

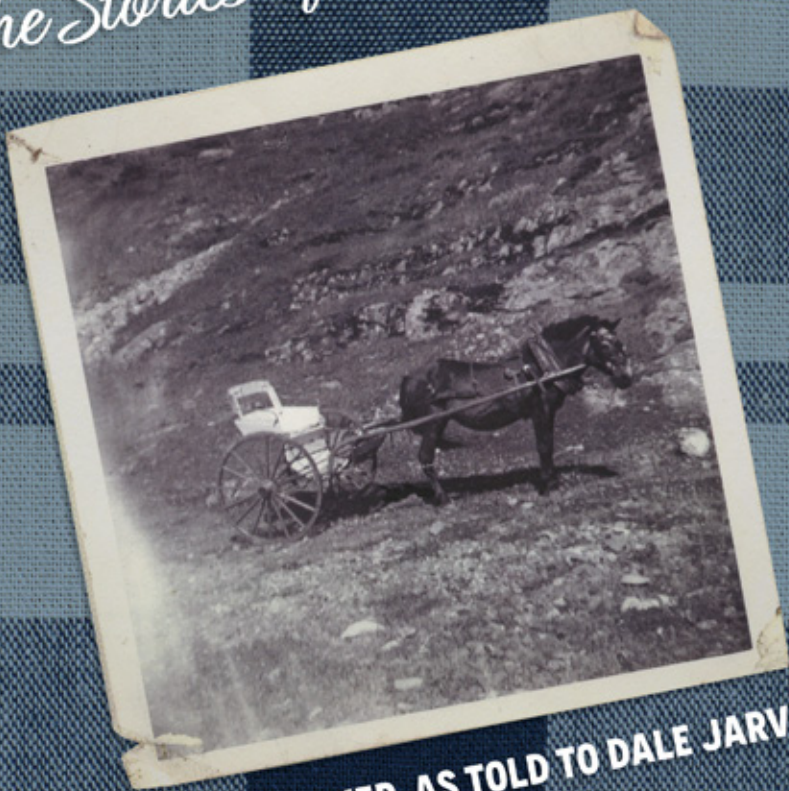


Heritage Foundation
Newfoundland & Labrador

#010

MARYSVALE MEMORIES:

The Stories of Bride Power



BY BRIDE POWER, AS TOLD TO DALE JARVIS

ORAL HISTORY ROADSHOW SERIES

Cover Photo: Michael Ryan's horse and cart, Marysvale, date unknown.

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Oral History Roadshow Series #010



Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador
Intangible Cultural Heritage Office
St. John's, NL, Canada

Layout / design by Jessie Meyer


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INTRODUCTION



Local children celebrate Canada Day in front of the Turk's Gut Heritage House, with Bride Power (top right).

I don't remember the first time I met my friend Bride Power, but I know exactly where we met – the Turk's Gut Heritage House at the end of the road in Marysvale, nestled in under the hills, just before you get to the Turkish Spring and the sweetest, freshest spring water in all of Conception Bay.



The Heritage House has been Bride's project for years, and somehow, the two of us got to know each other through various heritage projects. Bride would tell me stories about Marysvale, and cook me up breakfasts and lunches, and in return I'd go to the Heritage House now and then and tell my own stories. Bride makes a fine touton, and always had a cup of tea and a bite to eat ready for me. For a folklorist and storyteller, that is a pretty good arrangement.

In the summer of 2017, we held an Oral History Roadshow event in the community, and did interviews with several community seniors. Following that, I sat down twice with Bride at her house in Marysvale to record some of her own memories of growing up in the community. We talked for hours about her family, Thunder the horse, hanging out at The Lamp, gardening, trips into town, the fairies, pirates, and the phantom drummer. All those stories were transcribed, and then Bride and I edited them into this memoir, with editing assistance from Katherine Harvey.

Bride's stories paint a picture of a Marysvale different from the one you might drive through today. It's a look at a rural way of life that has changed and shifted since she was a girl, but which will seem familiar to anyone with small town roots. I hope you enjoy reading Bride's stories as much as I enjoyed hearing them.

Dale Jarvis

MARYSVALE MEMORIES

By Bride Power

My full name is Bride Marie Power. I was christened that name. I think everyone had double names way back. A lot of people don't have a couple names now, they probably have three or four now.

I was born April 9th, 1942, in Marysvale, English Cove. To get to English Cove, we go up the road and there's a little road that turns down.

My parents were Anna Hedderson and William Poole. My father's family, The Pooles, came from St. Lewis, Labrador and my mom came from St. John's. My grandmother - that's Mr. Poole's wife - she came from Harbour Grace. Her family were Streets from Harbour Grace. The grandfather, he came from St. Lewis, Labrador. I don't know how they met, but I know they met and got married very young. He was older than her and he married her just before he went off to war. He went to the First World War and Second, and he was in forestry. He lived all through this to be 95 years old. He lived in English Cove. The house in English Cove was torn down not too long ago. My daughter owns that land now.

I had three brothers, one died, and I've got five sisters. I am the eldest. I was born in English Cove too, in my grandmother's house.

I've got lots of memories of growing up here. I can remember back till I was three years old. I can remember we were living with my grandmother and grandfather. My father went away to work all the time. He went to the States to work at that time.

Then when he came back, he built the house that's up there now in English Cove.




Bride's uncle, Thomas "Tom" Joseph Hedderson,
who was killed in the Korean War.

We're almost in the same yard. This is my house and this was my grandmother's house. Her family, by that time, had gone away and gotten married somewhere or were working. They grew vegetables. One of the uncles was home, Harry. He's dead now too.

They had cattle – cattle, horses, and goats. I always remember the goats. They were so cute, especially the little ones. During the summertime, they were let out and they went away up in the woods somewhere, and they always came back in the fall of the year. They killed those goats for meat. I remember that much, I didn't like that part. They had their own cow and we had milk and cream. Grandmother always had lovely cream, it tasted good and was often made into butter.



Bride's grandmother Annie Poole on her 95th birthday,
with Bride's husband Patrick Power.




She grew vegetables, and she had a little cabbage garden. She had her lettuce and her tomatoes and beets. That's mostly what was in that garden. But then up in the big garden, they had all kinds of potatoes, carrots, and turnip. When we were young my cousins, my sister and I got into planting. We had our own small gardens.

For ten years, it was only myself and my sister. After my mother had more children, we always planted our own little gardens: beans, onions, carrots, and potatoes. Every day we watered the vegetables and weeded them. My cousins always wanted to have the best garden.

We also grew up cutting hay. They cut their own hay and we had all kinds of fun doing this. Cutting the hay would happen in the summertime, probably in July or a little bit later, the hay was cut and spread out to dry. When they got the chance they brought it over and they spread it out to dry.

You had to rake all the hay and put it in big bundles. Then the next day you take that hay and spread it out all over the yard. That was done for a while till it all dried. Then we got to put it up into stable loft to feed the cattle during the wintertime. Yeah, that was a bit of fun.

My Uncle Harry did the cutting. Sometimes John did it. Our job was to rake it all together. Every morning we'd spread it out and in the evening collect it all and put it in one pile. I guess so if it rained it wouldn't all be wet. Sometimes, if it was going to rain they would cover it in plastic. They would store it in the loft for the winter. We



had a two-storey barn. We had animals on the bottom: the hens, the goats and the cow. And we always had a horse, Thunder, that I loved very much. And with that horse we took the hay.

We used to go blueberry picking, my cousins, my grandmother and grandfather. They weren't that young then, but we went berry picking all through the berry picking season, picking blueberries. We would build a fire outside and boil the kettle for lunch. This was the highlight of my day. The money we made from the berries went to buy our school books and shoes to go to school, even though our father was always working.

At that time we picked berries by hand. It was no trouble. It was hard though, getting up early in the morning and going off berry picking and being gone all day. But when we came home, our mother had supper cooked. Later on in the years, after I was married, they used a comb for berry picking. There was always buyers. Mrs. Ryan used to buy berries, and so would Mrs. Croke down the road, and Sam Walsh up in Colliers.

They brought them to the cold storage. They'd collect the berries to sell them off to different places. But everyone made a few dollars and everyone had fun doing it. You know, it was just a normal thing to do. It was fun times.

We used a root cellar to preserve our vegetables. In the winter-time my grandmother used to sometimes send me to the cellar. It was always warm down there and dark, and we had a flashlight to go down. The cellar was torn down ten or fifteen years ago. It was a cellar you'd walk into, and then there was a trap door with a



A first communion class, Marysvale.

ladder to go down. I would say the cellar was about ten feet or so. There were vegetables in little spaces partitioned off, potatoes here and probably the turnips, carrots, and cabbage. They kept well in the cellar.


We would bottle jam, blueberries, raspberries, and strawberries. My grandmother also made pickles, and we used to help. She made them with tomatoes, cabbage and also cucumbers. Her daughter used to live in St. John's, and she used to bring out the cucumbers and whatever to do the pickling.

She used to get the spices to make mustard pickles. My aunt would pick them up in St. John's. I used to go to St. John's with her sometimes and I used to enjoy going because she used to do a little bit of shopping, and to me it was a big thing to go to St. John's.

We'd get on the Fleetline Bus, and go to town. We'd stay with her daughter who lived on Waterford Bridge Road. We used to go to the supermarket which was just up around Craigmillar Avenue. I remember going there with her. Her daughter had a family, triplets and three other children besides. So there were times when we used to stay over for a night or so. I can remember in the



John Poole - Bride's grandfather.




summertime going out and babysitting the triplets, taking them to Bowring Park and taking them down to the little bookstores there on Water Street.

I went to mass, to St. Patrick's. They weren't Catholics, but they gave me the privilege of going to mass and showing me how to get on the bus to go to mass. There were times I used to take the children on the bus and ride right around town. I've got those memories about growing up with my grandmother and cousins.

Bowring Park was a beautiful place. I just can remember the beauty of it, taking the kids around and swinging on the swing. There was a pond there. We always took food and had a picnic.

I can remember Water Street, visiting Bowring Store and Ayre and Sons. I believe that's gone now. I remember the little bookstores as well because I was always interested in books. There was another store I used to go to, my grandmother went there. It was a place they sold accessories for sewing, patterns and thread and all that, because she used to sew and my mother used to sew.

When I started school, I went just up the road to go to school. Pat's sister was my first teacher, she's dead too, and she was a nice person. We'd walk to school every day, go home get our dinner, come back. I went to the one old school first. There was a school that moved up over the hill a bit, they built a bigger school. I went here until I was in grade nine and then I went to the convent in Brigus.



I'd leave seven thirty in the morning, and we'd get there a little after nine o'clock. Some days we'd get a ride. There wasn't many from Marysville who walked, it was only a couple. A few in Georgetown and in Long Pond. We all stuck together when we were going. I didn't finish grade eleven. It was difficult walking back and forth every day. I worked in the post office in Marysville before going to St. John's. I did do a bit of night schooling on Bond Street. I lived not far from there.

Then I went and worked in the General Hospital on Forest Road. I was a nursing assistant. First when I went there I worked in the doctors' residence. I got to know a lot of doctors and made really good friends with them, and learned a lot of things from them. I worked there for two years. I remember learning about parts of the body with a skeleton. When I started to point out each part with the pointer the skeleton fell to pieces on the floor.

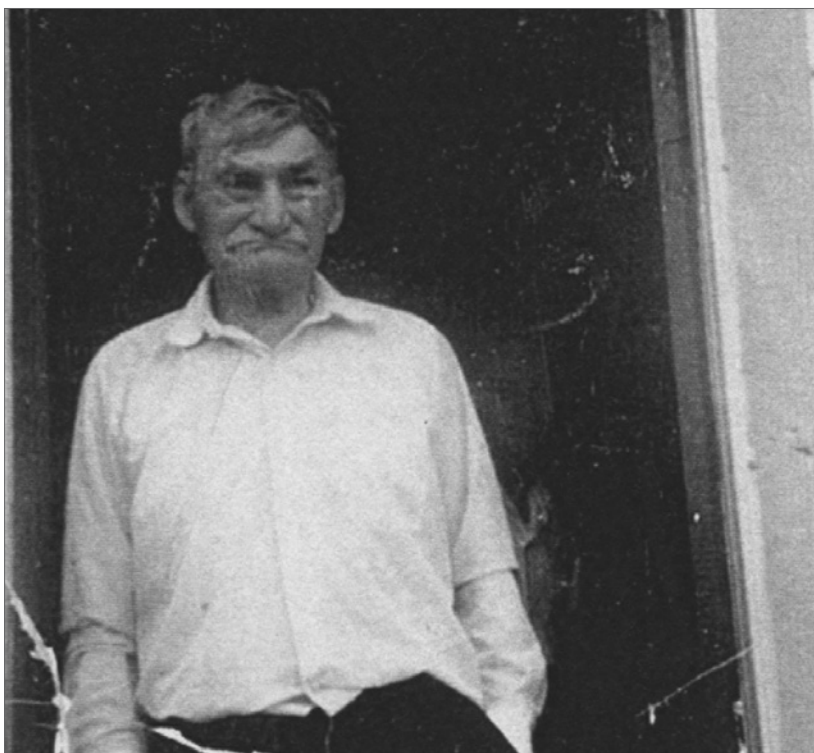
It was the Victoria Ward there, the Carson Ward. The veterans, I think, were down the bottom.

The nurses had a residence there, on Forest Road. We stayed at the Fever Hospital, which was right next to the old General. That's where our residence was. There were sick people there that had polio, because I think polio was on the go then. That was 1958 I think, 1959 and 1960. They were building Southcott Hall at that time.

Then I got married and moved back here. My husband lived across the road. We built this house here. We grew up together. His name was Pat, everyone called him Pat, short for Patrick. He was adopted

into that family. His mother died when he was one hour old, so his aunt adopted him and he went by their name instead of Bartlett.

He was a Bartlett. A lot of people teased him when he was growing up about his name and he didn't like to be called Bartlett. When he got old enough to go to work, that's when they adopted him – they let him choose his own name and he chose their name. And




Grandfather Michael Ryan.



Grandmother Margaret Ryan, also known as Mother, the operator of The Lamp.

I'm happy he did because they were good people; they adopted him and they were good to him.

We went to the same school and he was always picking on me. I didn't like him when I was growing up because I used to be going home telling my mother what he did. Pushing me down in the snow and putting it in my face, and doing all that stuff. So that's what I didn't like about him. He was older than me, two years older, and I was younger. We became friends at Mother's Place, that's where everyone met their boyfriends or their girlfriends. We got married 1961, and we were married for 45 years. Then




he started working with the railway. He worked putting in the tracks and that, until they closed it. He worked with CNR, and then he worked up around Stephenville and them places. He used to have to get the train to Avondale. He'd probably be gone sometimes for a month or longer, you know. That's how we built our house, this house. We were married two years and we owned this house. Well we didn't have it all finished. This was paid for by railway monies. The way it was with this family, when someone was building a house, all the boys went in, cut down the logs and got them sawed. And his brother, Jack, he was a pretty good carpenter. So the two of them built this house.

There used to be a sawmill in Long Pond one time, yeah in to Hayes and Clarkes. When that was closed Colliers had one. So that's how everyone built their houses. Went and cut down logs, got them sawed. Cupids also had one.

The Lamp was there before my time and Mrs. Ryan, that's her name, she used to buy blueberries. People picked blueberries and they'd sell them to her, then she'd sell them to the cold storage. Well during that time, there was no lights here in Marysvale. During that time they used to play cards in the night time and they'd light the lamps and whoever was around had a game of cards. So that's why it was called the Lamp.

From there on, when the lights came, she had a little store and she made money like selling bread, especially blueberry time, everyone bought their lunch and whatever. She got a jukebox which brought all the people around there, even from Colliers and Georgetown and other communities. That's where all the



teenagers met. They went up there in the night time and there'd be dancing and whatever. She sold soft drinks and ice-cream.

It had two names: it was called the Lamp, but then people also called it Mother's. Everyone called her mother, the woman who ran it. It was Mother's Place.

When she died different people took it over. Some of the family ran it. Then after a while it was sold to another woman and she ran it for a while. Then it was sold to Murphy's, and now it's called Abby's Place. Part of the building is still the same. It's a landmark in the community. Patricia Whalen worked there because her sister ran it for a while. I think she rented it and ran it.

Turk's Gut got its name from the pirates that landed here in 1625. We were called Turk's Gut from the beginning. It got changed to Marysville because Father Monsignor Murphy didn't like the name Turk's Gut. That's what the word is and he wanted it changed. He called it Marysville because everyone here had a Mary in the family, called after Mother Mary.

That was his version of it. But the other version is that at the same time Queen Mary and George were the king and the queen. So they decided they'd call Marysville after Mary and call Georgetown after George. So that's the names. All the people in Georgetown, they lived down in Bull Cove and Bull Cove is a beautiful little place. No one lives there now. They did live down there and they all moved up on the road. I think that's about the time the name changed. I think it was in 1929.



Marysvalle Wedding - August 1942, between Mike Ryan and Ellen Tobin (of Western Bay). Taken in front of Johnny Bartlett's old house, Long Pond Road.


The pirate story is that their ship got shipwrecked and was lost, and they jumped off and they swam in to Turk's Gut. They stayed here for one winter and during that – and I think it was six or eight months, I'm not sure, but there was one woman and they held her captive and saved her. And one of the pirates somehow found a way to go back to England, get her husband and they came to get her. The pirate loved this lady, he was good to her. They swam in together and when they did she got shot because there was gunfire. So anyway, they did get her on board that ship. She lived long enough to see her husband, but she died aboard the ship.

The pirate was good to her because he loved her. I think his name was Istovatisson or something like that. But anyway, when he'd seen that she was gone or he must have known that she died, he shot himself and he's buried out there. Word is he's buried out there along with treasure not far from Heritage House. The grave was marked with a flat rock with the Roman Numerals XVI.

There's Turk's Gut here and then up near Makinsons there's Turkswater. I don't know if that's in relation to any of the stories there. Now Turk's Gut, there's Turk's Gut Marysvale too, right up there. Turks Gut Long Pond. That's when you go across the road in here. So there's Turks Gut Long Pond and Turk's Gut Marysvale.




Children at play in the water across from the Heritage House.



I found that out first when we had the Heritage House opened. I used to have the older people out there for Christmas and different occasions and they'd be telling those stories, and one of them was a relative of mine. He was very impressed with the Heritage House. He said we never thought we'd live to see the day that we'd be able to celebrate like this. But in the wintertime the people here moved into Long Pond, and they built their whatever, call it I guess log houses or some kind of houses. And then in the summertime they moved back to Turk's Gut and did the fishing and grew vegetables. Then in the wintertime it was probably warmer in that area and they went up there to live in their log houses.

I remember Tom saying it was a bit cold because he said the women would be sitting around the fire in the woodstove and he said you could see their dresses blowing up with the wind coming in around the house. So it wasn't that pleasant. Well that was back in the day and many people lived like that, you know. But I remember Tom saying that, Tom Hayes his name is. He said, "I can remember now the women sitting around the night time and we'd be telling stories and whatever, and you could see the wind blowing up their dresses." I said, "Did you look," oh gosh.

Well as far as I know the drummer was shipwrecked and he didn't know how he got here because he had memory loss. He did not remember where he came from. He could talk and he was a very nice person. He was smart, he was a bricklayer. He could lay bricks. And he did travel from here to Brigus with different things and different people. When he died, he was buried on the Simms' land by Heritage House well.



My husband cleaned out that well, it's a hundred years old. He worked really hard, took up every rock, cleaned it out and it's the best water. When you're at the Heritage House that's the tea you drink. It's better than the water that most people around here got to drink.

The Simms family took him in and buried him when he died. There was a rock that was the drummer's rock. It's a flat rock. I don't know what happened to the original rock that was there, and I don't remember it. I remember the story because I was always nervous. The Simms girls come home, some of them are dead now, they come home in the summertime and they always come to visit.

They told me they were frightened to death when they were growing up, when their father and mother went anywhere because they were home alone. They were always afraid the drummer was going to come get them. And when their mother and father were gone, they had to put blankets up over the windows because they were nervous of the drummer.

The drummer, as a ghost, would return and play his drum. My husband says he heard the drummer you know because here alongside my house is the path. The path starts here and leads right into Marysvale.

My husband told me he heard the drummer, but maybe he was telling me a lie. He did say he heard it when I was gone to bingo one night. Other people have heard it too. He heard the drummer since we got married, that's a long time ago. It was after this



Pat Power with his daughters Patty-ann, Annette, and Brenda.
"Still a busy spot" - circa 1965.


house was built because his father came over and told me that I'm built in the drummer's path. He said the drummer's path runs right through the house, and well now it don't bother me.



The original Ryan House. Its wooden stairs, made in Harbour Grace, now can be seen in the Turk's Gut Heritage House.

Like it never bothers me in the night. If I wake up or the thought comes to mind, I'm never afraid. So someone taking care of me.

In Long Pond they said fairies were in on the farms. They'd just take the people and bring them astray as far as I know. I was always afraid growing up. My grandmother would always say, "Now put a bit of bread in your pocket when you're going to keep the fairies away." So they were up in English Cove too, they were all around here. My uncle died now a few years ago, the fairies




took him one night, took him out by the waterfalls. He was going home, his house was just up the road there. He found himself out by the waterfalls. That was my father's brother, Uncle John Poole. That happened about 35 years ago.

A lot of people say they were led astray by the fairies. There was a man who lived up the road, his name was Bill King, and I don't like to point but his face was disfigured and they say the fairies did it, the fairies took him. So there is some truth to it. His face was fine before the fairies took him.

People always carried bread in their pockets when they went across the bridge. Mr. Ryan now, he knew all kinds of stories. He was a really good friend of mine too, and Pat. The fairies must have been afraid of bread, because they wouldn't touch you then or wouldn't take you. I was always afraid going up to English Cove because my grandmother used to always say the same thing, "Put a bit of bread in your pocket and nothing will happen to you." So I had realized the truth to it. It didn't matter what kind of bread it was, as long as it was bread. Sometimes people used hard bread too.

Fairies are supposed to be these little people underground, not very big and they're supposed to be friendly, they just take you and goes on with you. You follow them, you follow them. Mrs. Ryan, they took her from Marysvale when she was out picking berries and she ended up in Colliers.

No one knows where the fairies came from, but they just appeared. So maybe in the daytime they just slept and when they got the




chance in the night, more late in the day – I think it was always late in the day time.

People still tell fairy stories, but now sometimes people say there's no truth to it. I sort of believe it is. I really think it is because these people years ago were very smart people. My grandmother was a very smart woman, she lived to be 95 and she had her senses till the day before she died. She worked hard all her life because her husband went off to war for five years, it was all over and then when they came back the times wasn't good.

They worked together and raised a family. She spent lots of time in the gardens and she raised hens. I can remember going around with the white apron. The apron, that is a story in itself.

I often heard people telling stories about seeing strange lights. My family would often spent the summer in the Henderson house. I used to be frightened to death going to school in the morning because I had to go out through that Long Porch when it was dark because of the stories that I heard. She used to tell me when her mother was alive, that her father and mother used to go up to the school on the weekends, that's where they'd have the dance.

She used to be left there to babysit her sisters and brother, she only had one brother, and one night she said she was frightened to death. When her mother was gone, the piano downstairs just started playing and she couldn't wait for her mother and father to come home, they had to calm them down there. Everyone says to this day there's fairies up there or something.

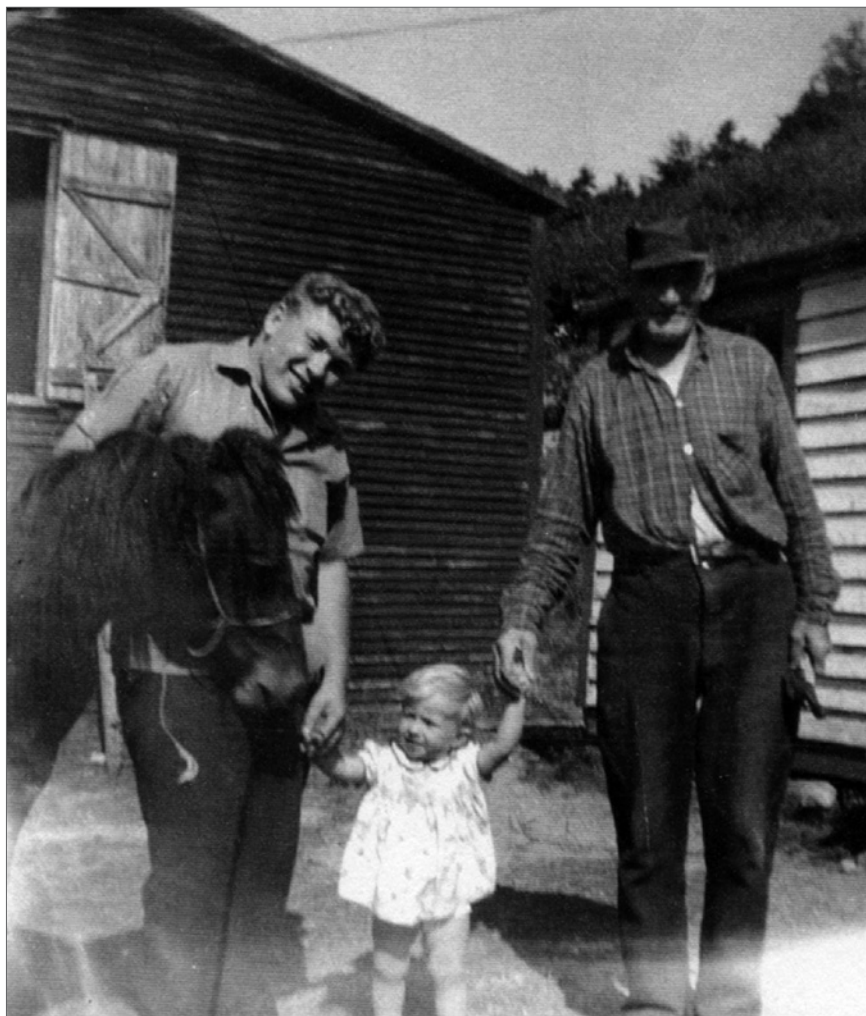


I often heard that some people would have premonitions before something bad happened. Sometimes I get that myself, you know. It's like something comes over you and it will happen or you dream. Well I'll tell you now, my mother had one brother, his name was Tom and he went to war, went in the Korean War. Anyways, he got killed, he was only a young man.


But she always said to me, the night before he died, before they got the news, she heard big heavy boots walking around the house in English Cove where we lived, and the next day they got the message he was dead. She always said that was him coming back before he died. I remember, and he was a lovely man, very good looking, very quiet man. The last time I'd seen and I was probably 10 years old. He came over, which was a big deal for us, and bought us ice-cream, Dixie Cups.

You never got that. Over there where the church is now, Clark's Hotel used to have a chip place, they sold chips and drinks and ice-cream. That's where he went and got the ice-cream and brought it over to us. We were up on the stable loft storing away the hay, that was the last time I'd seen him. So she always said that was him coming back there.

Some of them used to charm away warts. I forget now. But they had a way to do it. Anyone with seven sons always could do special things. But I think he used to do something with the warts. Mr. Ryan, I'll never forget it, he used to chew tobacco. Mr. Ryan was a nice man, but I didn't like the sight of spitting out tobacco.



The gentleman on the right is Mr. Michael Ryan, the man who chewed tobacco! The girl in the middle is his grand-daughter Maxine; the man on the left is James "Jim" Ryan.



Lots of men chewed tobacco then, and they would spit it out. But you know what he used to do? If he was going to mass, he used to drop in, he used to take it out of his mouth, and put it out there on the stake. When he was going home, he used to get it and put it back in his mouth again. You wouldn't want to waste it. I suppose it was expensive.

This place called Turks Gut (Marysvale) was a good place to grow up. Life was simple, everybody was friendly and respectful. Gone are the grocery stores, schools and the post office; places where everyone met for a friendly chat and a reason for a walk. Everyone hung their laundry to dry and chattered with their neighbour while the children spent more time outside playing, running and jumping.

It's not the same anymore.



About Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador

The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador is a nonprofit organization which was established in 1984 to stimulate an understanding of and an appreciation for the architectural heritage of the province. The Foundation, an invaluable source of information for historic restoration, supports and contributes to the preservation and restoration of buildings of architectural or historical significance. The Heritage Foundation also has an educational role and undertakes or sponsors events, publications and other projects designed to promote the value of our built heritage. The Heritage Foundation is also involved in work designed to safeguard and sustain the intangible cultural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador for present and future generations everywhere, as a vital part of the identities of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and as a valuable collection of unique knowledge and customs. This is achieved through policies that celebrate, record, disseminate, and promote our living heritage.



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Newfoundland & Labrador



Collective
MEMORIES

Newfoundland
Labrador

The Oral History Roadshow is a project to empower and encourage seniors to showcase their memories through a series of public oral history night celebrations, with funding provided through New Horizons for Seniors.

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