

Quirpon

A People of Spirit, Courage and Resourcefulness

PREFACE

With them the seed of wisdom did I sow
And with mine own hand laboured it to grow
And this was all the harvest that I reaped
“I came like Water, and like Wind I go.”

- *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*

What do the people of northern Newfoundland have in common with a poet by the name of Omar Khayyam? At first glance, nothing, except that this obscure piece of Persian poetry captures the essence of what this year-long Community History Project has taught me.

In the past year I ventured into sixteen communities: telephoning, knocking on doors, and sitting at kitchen tables drinking endless cups of tea, trying to learn customs, traditions, and wisdom from the older people in northern Newfoundland so that the stories could be set down in writing and preserved for future generations. *With them the seed of wisdom did I sow...*

Back at the office, after each interview, I would review the outcome of each story and try to write in a format that would satisfy not only the person interviewed, but the people who would read the stories at some future date. *And with my own hand laboured it to grow...*

By year's end there were stacks of photographs, pages of typewritten interviews, maps criss-crossed with names and dates, and hand-drawn pictures submitted by enthusiastic contributors. In people's homes there were interviews where we laughed, cried, walked over hills to the back of land, walked along winding pathways to graveyards, ventured out on the high seas in boats enjoying boil-ups with scalding tea, fisherman's brewis, beans and bread, and still more stories.

In these interviews, I was often perplexed by words and expressions totally unfamiliar to me and, without

the assistance of my husband, Len Tucker, I suspect the dialect would have defeated me utterly. Yet it is the words and expressions of northern Newfoundland that are, and were, the lifeblood of communication in a time when modern technology was unheard of. I learned that, while there are official names on Newfoundland maps, local fishermen have their own names for islands, bays and coves. I learned that the people who settled this wonderful, terrible place have an intimate relationship with the sea and the land that no tourist or outsider can truly fathom or appreciate. And at the end of the year, I knew that I had only managed to collect a few small pieces of the puzzle that make up a larger picture of hardships endured, joys celebrated, and lives lived to the fullest. *And this was all the harvest that I reaped...*

I came like water and like wind I go...

This precious generation of people you will read about in these pages were born, lived, and will, one day, pass on. In writing their stories I have attempted to grasp the 'wind and water' of their lives – as well as their customs and traditions – which are fast slipping away into obscurity.

This is not so much a historical document as it is an opportunity for these people – in their own time and in their own way – to tell the stories that were nearest and dearest to their hearts. Whether you are a student, a come from away, or a Newfoundlander, you may find in these pages the heart and soul of the people of Newfoundland.

History of Communities and St. Anthony

BILL CARPENTER, TEACHER



Figure 1 Bill Carpenter discussing chart features with Len Tucker



Bill Carpenter describes the route his fishing crew took when they were lost in a storm

Shipping lanes in the Strait of Belle Isle

The Shipping Lanes through the Strait of Belle Isle (Belle Isle is the large island farthest to the right of the map)



Lost at sea

I never did have my own fishing boat, I never did fish and I never took any share in the profits. I just went out to be with the boys; I did it for the adventure; and for payment I probably got a fish to eat or fried some cod tongues. When I first fished with Gord Diamond, they went back and forth from Quirpon to Belle Isle in a 22-foot wooden speedboat.

Now, a southwest wind is deadly; it comes right out of the Straits, and you get this channelling and funnelling effect, and oh, you come up around the island, and gale-force winds hit you. The Strait of Belle Isle is like a big funnel that opens up into the Gulf of St. Lawrence and when the wind comes out between the Labrador

land mass and the Newfoundland land mass, it comes through like the Venturi tube in a carburetor; it's restricted, and that increases its speed.

Early one morning, we left Quirpon to go out in the speedboat; Quirpon was the jump-off point. There were four of us in the boat: Gord Diamond, Hayward Roberts, Boyce Roberts of Quirpon – they were the crew – and then me. We had ten bags of salt with us and about thirty-five gallons of gas and food enough for a week. That's when we were living at Black Joe in the bunkhouse.

It was daylight at four-thirty or five o'clock in the morning, and the sky was gorgeous. Gord said, "Geez, boy, we're going to have a wind today. It doesn't look good." And all of a sudden while we were talking, everything went flat, the wind died, and the sea went calm.

In that speedboat, they could make it to the southwest end of Belle Isle in less than an hour with a 50 hp and 35 hp motor. And if you got there, you could go in Lighthouse Cove, or Barber's Cove, or some other place for shelter. So we all jumped in the boat and booted

her for Belle Isle. We got out off League Rock and in the Straits – about three or four miles out – and the wind came up, southwest and gale force. It was blowing right against the side of the boat. We got over half way out there and the wind kept breezing up – getting stronger and stronger – and now we were looking at big rollers coming towards us, and we couldn't take them side-on in an open boat. We had to turn the bow into the wind. Ruby's brother Hayward was steering the boat. We were going head-on into this white foam; the waves were combing. We took in a couple barrels of water. So then it was bail out. Boyce was on one side baling out, and I was on the other side. We'd get down in the troughs between the big rollers and it was so calm you could take out a cigarette lighter and light a cigarette. We were in the trough of the wave and there was a big wave going away from you and another big wave coming at you. And we were out there dodging waves from seven o'clock in the morning till two o'clock in the afternoon, and we never did find Belle Isle. We couldn't steer on course because it was too rough. We couldn't go with the wind because we'd end up way off-shore in the Atlantic somewhere.

When the wind finally began to abate and clear up, we could see the land. Gord said, "Boys, is that Belle Isle?"

I said, "Nope, that's the tableland behind Henley Harbour." We were almost across the Straits!

Our gas was getting pretty low by this time. I said to Gord, "Our best bet is to go for Labrador." We were about a mile or so off Saddle Island when we ran out of gas. We

had a piece of old canvas, so we rigged up a sail, and we put everything up at the head of the speedboat to get her to sail; she wouldn't sail headfirst. So we pulled up the engines and put everything up at the head of the boat – got up there ourselves – and we could steer her with an oar; we had no problem then. We were sailing down the Labrador coast across St. Peter's Bay, and we must have looked very peculiar.

A Search and Rescue Helicopter came down the coast – she must have been no more than three hundred feet from us – we could almost feel the prop-wash. They were in one of those big Labrador helicopters, and the helicopter flew right over us and went on down the coast and the crew never even noticed us. Four guys in a boat with an old rag – tag sail, sailing down the coast stern – first on a beautiful afternoon. Gord said, "Boys, they couldn't have seen us!"

"Boys," I said, "There should be some guys fishing in Carol's Cove. We'll put up a signal and they'll come out." So, sure enough, we put up a signal on the boat-hook we had, and a feller and his brother come out, and they said, "Where did you guys come from?" It was about five o'clock, or later, in the evening by the time we got there. And Gord said, "Boy, we left Quirpon at seven o'clock this morning." And buddy looked at us and said, "Quirpon! It's blowing too hard for us to go out around the head and look at the salmon nets."

"Yeah," we said, "We know!"

So, they said, "Do you want a tow?"

"No," we said, "We don't want a tow; all we want is some gas."

They gave us some gas and off

we went. We went to the Camp Islands and stayed with the light keepers, Joe and Malcolm Campbell and their families.

When we got to the light station at the Camp Islands, we got a message home that we were alright. All the light stations had VHF, so when we got there they patched a call through to the St. Anthony Coast Guard radio and they would patch it through to whomever you wanted to call. We had no radio on the boat; never thought of it.

And of course, when we got there and told the boys about our experience, all they did was laugh and laugh and laugh. We stayed at the light keepers till the next evening because the wind freshened up again the next morning and blew all that day. We left for Belle Isle at seven o'clock, and we had lots of gas this time, forty-five gallons. We made it right to Lark Island when we got across, and when we went down to Black Joe, it was foggy as mud. The men were there putting away their fish, and that's where we went in. And then it started to rain.

So, naturally then, after going through all this – I was a jinker, eh?

Hidden Treasure at Quirpon

FLORENCE (FLO) HEDDERSON

Florence Hedderson was born Florence Decker, September 19, 1930, daughter of Charles and Rebecca Decker. Her father's two brothers owned the J&R Decker store in Ship Cove; another uncle, Uncle Abe Decker, was the postmaster for forty-eight years. Florence's aunt, May Clouston, was a Red Cross nurse in WWI; she was also head nurse in St. Anthony and St. John's.

Florence met Frank Hedderson while he was fishing with her father in Quirpon. "They used to have little houses over on the island for fishing summertime and go back to Ship Cove later in the year; they'd all go down to Cape Bauld fishing." At that



Figure 1 Flo Hedderson at her home on Quirpon

time, Florence was working at the hospital as a nurse's aide.

When Florence's father suggested that Frank Hedderson would be a good man for her, she didn't want to

get married because she was only seventeen years old. She smiles, "Frank never let up chasing me around. I was foolish enough to listen to my father and give up my job for him, and I got married, see? That's when you sees your mistakes, when you makes them." She makes this comment in jest.

She married Frank Hedderson on August 21, 1947 in Spillars Cove, which is now called Straitsview. They lived in the community fourteen years.

Miracles happen

After we were married, a doctor told me I would never be able to have children, so we adopted a little girl. I was married six years before I adopted her, and the next year I had a boy. His name was Donald; then came Thomas, Edward, Rhonda, Ricky, Dwane, and Sherry. After I had my family, the doctor in St. John's was surprised. Miracles happen, but sometimes I wish you could put them back where they come from!

Memories of a schooner fire at Ship Cove

When I lived in Ship Cove, sometime around the early 1940s, you could walk on the schooners from High Point to Uncle Quil Bessey's wharf; there were that many of them lined up, side-by-side. There were planks laid across from boat-to-boat, and many of the boats were only a foot apart.

I remember one time, Uncle Sim Colbourne, he had a wooden leg. He was a Master of the Watch, assistant to the captain of one of the boats, and he was waiting to go across to Labrador, and he had an argument about gasoline burning on the water.

And so, somebody was silly enough to throw the gasoline overboard and heave a match to it. Anyway, it caught afire the schooner. That's the truth. She was a green schooner – I can mind it the same as yesterday – and when the fire caught they had a job to put it out, because all they had was wooden draw buckets. And everybody scrabbled up from the shore and tried to dout the schooner, because if they didn't the whole outfit would have burned.

And you know, that schooner went across to Labrador in the spring, and she still had a black side and a green one when she come back in the fall!

Quirpon schooners and french ovens



Figure 2 French oven behind the Pynn house in Quirpon

In 1961, Frank and I moved from Straitsview to Quirpon. There were no roads back then, but there were boats and schooners everywhere. Everybody had dog teams and everybody had root cellars; they're still here in some places. Those French ovens you see up around there; that was only put there in late years, and as far as I'm concerned, they aren't in the right place anyway. The French Ovens is across the harbour there, where you goes over to Grandmother's Cove, on the Island; there was eighteen ovens there. And you

see them bricks we got around our flower bed? We took five-gallon buckets to Grandmother's Cove, filled them with bricks, and put them around our flower bed. I knows where every oven is to.

Quirpon Island was a French island. French fishermen lived on that island and they baked enough bread for their daily use. You go and dig up the sod and you'll find the bricks; we found eighteen places, my husband and me, all in Sealot, right below Grandmother's Cove.

The French Fishery in Ship Cove and Quirpon

The French would come over in a schooner with a crew of maybe forty or fifty fishermen and would set up operations here. The fishermen would operate in small boats: go out and get their fish, bring it back, and they'd salt it away on their schooner. They would build little shacks on the shore to live in, and they had the ovens for cooking their food, which was all cooked outdoors. They didn't use the ovens for bread only; they might have used them for fish or anything else they wanted to cook.

The French weren't allowed to set up permanent establishments, so everything was temporary. Some of them stayed the winter, because my grandmother, Aunt Bertha Decker from Ship Cove, used to teach the Frenchmen at one time. She would teach them – those who were left behind in the wintertime – in Ship Cove. I heard tell of it dozens of times. Local people spoke French, too; I heard them lots of times, sitting around the table. I remember when I took grade nine, trying to learn French, but I never did like it. I got sick of hearing them around the table gobbling; I couldn't understand a word.

Buried relics at Grandmother's Cove Quirpon Island

The French used to bury their fishing gear. Dappers and small fishing gear – they buried it. We had a garden over there one time; me and Frank was digging and we dug up fourteen dappers. Dappers were about six or seven inches long, made of lead, with just one hook on them, and they were used for jigging fish. Newfoundland dappers had two hooks; the French dapper only had one. A dapper is right narrow compared to a jigger.

So, the French would hide their fishing gear by digging a hole and burying it, and when they would come back the following year and dig it up again.

A few treasures

Flo displays some of the treasures she and Frank dug up on Quirpon Island: a large spoon, ten inches long, made of bone – whale bone, perhaps. There is a handful of little decorative rocks; a few coins; an egg-size rock, which is a flint-rock; a flintstone. There is an ebony figurehead which appears to be either African or Egyptian and it is very lightweight, but can't be cut with a knife; it looks like wood. The figurehead could be Nefertiti. It might have been a figurehead on a French schooner or battleship.

"The experts want these things," says Mrs. Hedderson, "but you'll never get them back no more."

More than potatoes in the garden

What happened, when we went over to Grandmother's Cove, it was

about forty-five years ago, around the mid 1960s. We went over there and we were just digging a garden; we had a huge garden. We set twenty-five sacks of potatoes there – on the little island up from the lun. And we dug, just like everybody else. And when we dug down, the first thing we dug up was a figurehead, and it was like wood, but you couldn't mark it with a knife. Then we dug up different kinds of money; French and Portuguese. And well, we got excited then. There were French merchants here, and merchant ships; perhaps the French brought the money for to trade or something. They say there's a lot of money buried around here.

Every year we'd go to the island to set our potatoes, and every now and then, when we tilled the soil, we'd find something. We found a broken jar, but we never got it up.

And then we dug up part of an iron pee pot, or chamber pot. We don't know what they used it for but that's what it was, a pee pot. After that we dug up, I'd say, about fifty of them dappers: all in the one big hole; all where the garden was to. We were only digging on our own land, eh? Two years after we moved to Quirpon, we dug up the leather map.

Symbols and carvings

I suppose ten years after we had the children, we used to go swimming in Sealot Pond, and we used to see marks. We'd see two nails crossed. Then there was *A O* and that was in the cliff. Then you'd look ahead, probably about a mile, or a mile and a half, and there was a buffalo in the hill. And another kind of animal was carved in a rock. And you'd go up on this high hill where you'd pick the partridgeberries, and look a little further ahead and all the marks led right onto this cove that we



Figure 3 A ladder from the wrecked SS Langleecrag

was headed for.

And Frank used to say to me, “Maid, there’s something here in this place, because I got a weird feeling.”

And I’d say, “Yes, boy, I got a weird feeling, too.” There was only the two of us. But that mound in the middle, you know; I think there’s something down there. So anyway, we was going to dig up that mound, but Frank got sick and we never did get around to it, but I still think there’s something there. It’s on a grassy meadow, and there’s no mounds nowhere in that place, only right in the middle. And I still think there’s something there because all them marks led right to it. We couldn’t figure it out. Every time we’d see symbols or marks, I’d draw them on a piece of paper, and then I’d draw the shape of the hill where you’d find it.

Frank got sick shortly after that, and four years later, in 1997, he died.

Huts on Quirpon Island

And that’s where we found the huts over there, too and, after finding those huts, well, I don’t think L’Anse aux Meadows is in the right place! Honest to goodness, I don’t!

All these things we dug up were around Grandmother’s Cove and Sealot Cove. But that cove I was telling you about, where we was going to dig that place – where the

mound is – that’s not in Grandmother’s Cove. That’s on another part of the island; the back of the island. What we done, me and my husband, so nobody else could find it, we covered every mark. We went and got blackberry bushes, and we got the sod and all, and we stuck them on

see, and one end of the leather is in pretty bad shape, but, every mark that we found on Quirpon Island is on that map.

Flo Hedderson has been approached by many people regarding these finds, but she has no interest in sharing this information with anyone outside her own family: ‘finders keepers’ is her motto. She and her husband bought the land and paid to have it surveyed.

I can do what I like on my own land; we bought the land for our garden back in 1947. We had it surveyed and we have the grant. I think the Tuckers-who used the land before us – found a French weigh machine over there one year.



Figure 4 A pewter jug, a cast iron stove and a woodbox

the rock right over there, and they grewed on.

These marks I’m talking about weren’t on the ground; they were on the cliff face. You could see them from a distance, scraped into the rock. I covered them all, but I know where every mark is, because I have the map. My children know where it all is, but they won’t meddle with it until I’m gone.

I don’t know if there’s buried treasure, but its treasure to us. It’s important to us, you know.

A leather map

Now, the last time we dug, we dug up a leather map, and that map is in preserve in St. Anthony. My son-in-law worked in university and there’s a liquid what it’s put into. Its leather,



Figure 5 When there’s work to be done, Flo is up to the task

Glossary Dictionary of Newfoundland English

1. Dout: To extinguish a fire; turn off an electric light.
2. Lun: A sheltered location; lee.
3. Dappers: also dabber. A weighted hook used with bait in hand-line fishing for cod near the surface of the water; jigger.

Water Waves and Diamonds

LINDA TUCKER

Linda Tucker could open a store with the number of socks and slippers she has knitted over the years. She lives in Quirpon with her husband Roy and, while she has a store-load of slippers and socks, she'd rather give them away than sell them.

The pallet of colours she uses to create her masterpieces rival any oil or acrylic paintings you see on the walls of art museums in the cities around the world. When she's not working at the fish plant in St. Anthony, which is seasonal work, she spends her evenings at home knitting up a storm.

"In the wintertime I don't be working, so I don't have much to do. You can only do so much housework a day." But it is obvious that knitting socks is less about filling in time and more about cultivating a natural creative talent that simply must express itself through a medium of rich textures and colours.

One of Linda's favourite patterns is one she calls water waves. She picks up a slipper and says, "The knit is double; they last longer and they're warmer." Because she can't see as well as she used to, Linda uses bright colours to see the stitches more clearly.

Linda never learned to knit from her mother, who died when she was young; she learned the craft from her mother-in-law over forty years ago. "She showed me how to knit and turn the heel; back then they used to do the diamond pattern, and they did a lot of striped ones; most

all socks were striped then."

She's passed the skill of knitting onto her daughter, Debbie, who usually knits 'bubble socks' rather than slippers.

"I used to knit a lot of socks at one time," Linda says, "but I find men don't wear the socks as much anymore."

It's an art that hasn't been taken up by the younger generation. "None of the young people knit anymore; but forty years ago I was

along to her friends.

Linda remarks that it is mostly the older people that still knit, saying she used to sew and make curtains, but nowadays it's cheaper to buy them. She adds that more women are working out of the home so they don't take the time to sit down and knit and crochet and sew like they used to.

"Back in the old days, Roy's mother was always knitting socks and mittens. She had seven or eight



Figure 1 Feast for the eyes

interested in it. Roy's mother was always knitting; she had a crowd and she used to knit for them.

She reaches into a plastic storage container filled to the brim with a riot of hectic colours and says, "I think there's ninety pair of slippers. That's not socks, just slippers," she hastens to add. The socks are stashed away in her closet and she has plenty of those, too. Mrs. Tucker has no plans to open a store or sell her wares but, although she doesn't sell the slippers or socks she makes, she likes to give them away at Christmas or pass them

boys; she had to keep them going. She never packed any away as I do; because as soon as she had them knitted somebody would be waiting to take them," she says.

Linda puts her knitting away and gets up to set the table for tea. She admits she doesn't knit because she has to; she knits out of habit and old habits die hard. "Three months of the year I'm not working, so what am I going to do all day long and all night long?"

Roy Tucker smiles and says, "You could look out to me!" And they both laugh.



Figure 2 Linda knits mostly the Water Waves pattern (bottom left and right) and the occasional D iamond pattern (center)



Figure 3
These slippers have the Diamond pattern

Quirpon and a Lightning Strike

MABEL TUCKER

Born in Quirpon



Figure 1 Mabel Tucker lives in Ship Cove

My name is Mabel Tucker, formerly Mabel Taylor of Quirpon. I was born November 10, 1947. My parents were Lewis Taylor and Frances (Fannie) Pynn. There were nine children in our family, five girls and four boys.

Photograph of homes in Lower Quirpon (next page): Top left: Ken Saunders (Eliza Pynn); Lane Pynn; Wilfred Pynn (behind); middle right, Anglican church; left of the church, Lewis Taylor (Fannie Pynn); lower left (hidden from view), Taylors. Photo courtesy of Mabel Tucker, Ship Cove.

Note: The original photo of the community was taken from quite a distance – up on the hill – and was an enlarged copy of a smaller picture. Some of the integrity of the picture is lost as a result. For instance, according to Mabel Tucker, in the photo, (next page) the door to the church is not visible on the front

of the church (the sunlit side), but it is there.

Living in Lower Quirpon

If you look at Figure 3, you see the cove where we lived. If you were to go there today, not a home you see in that picture would remain. There was an actual single-lane road that went around the cove.

In Figure 3 (next page) the Anglican Church, as far as I know, is the same structure that was struck by lightning in 1913. The church is located at center on the far right.

My uncle Wilfred Pynn told me the story about the lightning strike in 1913. All of our family, my older sisters and brothers, they know the same story that I do.

The lady in Figure 2 is my great-grandmother; that would be my

Lightning strikes the Anglican Church

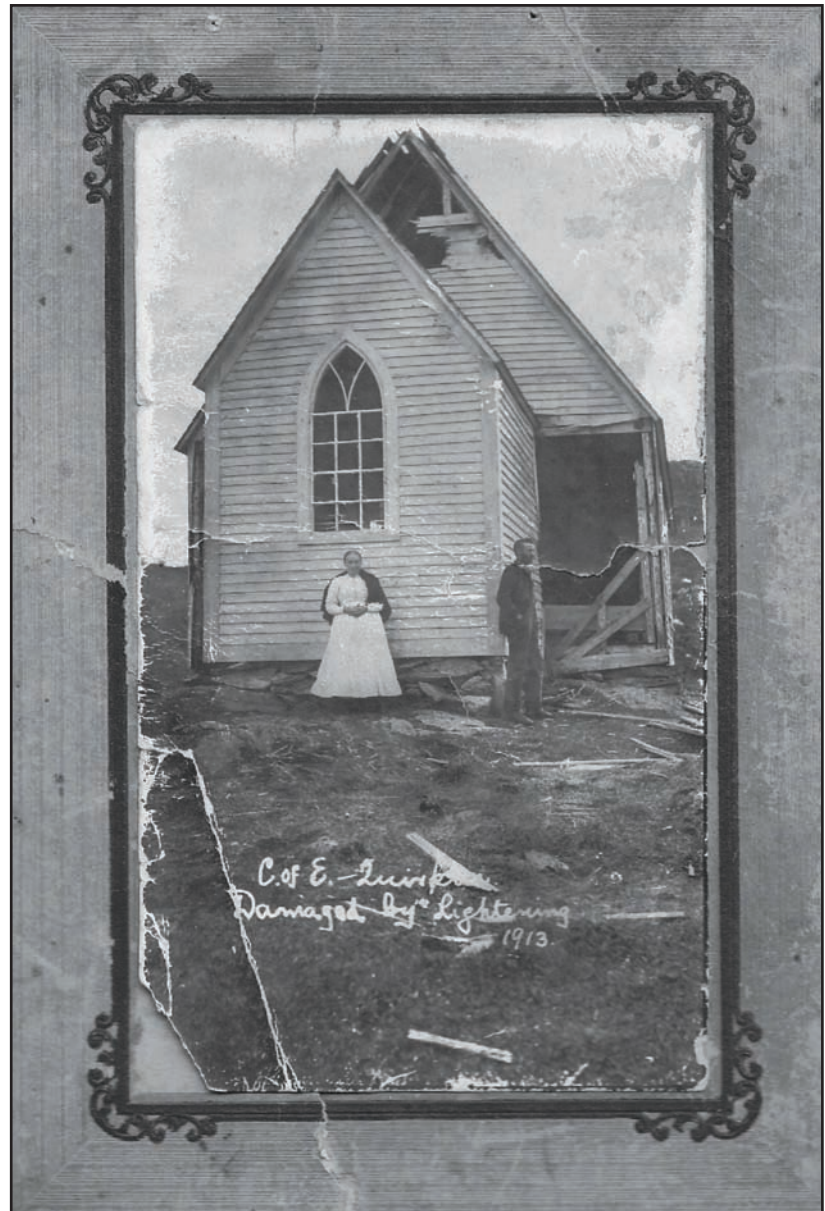


Figure 2 Church of England in Quirpon 1913



Figure 3 Lower Quirpon early 1960s

mother's grandmother; her name was Mary Pynn. The gentleman in the picture is unknown to me.

Lightning strikes the church and dances on old cast iron stoves

If you look closely at Figure 3, the front of the church, the sunlit side, faces the road, while the rear of the church faces the water. On top of the church was a steeple, and that is where the lightning struck. It passed down through the steeple and out through the side of the building (Figure 2).

Some say the lightning hit the church and then struck the house belonging to Thomas Clark and

killed his dog. His wife was sitting in the rocking chair and the lightning took the slippers right off her feet, but neither Thomas nor his wife was killed.

Back in those days, stoves were cast iron. They used to tell us that when they had really bad lightning storms they would see flashes on the stove from the lightning. Nothing back then was grounded properly, so if there was a metal chimney and the lightning came from above, it would come down through the stove and you would see a little flash on the surface of the stove. I never saw that happen, but we were told about it. I remember we had a stove like that in the kitchen, with the oven up on the back.

Quirpon

You don't see a school in Figure 2 because the school was in the center of Quirpon. Quirpon was spread out over quite an area, and each area had its own name. Some called the area we lived in Lower Quirpon, but we always called it, 'down in the tickle'. The boats would come in up in the other part, then come on down and go out through the tickle instead of going around Cape Bauld. We lived 'down the tickle' as people used to say. The center of the community was called Quirpon. Up where the graveyard was, they used to call that 'up Lancy Ball' (L'Anse-a-Bois – which translates, Wood Cove).

Now, the United Church was up there in L'Anse-a-Bois, where the old graveyard was, but over further. The school was in the center of the harbour; it was about a twenty minute walk from where I lived. We had to go up over a big hill from where my grandmother lived. We'd go up over that hill and come across and come down over where Uncle Zachariah's shop was. In the winter it was really cold coming down that droke; more than once we'd freeze our face. It was only a two-room school, and there were two teachers and perhaps thirty students.

Churches

There were three churches in Quirpon: the Anglican Church 'down the tickle', the Salvation Army in Quirpon, near the school, and the United Church at L'Anse-a-Bois.

A brief history

Quirpon, in the 1930s, 1940s and into the 1950s, was booming. Not only did it have a summer fishery, like every other community, it was a place to go in the fall to fish. The fish might stay around till October or November, so fishermen from other communities would pack up their boats and go down there. Also, the very first fish plant was built at Quirpon in the early 1950s. It was a place where fishermen could sell their fish fresh; at the fish plant they'd put it in ice, or the fishermen could sell it to the plant directly and it would be salted there. It was a big enterprise, but it didn't last that long.

If you go back further in its history, when the Labrador fishery

was on the go with schooners, schooners would come from all up the Notre Dame Bay, Trinity Bay, Conception Bay, and they'd go to the Labrador fishing. In the spring, before the ice would move off the Labrador, they would hold up in Quirpon for weeks waiting for the ice to clear; perhaps fifty, sixty, eighty schooners. The older folks remember that the harbour would be full of schooners.

'Uncle Sack Button' the local merchant

Uncle 'Sack' Button (Zachariah Button) came from Lead Cove, Trinity Bay. He used to come down to Quirpon every spring. He had his business, and then the schooner would come and bring his supplies, and he would supply all the fishermen over the fishing season. He had everything in his store, not just fishing supplies. I remember there was a barrel of apples, and sweet biscuits were in wooden boxes in rows. There were boxes of prunes, and tea was loose then; you'd go and get five pound of tea in a bag.

And you know what I remember? In the spring of the year, when he used to come with his supplies, we used to walk along his store to go to school, and we could smell the apples. What a smell, that barrel of apples! My dear! And, then, they were only three cents an apple; the big ones were five cents; some of them were huge, and they were delicious.

From pronging fish to teaching school

Summertime I helped my father with the fishery. He had his own

crew, including my brothers, so I didn't work in the stage, but I used to prong the fish into the box. As children, we always had to help spread the fish and take it up, and make hay in the summer for the sheep. Mom and Dad sheared the sheep. My mom used to wash out the wool and spin it. In later years she would just wash the wool and make it all clean and would send it away to PEI. Whatever she could get in a flour sack she would send away and they would do it in skeins and send it back to her, dyed in various colours.

I only attended school up to grade nine in Quirpon; for grades ten and eleven I went to the Anglican School, St. Mary's, in St. Anthony. We didn't take the bus; the government gave us a bursary then. When I left home in 1963 and moved into St. Anthony, up until Christmas I was homesick every day. I boarded with Blanche and Luke Biles. After Christmas I was good, then. I wouldn't go home, probably only once or twice, because you couldn't get home. In the winter, when I went home for Christmas, they had the road down as far as Griquet; my brother came up and got me on the dog team.

The fish plant was in St. Anthony then, and Luke was the foreman there. He got work for me the first year I was there. I worked two or three weeks and then I got laid off. I went home and returned to St. Anthony in the fall; by that time the road was through down to Quirpon. After grade eleven I went to summer school, Prince of Wales College, in St. John's for six weeks, then got a job as a teacher at Ship Cove, arriving at Ship Cove in the fall of 1965. My first school was

Light of the North, and the following year we moved into the new, three-room school. I taught two years at Ship Cove. After that I married Wilfred Tucker and settled down in the community of Ship Cove, and I've lived here ever since.

Glossary
Dictionary of Newfoundland
English

1. Droke: a valley with steep sides, sometimes wooded and with a stream; frequently in place-names. GULCH.