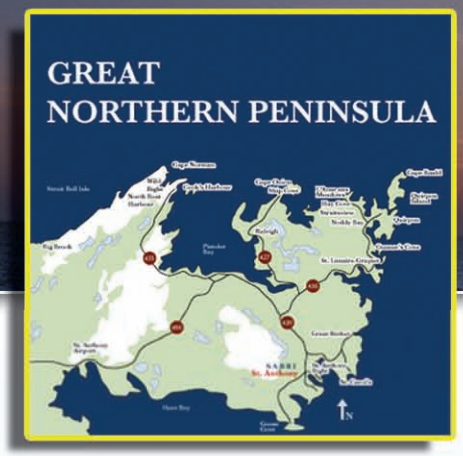

Canada
Newfoundland Labrador

Straitsview

SABRI
ST. ANTHONY BASIN RESOURCES INC

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.

Straitsview

Bill Carpenter

Straitsview circa 1961 —Horace McNeil Photo- courtesy of Bill Carpenter

The above picture was taken by Horace McNeil, who was not a photographer, but was known as "a man who takes pictures."

Mr. Carpenter explains, "These people are all from Straitsview, and this is what the local road was like, with the flakes built right on the road. I did a lot of work with Horace McNeil's son, Curtis, helping him to identify people and places."

Curtis McNeil has produced a book of his father's photographs entitled, *The Day Before Yesterday: Northern Newfoundland and Southern Labrador from 1958 to 1964*, which can be purchased locally in St. Anthony at Don's Barber Shop.

Newfoundland Cod Fishery as it was then and as it is now

By John Hedderson

In the beginning of the Newfoundland cod fishery, which began in the 1600s, codfish was caught by handline, then trawl, commonly known as bull tows. The fishermen fished from small boats, holding three (sometimes more), each using one or two baited hooks on long handlines. Having three men in the boat and two men on shore curing the catch was normal (once the fishery was in full operation). In the beginning of the season the men used mussels for bait, later in the season, herring became available for this purpose; in late June caplin were plentiful, and finally in mid-summer squid. Once landed on shore, in the stage, the fish was headed, gutted, split and backbone removed. It was then laid flat in rows and covered with salt, and when a pile was about three feet high, another pile was stacked. After a week or two in salt (depending on the type desired) the fish was spread on flakes to dry in fine weather, with great care taken to protect it from rain. It was piled in small mounds (faggots) at night, and if necessary, covered with rinds from trees. When completely cured, it was placed in large piles covered with rinds awaiting shipping at the end of the voyage, it was known as salt fish. Meanwhile, the livers were dropped into a vat, where they gradually rendered into cod oil, during the course of the warm summer.

This method of curing continued until the introduction of fresh fish. This method of catching fish continued until the 1800s, when bigger boats and cod seines were introduced. The bigger boat known as the schallop was introduced, these boats were decked in fore and aft with removable deck boards in the center of the boat. The shelter cuddies at each end gave the crews some protection when they remained out overnight. It is generally stated in history that these schallops never went past the headlands at the mouth of the larger

bays, but it is well known that these schallops fished from the communities along the shores of the Strait of Belle Isle and Belle Isle itself, when the fish started to migrate off shore later in the autumn or late summer. These schallops were fitted with approximately four oars on a side, and fitted with sails. These boats were also engaged in the seal fishery if weather permitted, or ice conditions permitted. Besides the schallop during the cod seining, these had another bigger boat to go with them, sometimes thirty feet long, from which they set or threw out the seines, and hauled it aboard the bully or schallop, and dipped the fish in the bigger boats. This method of seining was the most successful until the invention of the cod trap.

In 1871, a William Whitely born in Boston, USA, he built a fishing establishment at Bonne Esperance, known as Bony. This port, now in the province of Quebec North Shore was one of the great centers of the migratory Labrador fishery. He invented the cod trap. Whitely was later a member of the House of Assembly in St. John's, Newfoundland. This 30-foot boat which they used with the schallop or bully in using the cod seine was now used as a trap skiff. The trap skiff was an open boat with a mast which was taken down when there was no wind, to the mast there was a sail attached which was raised when there was wind to help them along.

There was three oars on each side of the boat, there was no engine to power the boats in those days except for the wind and the manpower. This method continued until the invention of the make-and-brake engines.

During the later part of the nineteenth century or early part of the twentieth century, sails start to disappear, and a different kind of boat was built. A sturdy 30-or 40-foot boat measuring approximately 12 or 14 feet at her midships with a sturdy rudder and engine house as well as a cuddy up front, another back aft, and touts so the fishermen could stand on to haul their traps.

With it they had another smaller boat known as the punt about 15 to 18 feet in length in which they placed a man to keep up the heads when the traps were being hauled. Some of those trap skiffs could carry from thirty to fifty quintals of fish, depending on her size. These boats were used until the closure of the fishery in 1992. No person has been allowed to set a cod trap since the collapse of the northern cod fishery in 1992.

Prior to the collapse of the northern cod the Japanese trap arrived on scene. With this latest trap, the Japanese trap, you did not have to haul it everyday. When hauled over a period of several days in the water, if had been known to take up as much as 200,000 pounds a summer's voyage. None of these traps were allowed to be used since the closure of the fishery.

Gill nets were always used, and did not come in a big demand to catch cod, as the older nets were made from hemps and cotton until the arrival of nylon, and monofilament nets, sometime in the 1960s. Gill nets, handline, and trawls are still the main technique to catch fish. Squid and caplin was never a sale until later years. Fishermen used them for bait and fertilizer for their gardens until around the 1970s when the Japanese market opened and people received just as much for them as cod. Herring was always a fish you could sell, as well as salmon, but you did not get much of a price until later years.

Fishermen always salted and dried or sold in salt bulk until the 1960s, when there was a lot of fish plants built around the province and people sold their fish round gutted head off, then round gutted head on, which is still done by all fishermen in the province. With the introduction of the cold storage plants, which can freeze tons of cod, the old method of salting fish and drying it disappeared altogether, except for a person who may split and dry a bit for his winter.

In the beginning of the Newfoundland fishery, there was a bank fishery that was carried on by large vessels, which also fished with trawls, and with the arrival of the otter trawl and modern vessels known as draggers the old method of banking disappeared. Draggers which took large numbers of tons of cod came on the scene, and which is mostly the blame for the disappearance of the cod and the final collapse of the fishery in 1992.

In the beginning of the Newfoundland fishery, fishermen did not get paid for their catch in money, but for barter. All the cod fish you had was sold to merchants for goods such as food, clothing, and fishing supplies, as well as salt which you had to have to cure your fish. This method of payment continued up until around the end of the nineteenth century when Sir Wilfred Grenfell appeared on the shore. Up until the 1930s everything seemed to take on a new face, at the same time a Newfoundlander appeared on the scene by the name

of William Ford Coaker, and in 1908 launched what was known as the Fishermen's Protective Union (FPU). The prices of fish soared up, hospitals were built by Grenfell, and northern Newfoundland and Labrador Grenfell sought to redeem outport life by a combination of Christian simplicity and economic improvement, through co-operation, diversification and local initiative.

From then on fishermen got paid money for their fish, but the old barter system was still hidden in the system. Whereas before, fishermen barter their fish for supplies, and if you did not have enough to pay your bills, you would not get anything, a person would have to seek government relief. Now in the new system a fisherman took all of his supplies from the merchant vessel when she came in the spring, perhaps the vessel would make two or three trips during the fishing season, making sure that the fishermen was well stocked with food, fishing gear and other commodities of life, and salt to cure his fish. In the autumn after all the fish was made and cured a vessel with a weigh master and the merchant himself with his clerk or bookkeeper on board. The vessel was usually loaded with provisions after the fish was weighed, and loaded on board, the clerk would subtract from the fisherman's voyage the cost of his goods which he got first in the summer, and paid him in cash for what was left. There wasn't any hesitation by the merchant to refuse the fisherman any goods he wanted to keep him throughout the winter months. Everything was in bulk: flour, and sugar was in barrels, molasses was in puncheons, butter was in tubs, rum was in gallon jars if a person wanted it, and the list goes on. This was called a credit system. The older folk use to say that this was the golden age in the fishery.

One fisherman is known to have bought a cod trap (the cod seines was then abolished) that summer there wasn't any cod fish or they weren't familiar with its use, they got only 10 quintals of cod in that trap, but had a good fall fishery. When square-up time came (as it was called), the dealer or merchant would not take anything for the trap, and told them to wait until next year. The next year was a real good year. They paid for all the goods they received for the winter and bought two other cod traps.

This method continued on until the collapse of the economy in 1933. Then things went from bad to worst. The bottom fell out of the fish markets. Fish was little or nothing, and what fish the merchants bought had to be a number on quality, which the buyers or merchants claimed they needed to barter in the European and west markets for supplies to keep the country going.

After the collapse of the country, the Premier resigned and went back to Great Britain, and was replaced by the then leader of the opposition Frederick Alderdice who passed the country back to Britain, who ran the country by commission of government. This new government came into effect February 1934. These years had passed up until World War Two, were known as the 'dirty thirty's' or 'depression years,' fish wasn't worth anything, people some years had to prong it out of their stages, or use it as fertilizer. The merchants only wanted enough to pay for the goods they gave in the spring, which wasn't very much. The government issued welfare in the amount of six cents a day dole, a family of ten got $18.00 a month, there was no welfare during fishing time, the old credit system was in use again, and the merchant was the price maker. Times were hard and only for the Grenfell mission at St. Anthony, which gave work in exchange for food and clothing during the fall after the fishery on the coast was over, and the seals, and the birds, which were plentiful during the fall months (that is harp seals, eider ducks, and turrs) people would have starved.

Seals was always a means whereby a fisherman could make a few dollars, both in the fall out of nets, and in the spring around the middle of March on the ice floes. They wasn't worth much in price, but fishermen was paid down in hard cash. As a matter of fact, it have been known where fishermen earned enough at the seal fishery to keep him through the spring and the summer. If however, it was known that if you had got enough seals to feed you, during anytime in the sealing season you would not get any welfare.

The six cents a day dole you were received would stop. If at anytime throughout the winter you were caught with white flour in your home or premises, you would be questioned by the authorities who would be a member of the Newfoundland Ranger Force, and the local magistrate serving the area. Things were really tough.

With the coming of World War II, fish prices went up again. The old credit system appeared again on the Northern Peninsula and Labrador. The law was that every

merchant dealing with fishermen on the Labrador coast and Northern Newfoundland had to make sure there was enough of food above everything, stocked up for winter, owing to transportation difficulties caused by the German U boats operating along our shores. You gave the merchant your fish, they gave you provisions, but no money, just enough to pay your passage to go away to work, or to pay your doctor fees and church fees. Sometime the fish was collected on behalf of the church from each family, and carried to some merchant, and sold on behalf of the church. But everyone was looked after, in regards to food and most of your household goods and clothing.

At the end of the World War, prices of fish was good. Everyone was given $5.00 per head during the winter months for nourishment, besides what he earned himself, or to pay his church or hospital fees, this was done by the commission of government. There were control prices put on most of the goods you bought by the commission of government, as well as tobacco. This method went on until 1949, when confederation was elected by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Newfoundland became a have-not province of Canada, or a welfare state.

With the coming of confederation people started to prosper, family allowance in the amount of $5.00 a month for each child in a family were paid by the Federal Government. Old age security at $40.00 per month was paid to each person reaching the age of 70 years. Welfare, if the fishery failed was paid to families without too many restrictions. Make-work programs were also introduced by the Canadian government to tie people over the lean months of winter. During 1956, unemployment insurance for fishermen was introduced by the federal government of Canada. People felt a little security coming their way, no longer were the days of the past, not knowing where the next meal was coming from.

With modern and foreign fishing, banks were raped of most of its fish. A two-hundred-mile zone was imposed upon all foreign vessels, but did not stop the raping of our banks. Our own Canadian fish companies got more and larger draggers, until the cod fish and other species was almost gone to extinction. Then in 1992 a moratorium was placed on the northern cod, and fishing except for certain species was brought to a stop for seven years.

At the present time certain areas around the province are picked by a body known as the Fishery Resource Council (FRC), introduced by the federal and provincial governments, as well as the union, known as Fishermen Food and Allied Workers (FFAW), which was introduced by the fishermen, Richard Cashin, and Des McGrath during 1970s. You are only allowed to catch so much cod, crab, herring, caplin, shrimp, whelks, squid, and other species what the Fisheries Resource Council recommends to the federal minister of fisheries, at a certain time frame and certain quotas, for example in 4R which covers the area from Cape Bauld to Port Aux Basques. This area for the past three or four years, you are given a certain quota of cod to catch, and you are only allowed to catch five thousand pound a week until the quota is taken.

There are other species you can catch and sell now, such as toad crab, whelks, and many other species which one time was considered to be a nuisance by most fishermen.

Since the forming of the FFAW, which is a strong body that have control over the prices of fish, which has caused many strikes since its formation, but its working and fishermen are receiving better prices and have more to say than they did in the past on how things should be done. Gone are the dark days of the past in the fishery and with the help of their union who will keep tabs on the overfishing, and the foreign overfishing, fishery will still be the future of our economy in Newfoundland.

Folklore

JOHN HEDDERSON

The Brown Man

I don't know nothing at all about the Brown Man; I never seen him. My father used to go with a girl up there, in L'Anse aux Meadows – Matilda Decker, Uncle George Decker's sister. Father told me he'd lie down on the barrens and wait till daylight to come home, and he never seen nothing at all in his life going back and forth; not a thing in the world. He didn't believe in spirits anyway.

Weather lights and a phantom ship?

There was one weather light come in on a ship a couple year

Figure 1 Conversation on John Hedderson's wharf

Figure 2 Relic of the fishery

Figure 3 John Hedderson has a vast store of recollections

ago. I seen that one meself. I told Susie, "Come! Come out!" But she never come out.

The ship had three lights, green lights: one on the stern of her, one on the bow, and one up in the masthead. She come on in and made for the old anchorage ground that used to be there. I never seen her afterwards.

My father was coming down from Griquet one time; he had a team of dogs. And a big light, like a barrel, rolled up the arm. Oh! Just like a barrel of light. It was all he could do to hold onto the dogs, they was taking off. By and by he passed on that side and when he got right up towards the Alcocks, the light went to pieces; there were flankers all around. That's weather lights, my son, that's gas.

Lights from a lost world

Susie:

The first night I went out with John he walked up to Hay Cove with me to take me home; when we got out on the barrens we seen a big light.

John:

That wasn't a light. No, no, no! That was the Lost World. You see it in the comics – the lost world. The light we saw was bigger than the earth, bigger than the moon, and, oh, what a sight!

I said, "Susie, maid, we're going to have the wind southeast tomorrow." So, anyway, I stopped and looked at it. We could see Ship Cove, just like daylight all around.

Susie:

I said, "Thank God I don't have to go back!"

John:

So now, I had to go back! But I wasn't afraid of nothing when I was a young feller. So, anyway, it was so dark I had to feel my way up over the hill, and when I got over the hill I never saw any light until I got down towards Seal Cove Pond, where I could see a shadow. And the next day there was a gale of southeast wind.

Shadows in the night

Another time, where Wallace Blake used to live, I took a big flake lunger with me, because there was a sickness of dogs going around and you had to be careful. When I got up there on the barrens, there was a rock on the path in the dark. I said, "That's a sickness dog! Look, he's coming towards me!" I thought he moved; sometimes you see things like that, and I made a smack at him, and I smashed up the lunger in three pieces. It wasn't a dog, it was only a rock.

Glossary
Dictionary of Newfoundland English

1. Weather Lights: gleam or flicker of light at sea, thought to presage a storm. Weather lights in the rigging of a schooner is the sign of a storm coming. The lights start at the bottom of the riggings and move gradually up to the top where they disappear.
2. Lunger: A long tapering pole

A View of Straitsview

Nellie Hedderson, Straitsview

Early years

Nellie Hedderson was born Nellie Roberts of L'Anse au Pigeon, Quirpon Island, the daughter of William Roberts and Selina Caravan. "We moved to Lushes Bight, where my mom died when I was ten years old." she recalls. "When I was twelve years old, my grandmother said, "Nellie, your dad wants you to go to Quirpon." So, Nellie went to work as a servant girl, cleaning houses and things like that. "I never had much of a life, did I?" she remarks. "I was beat around from dog to devil."

Nellie married at age fifteen, and, "I was fifteen years old when my oldest child was born, and I didn't know nothing about having a baby," she laughs. "No, I did not." She went on to have nine children, but only five survived. Aunt Lucy Edison of Noddy Bay delivered her first child. "When I was a youngster," she says, "nobody told you about the birds and the bees. As far as I knew, babies came from stumps. I often said, when we were in Lushes Bight, "If there's 'ere rotten stump, well, we'd know where it was to, because that's where babies came from."

Shipwreck and a ship's wheel

Mrs. Hedderson says she has lived in Straitsview fifty-seven years, and recalls hearing stories of shipwrecks from her father-in-law, George Hedderson. "We have the ship's wheel off the *SS Langleecrag*," she says, "and it's been well cared for; it'll last forever." Her son, George, also has two vises from the *Langleecrag*. Nellie goes on to tell how Uncle George Hedderson, in 1947, boarded the stricken vessel off Great Sacred Island in Sacred Bay, and was hurt when someone threw down a barrel of oil. "It hit him on the side, and he had a bad side all his life."

Figure 1 (Right): Ship's Wheel from the *SS Langleecrag.* Some crew members etched their names and initials on the ship's wheel.

Figure 2 Nellie Hedderson with the ship's wheel before it was refurbished

Fishing, a way of life

"To make a meal of fish nowadays, you need fresh cod, and where do you get that to? The food fishery will open up in the summer; you can go get a meal, but other than that it's closed. Don't you think that's a whole lot of bunkum? Jumping dying! After you've lived so many years in a place like this, and then the government tries to tell you this and that."

Catching fish was a way of life when Nellie's generation was growing up, any time of the day or night, any day of the week, if they wanted to have a meal of fish, they had it. Now they can't go out and get one. "If you tried, you could lose your boat, your motor, the whole bit."

Fishing is something that's part of the culture of the people that settled here. In Nellie's generation, fishing for cod was a part of their daily life, not only for her generation, but for generations of people before her. It seems now that fishery has been regulated to death, and many Newfoundlanders say that people from previous generations must have just rolled over in their graves when the Moratorium came.

"My father warned me; he said, 'Now, Maid, there's coming a time when you won't be allowed to go out and catch fish.' Dad died about twenty years ago, and he saw it coming then, he realized the fishery was going downhill."

"I worked in the fishery for five years with my husband, Ed. Four o'clock in the morning, out in boat. I liked fishing, but I used to get sea sick, yes, sir! But, in spite of sea sickness I still liked going out and hauling a trap. When we started off, there was Ed, his three brothers, and his father. Then, one of the brothers got his own trap, so they had to get someone else. Then Ed got sick, and he used to be in more times than he was out. Last time we went out, myself and Ed's brother, Gordon, and a couple more, I said, "Now, that's the last time I'm going to haul a trap! That's it for me!" Because with fewer crew members it was too darnation hard! Ed finally gave it up; threw it all down because there was nothing at all into it; not enough to make a living at it. He sold it all – just like that – and took a job as a bus driver.

The view from Nellie's window

"My gosh, maid! If this was forty years ago, and I was looking out my front window, I'd see the boats coming in the harbour, loaded with fish, going back and forth. And you know, back then there was lump fish, because my mother used to go out fishing and if they caught a lumpfish, they'd dump it overboard or feed it to the dogs.

Figure 3 The View from Nellie Hedderson's window

"And all the activity around the community would be at the wharves; that's where the people would be. There'd be a crowd of men everywhere, and off every fishing stage there would have been a boat moored, and there would

have been a smaller boat at the wharf on a haul-off. And now, down there," she says, pointing to the shoreline, "once there was a big stage and it's only just two or three years ago they tore it down. There's nothing left."

"And youngsters! There was more youngsters than anything. I reared up five children, and my sister-in-law had six children – and now you don't see one! There was a lot of life back then: laundries on the clothesline all the time; and that never stopped, rain or shine.

"As for entertainment in the community, I just wish that Uncle George's old house was still here; I wish that you could see it, because that's where dances was! His place was where people hanged. After we finished our supper, it was, "Now, boys, hurry up because the crowd will soon be here!" We had to get the table ready for a game of cards: five hundreds, hundred and twenties, or hearts. Mostly men played – I didn't even know what five hundreds was until I came here, so I said to the boys, you're going to have to show me how to play. I'd go from one end of the table to the other, watching them play, and that's how I learned.

"And nothing was planned either, it just happened. Sometimes somebody would come in and say to Uncle George, "What are you doing this weekend, Uncle George?" He'd say, "Nothing at all, boy." And they'd say, "Well, we're coming in for a dance." Just like that. And that was it.

"He had a back porch on his house, and that's where they danced. Oh, my! Half of Straitsview would show up for the dance, and perhaps some from Hay Cove and L'Anse aux Meadows, too. And Uncle George's son played the accordion. That was the place where everything happened.

"There would be a lunch after the dance. Aunt Sarah would make sure of that. People didn't really bring food to the dance, but I tell you, sometimes there were squids. When I was fifty years old the women said they were having a birthday party for me. But I said, "I'm not having no birthday party." They said, "Yes, you're having a birthday party," so they had one for me. And that's what we had, stuffed squids. But at Uncle George's and Aunt Sarah's, if there was a dance, there might be molasses bread or a drop of milk; something like that. What you had is what you got.

Homemade bread and jam

"All the women made bread in Straitsview years ago. I knew how to make bread before I was nine years old. I stood up on a biscuit box to reach the table and my grandmother taught me how to make it, but it wasn't always that good, you know! When I was only thirteen or fourteen years old, I worked in a hospital, and I made three lots of bread a day.

"Years ago everybody picked berries: they'd go across the harbour or up on the hill and pick partridgeberries, and they'd go in over the marsh for bakeapples, or straight over the barrens, or out on the islands. Quirpon Island was perfect, and you know what? The berries tasted different; no trouble to tell the difference between berries picked on Quirpon Island and those on the barrens. You'd hardly think it, would you? I don't pick berries anymore, though. I just marl around the house now.

"We used to have sheep and cows and goats and hens, and Uncle George always had cows. And we always had our own gardens. As far as I know, we're not going to have a garden the year, and that'll be the first time ever. It's not worth the effort anymore; it's thirty dollars now for a bag of fertilizer.

"We never had cars in the community to the late 1960s.If you wanted to go to St. Anthony, well, Uncle Quil Hedderson in Noddy Bay, he was the man who would take you there, in boat. We lived off the land and the sea; everything we needed was here, and we had to walk wherever we went. We walked to Griquet, walked to Ford Elms' and lugged a few things back, whatever we could carry. That walk took about an hour, and we thought nothing of it.

"There were no roads before then. I have a car parked in the garage, and if you don't have a car now, you got nothing."

Peas soup on the Devil's birthday

In Newfoundland, meal routines often followed a pattern, as it did in Nellie's case. "Sundays, 'twas hot cooked dinner, Mondays was baked beans or stewed beans, Tuesday was jigg's dinner, Wednesday was roast, Thursday was jigg's dinner, Friday was fish or fish and brewis, and Saturday we had pea soup, that was the devil's birthday. Yes, maid."

There were some peculiar sayings when Nellie was growing up. "My grandmother used to say to me, 'Now, Nellie, run over to the store and get me such and such.'

And, then she'd say, 'M'kase, now, m'kase!' I never knew what m'kase was, but she was really saying, make haste!"

"When I come to Quirpon I was staying with my uncle Walt Roberts, and Dad was there. Uncle Walt said, 'Nellie, get that thing there on the covel.' I said, "The what?" Uncle Walt started laughing and Dad said, 'Now, Walt, tell her what a covel is.'

"'No,' said Uncle Walt, 'you go to the covel now and get it!' So I went to the porch and I looked for a covel, but I didn't know what the deuce a covel was! And this was a water barrel; a pork barrel, perhaps half the size of a 45-gallon drum in volume.

No other place in the world

"If somebody said to me, if you had a million dollars, where would you go to live, my answer would be Straitsview. I wouldn't move, and that's it, because there is no other place in the world for me. I guess I'd choose Straitsview because I was reared up in a small community, in Lushes Bight, but it wasn't like Straitsview. I'd have to say it's the scenery and the people; it's the lifestyle, it's knowing everybody, it's knowing the place, that makes me want to stay."

Glossary
The Dictionary of Newfoundland English

1. Haul-off: rope forming part of the 'collar' or mooring of a boat by which the craft is kept in station off the wharf.
2. Marl: to stroll, meander, walk aimlessly.
3. Covel: a half barrel or tub, frequently with handles or rope affixed to the sides, or with holes for inserting a staff for two men to carry.

Straitsview as it was then and now

John Hedderson

(population 1991: 133)
once known as "Spillers Cove"

Straitsview is a community near the tip of the Great Northern Peninsula, about 2 kilometers southeast of L'Anse aux Meadows. It is ranged around Spillers Cove on the west side of Noddy Bay, and was known as such until the 1960s. At that time the current name of 'Straitsview' was adopted to avoid confusion with another Spillers Cove near Bonavista. The name Straitsview implies view of the nearby Strait of Belle Isle; however, the strait is visible only from the southeastern extremity of the well-sheltered cove.

Spillers Cove first appeared in the 1891 census with a population of 12, although it may have appeared in an earlier census combined with Noddy Bay. The first known settlers were William Allingham, and a person by the name of Knockers or Norris. The family name currently associated with the community (Blake, Hedderson, and Tucker), have earlier associations with Noddy Bay or Quirpon, where some migratory fishermen from Conception and Trinity Bays settled in the late 1800s. Straitsview has relied exclusively on the inshore cod fishery and the seal fishery throughout its entire history.

The only means of travel other than by foot was by boat, when the ice was cleared off in spring, summer, and fall; or by dog team in winter. To travel outside the area you would have to use a coastal boat, which usually operated out of St. John's, Lewisporte, and Corner Brook, which was sponsored by the Newfoundland Railway before we joined Canada. Then after Confederation with Canada, the Canadian Railway sponsored it.

Straitsview did not have a highway until 1966, when a road was built from the Trans-Canada Highway to connect all the communities on the west side of the Great Northern Peninsula to the other parts of the province and Canada.

Besides the inshore cod fishery, many harp seals were taken each spring, and still are. Most people did some subsistence like gardening, and kept a few sheep, goats, pigs, and cows. Services such as school and church were obtained in a chapel school in the community, sponsored by the Methodist School Board, then by the United Church School Board. After 1966 when the construction of the highway was completed, the services were obtained at Griquet or St. Anthony by school bus. The construction of the highway made these communities more accessible.

The homes were usually made from sawed studs, which were sheeted up on the inside with board and on the outside with rough clapboard instead of siding. The interior walls were sheeting paper pasted to the board, which was either covered with wallpaper or paint. The home

wasn't like your modern home today, but they were warm. A woodstove such as the "Waterloo" or "Comfort" heated them, then later the wood range came onto the market, such as the "Maid of Avalon" or the "Gurney" and many others. These stoves were not only used to heat your home but to cook and bake with as well. Some people who were well off enough to have a living room or parlor, usually had a living room stove known as a bogie or box stove. This sort of stove did not have an oven, just a firebox to put wood in. Today most of the homes are made from modern material, such as plywood, gyproc, vinyl siding, and asphalt shingles. They are also insulated with Rockwool, or Styrofoam.

There wasn't much to buy from stores then as there is today, but people seemed to be happy according to those who lived through that period of time. Straitsview today has a paved road around the community. Nearly every family owns at least one vehicle or two, as well as a snowmobile to replace the dog team. Instead of burning all wood for heat, most people have a furnace that burns oil, or use electric heat. For light, the kerosene lamp is no longer used. Now the houses are wired with electric lights. As well as electric lights, people now have modern electric appliances such as a stove and fridge to cook and store food.

There was a time when Straitsview also had its own Post Office, now all that has changed. The mail is delivered to the Post Office in Griquet and dispatched to the different homes throughout the community by a courier from Griquet on a rural route. Straitsview is no longer isolated from the outside world as it was before 1960. You can now travel to any part of the world if you wish.