write out a hundred times, "I must not be late." Elna Sheppard was also one of Violet's teachers. Violet says she liked school, but after her mother passed away, she didn't get much schooling.

After Her Mother's Death

Violet's mother died in 1956, when Violet was just 12 years old. She had a bad heart and had to go to the hospital in North West River. She was there for the longest time and then they sent her on to St. Anthony and that's where she died. She's buried there in St. Anthony.

At that time, Violet's baby sister went to live with Aunt Maud Broomfield. Violet's father was left to raise the other four young children on his own. Violet became a mother figure to her younger brothers. "My brother Max, he used to say, 'Violet is more like a mother to me than a sister,'" Violet recalls. She had to work very hard and do things that other young girls didn't have to do. She learned to cook and clean from her father and on her own the best way she could. Violet recalls:

I used to go out and play with them. We used to play tally over or rounder*...and then, when it was getting dark and we were getting hungry, I used to have to go in and try to find something for the boys to have for their supper. It wasn't easy. It wasn't easy. Especially when it came to washing their clothes You couldn't just throw it in the washer. You had to go and get the ol' board and tub out, and water. The boys used to be racing around the house and father used to bawl at us and tell us to be quiet and he used to say, "Be careful with Violet, don't be rough with Violet 'cause you poke your finger at her she'll cry." I was really a crybaby. I don't know if I used to do it for attention or what.

After Violet's mother died the family still went to Ailik fishing. And Violet's father also worked on the American site at Cape Makkovik. When Tom would go to Cape Makkovik he would leave the children home by themselves. Violet was 14 or 15 years old, Jack was around 11, Max 9, and Irven 6 or 7. Violet remembers her father would be gone for weeks before they would see him again. He had no choice. Their next-door neighbour, Aunt Maud, would keep an eye on them and sometimes bring them leftovers. But the next year Tom got a little shack stuck up out there and he took the children with him to Cape Makkovik.

Violet says her father did a good job of raising them on his own with what he had at that time. "Yes, yes, my goodness! If I had the house to live in what I'm living in now when I was growing up, I'd think I had the queen's palace," she says. "It must have been harder then, but at the time, when we was back there, just like it didn't seem hard. We didn't know we had it hard."

Violet remembers her father was very strict on his children. Even when she was 20 she still had to be in by 9 o'clock or her father would send her brothers out looking for her.

When Violet was a teenager, she would go out in the evening with her friends and walk the roads. Violet was close friends with Alice Ralph, Elna Sheppard's sister. Her other friends were Gladys Lyall, Hazel Edmunds, Lavinia Roberts, Evangeline's sister. And then the boys: Harold Goudie, Edward, Pierce, and Claude Sheppard. "We used to have really good fun," Violet remembers. "Hiding away from the boys and the boys hiding away from us. Now you can go in the gym and play all kinds of games in the warm."

Married Life

At the age of 21, on February 8, 1964, Violet left home and married Albert Flowers. Albert grew up in Flowers' Bay, north of Hopedale. And when they started to build the American site in Hopedale his family moved there for work. After that, Albert moved to Goose Bay for a while and then to Postville. Albert and Violet had two children: Stella and Charlie.

Violet says her greatest accomplishment is her children. "I really enjoyed my kids," she says. After she had Stella and she was going to have her second child, she remembers thinking, "I can't have another girl, I got a girl. It gotta be a boy!" It was so exciting, she says.

Albert fished in Bar Harbour and Ailik and Violet fished as well. During their first years together, they fished salmon up at Salmon Brook. Violet had a salmon license, a groundfish license, and a boat license. One week they would fish in Albert's boat and the next week they would fish in Violet's. "We worked really hard, but I really enjoyed it," Violet says.

Violet experienced many scary moments out on the water. "We'd be out there, and the sea used to be so big," she remembers. They had lots of nets and sometimes they would be too busy to keep them all clean. If the net was dirty in the water, they wouldn't stop to clean it; they would take it in the boat and put out another one. Then they would take the dirty one on land and clean it when they had spare time. "But you had to have lots of nets to do that," she says. Violet recalls more than once having to get up in the middle of the night to haul the boat up because the wind was in and ice was coming in the harbour.

Stella and Charlie were involved in the fishing as well. They helped take the kelp out of the nets and draw water over the stage head for cleaning the nets. When Charlie got older, he got his own license, fished with his father, and got a share.

The most salmon Violet ever cleaned in one day was 100! She had already cleaned 92 that day and was waiting for Albert to come back from the nets one last time. She was going to put the rest of the fish on ice until the next day, but Albert came in with eight more salmon. She remembers saying, "I got to clean them to make one hundred!"

They worked long hours, but it was only for a short season. "They was good times," Violet says. "We'd get a lot of fresh air."

Violet gave up fishing when she got a job at the local gas station. She enjoyed working there and says, "There was lots of money to handle. It was only myself working there, so if

I was short or over, there was no one to blame, only me. You had to be right on. I worked there for 28 years and not once they had to come and see where this was gone or that was gone."

After Violet retired from the gas station, she took on a new job as a cashier at Sheppard's Variety and worked there for about 10 years, until she was 77 years old. Even after that, she was still relied on as a call-in when the store was stuck for a cashier until she fully retired in 2020.

Retirement

Violet always keeps busy knitting and sewing. There is always a pair of slippers or mitts on her table that she is working on. She is always sewing things for other people: putting fur on hoods zippers in coats and hemming pants.

Upon reflection Violet can see many changes in Postville over the years. Life is different. Long ago life was good. Everyone seemed happy. Everybody helped each other. It's not like that anymore she says. "I can be out shovelling off my doorstep and five or six people can be out on their Ski-Doos and they just look at you. Back in them days, if you was out shovelling your doorstep, whoever passed, that person stopped and give you a hand." But Violet is happy that today there are phones, electric lights, washers, and fridges.

Glossary:

BAWN: A rocky area where cod fish were laid out to dry

BOOM: A way to collect and contain floating logs

BRIDLE: A loop that holds the dogs' traces (lines attached to the dogs' harnesses). There was a specific bridle knot that had to be tied. The bridle also included a "button" made out of bone.

BRINEX: A mining company doing uranium exploration in the Postville area

CABLE CAR: A transportation system where a cabin is suspended on a moving cable to transport people, for example, across a river

CUFFS: Mittens

DICKIE: A traditional hooded parka that is pulled down over your head.

DUFF: A pastry which sits on top of roast meat

DUNCHY: Heavy or soggy cake or bread

FLAT: A small rowboat

KOMATIK: From Inuttitit. A sled to travel on snow.

JIGGER: A lead weight with two large hooks used to jig for cod

LANDWASH: The foreshore, especially the part between low and high tidemarks.

PAUNCHEDED: Remove the guts of an animal to prevent the meat from spoiling.

PLIM: A process whereby wooden boats become watertight. When placed in the water the wood swells and thus the seams close up and the boat no longer leaks.

PUNT: A small wooden boat shaped like a motorboat.

QUINTAL: Known locally as "cantal," this was the weight by which fisherman sold their fish, by the cantal, which was 110 pounds

TALLY OVER: A game with two people or teams, one on each side of a small house or shed. One team throws the ball over the house and the team on the other side tries to catch it

ROUNDER: An older name for the game we now know as baseball.

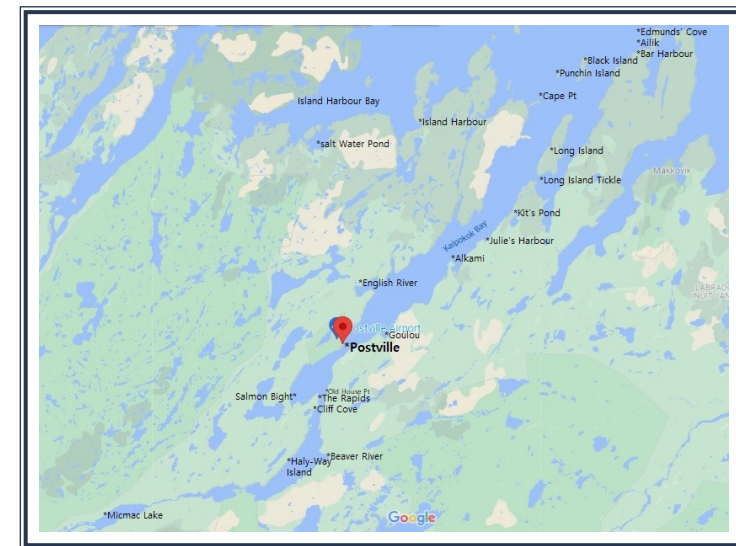
SCHOONER: A type of sailing vessel

SHINA: The edge of the sea ice where there is open water

SLOB: Slush on the ice.

STAGE: A shed used for cleaning and splitting fish

Map of Named Places



The Life Stories of Postville's Treasured Seniors

2021