

SOME ASPECTS OF THE SCOTTISH GAELIC TRADITIONS OF THE
CODROY VALLEY, NEWFOUNDLAND

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MARGARET BENNETT 

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"Deoch slainte chuairtear
a ghluais bho Albainn!"

["Here's health to the traveller
who left Scotland!"]

--A toast by Allan MacArthur, Codroy Valley Scot.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE SCOTTISH GAELIC TRADITIONS OF THE
CODROY VALLEY, NEWFOUNDLAND



by

Margaret Bennett Knight B.A.(Ed.)

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Department of Folklore
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ABSTRACT

In the mid-nineteenth century, a group of Highland Scots emigrated from Scotland to Nova Scotia with the hopes of claiming some land, just as those who had gone out before them had done. After over a decade of hard work and disappointment, and still no prospect of land-ownership, where the landlord situation seemed no better than what they had left in Scotland, they migrated to the fertile Codroy Valley on the west coast of Newfoundland. The land they met with was heavily wooded, without any of the marks of civilization such as churches, schools, roads, or railways, as up until that time it had been the home of Micmac Indians and a few English settlers, with French fishermen visiting in the summer to take advantage of the excellent fishing off the coastal waters. In spite of the hard work they saw before them, the Scottish settlers were relieved at last to find that they could indeed own segments of the land.

As the Codroy Valley became the permanent home of the French and some Irish, as well as the Micmac, English, and Scots, the various ethnic groups at first kept apart from one another, speaking their own language, and carrying on the customs of their forebears. Towards the turn of the

century, when they began to build roads, railways, churches, and schools, they became more integrated, although they continued to speak their separate languages for many years. Several of the Highland Scottish families were Gaelic-speaking until the 1960's when finally the entire population of the Codroy Valley adopted English as the common language, and modified their separate cultures to fit a new way of life.

One of the last families to retain the Gaelic as the language of the home was that of Allan and Mary MacArthur of Upper Ferry. Allan himself was for many years looked upon as one of the last strongholds of the Gaelic history, culture, and traditions in the Codroy Valley. Well into his eighties when I first met him, he came to look upon my interest in recording his traditions as a last hope for preserving what the younger generations of the Codroy Valley Scots had virtually ignored. As he selected what he wished to pass on, he revealed his remarkable memory and deep interest in all aspects of his culture. His contributions were complemented by additional information from his wife, Mary, who, after the death of her husband, took on the responsibility of making sure that the traditions were accurately preserved.

This study deals with selected aspects of the oral and material culture of the Highland Scots of the Codroy Valley. Largely from the point of view of the MacArthurs, it is, however, supplemented by information from other Codroy Valley informants and from what printed sources were available

during the research. While this study traces the history of the Highland Scots in the Codroy Valley and deals with their traditional way of life, it also aims to point out that language is of a crucial importance in preserving a culture. Once the language is removed, then so much else is forced to change, resulting in the evolution of a new culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In preparing this study, I have incurred a great dept of gratitude to many people in various parts of Newfoundland and Scotland. It is with pleasure, then, that I acknowledge their important contributions to the finished work.

My thanks are first due to my parents, George and Margaret Bennett, who gave me my Highland heritage and appreciation of the culture of the Scottish Gaels by bringing me up on the Isles of Skye and Lewis. As far as this study is concerned, I especially appreciated their many visits to the Codroy Valley with me, their participation in the pipe music, Gaelic singing, and conversation which elicited so much information and music, and so many songs there. Special thanks go to my mother who later spent many hours patiently transcribing the Gaelic material from my field tapes, and providing translations also.

My grandfather, the late John Stewart, and my grandmother, Mrs. Flora Stewart on the Isle of Skye, Scotland, were also helpful in giving me a clearer understanding of life in the Highlands and Islands before the turn of the century. They were interesting informants who made my comparisons between the way of life in the Highlands to that in the New World all

the more real. For this, and much more, I thank them also.

There were many people who visited in the Codroy Valley with me at various times; and while I cannot name them all here, I do recognize the fact that their presence often elicited material that I might otherwise have missed. I particularly appreciated the opportunity of having my twin sisters, Marie and Florence, both nurses, and my brother-in-law, Dr. David Clow (Florence's husband) accompany me on a few visits, especially when their interest in medicine brought out many interesting aspects of the way of life in the Valley in the early days before there was any medical service in the area.

I wish to acknowledge and thank several sources of assistance at Memorial University of Newfoundland, especially my supervisor of studies, Professor Herbert Halpert, Department of Folklore, who initially convinced me of the urgency and importance of the study. Then, with his infinite patience, he guided and advised me throughout. I was indeed fortunate to be able to draw from his wealth of experience in folklore fieldwork, particularly when he visited me in the Codroy Valley and met my main informants. Of equal importance to me was the fact that he was always accessible, and with his extensive knowledge of the subject offered so many helpful suggestions and criticisms throughout my numerous consultations with him.

Great appreciation also goes to Dr. John D.A. Widdowson,

Department of Folklore, who, during the last year of my study, put as much encouragement and advice in that one year as he might have done had he been at the University throughout the entire five years. He also read my final drafts of each chapter, and before I had the typing done, he gave me much valuable criticism which, at the eleventh hour, I was able to incorporate into the text.

Dr. John Mannion of the Geography Department was also helpful in giving me advice on how to collect information about aspects of material culture. He kindly made his own bibliographical collections available to me when preparing for my research into the various stages of the wool industry in the Codroy Valley, and for this and his advice on the presentation of the material, I would like to thank him.

In the early stages of the research, Miss Agnes O'Dea, Head of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at the Memorial University Library, gave me invaluable assistance in locating documentation from published sources to assist my compilation of the history of the Codroy Valley. She not only set me on the road to looking in places I would otherwise have missed, and thus helped me begin my writing, but she was also there at the end when I greatly appreciated her last minute help with the bibliography. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Library in general, who were always ready to give assistance when it was required, and also to Michael Taft, student in folklore, whose kind help and skill in locating bibliog-

raphic material proved to be of great assistance to me at the last minute.

I also wish to thank Memorial University of Newfoundland for providing me with a University Fellowship during my first two years, thus alleviating the financial worries of being a student (and with a student husband!). I also appreciated the assistance of my husband, Ian Knight, who accompanied me on several visits to the Valley, took some of the photographs used in this study, and obtained the maps and aerial photograph. I received the generous assistance of several people who were instrumental in my being able to use a considerable number of photographs for this study and would like to thank all who helped in this area: Jerry Pocious, another friend from the Folklore Department, who visited the Valley and photographed Mrs. Mary MacArthur's photograph album; George MacArthur who very kindly allowed him to do this for me; and Ben Hansen and Wilfred Marsh who, at various times, developed and reprinted those I had decided to use for the study.

Over the past five years of my association with the Codroy Valley, I have been continually aware of the dept of gratitude I owe to so many people there, without whom this study would have been impossible. My deepest appreciation goes first to the late Allan and Mary MacArthur, to whose memory I wish to dedicate the study--they welcomed me into their home and extended their hospitality over the many months

that I spent with them. They shared their wealth of knowledge of the Highland Scots with me and taught me about a great diversity of topics. On many occasions, they took me and showed me, or demonstrated certain skills so that I should be able to see for myself what they were describing. When they were unable to answer questions themselves, they sent me to someone who could; and consequently, I not only received so much additional information, but I also incurred an even greater dept of gratitude.

I have made so many warm friends over the past five years, and I would like to thank each one of them here. George and Lucy Cormier shared many hours with me, when I enjoyed their hospitality, conversation, songs, and demonstrations of their various crafts. Afra and Kate Gale provided an entire section of information which I needed, and extended their hospitality on several occasions. There were, indeed, so many open doors in the Codroy Valley that it would take too long to detail the contribution of each person involved. Suffice it to say, then, that sincere thanks goes to all of them: Frank and Margaret MacArthur; Sears and Marie MacArthur; George MacArthur; Martin MacArthur; John and Georgia MacArthur; Dan and Elizabeth MacArthur; Leo and Margaret Cormier; Sandy and Mary MacIsaac; Mr. and Mrs. Sandy MacIsaac of St. Andrew's; Hector MacIsaac; Archie MacIsaac; Norman MacIsaac; Johnnie Archie MacDonald; Jessie MacArthur; Leonard and Marie MacArthur; the late Con Gabriel and his wife, Rita; Jimmie and

Rose MacArthur in Corner Brook; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Joseph O'Quinn; Minnie McQuarrie; Angus MacNeil; Genny Gale; Father R. White; Father D. Gash; and the late Paulie Hall, and all the others who have extended invitations to me and showed me kindness while I lived in the Valley.

Also in the Codroy Valley, my warm appreciation goes to my son, Martyn, my constant companion during the past four years. With his childish curiosity and enthusiasm, he arranged for me to share with him the delights of exploring the barns and stables, feeding the animals, riding on top of hay carts, and when he and his good friend, George MacArthur, had harnessed the horse and sleigh, they agreed to take me with them through the snow on the winter wood-cutting trip they had planned.

In St. John's, where I did almost all of the writing, I received the loyal support of several friends who encouraged me throughout. While I cannot mention them all by name, my special thanks go to my good friends, Cathy and Lloyd Leland whose continued interest in this study was a source of strength and inspiration to me. Both Gaelic speakers, they were there when I needed to telephone them about a word or phrase, when my mother and I needed someone else to listen to the tapes that she transcribed, or when I was uncertain about certain aspects of the culture of the Highland Scots. In the last few weeks, they were especially helpful and kind to me, as they transcribed and translated a story from tape, which I decided

to include at the last minute. And finally, Lloyd proofread the entire study. Had I known sooner of his great potential as an editor, I would have consulted him even more than I already did! During the evenings of proofreading, Cathy, in the meantime, did more than I could have ever hoped for with her generous hospitality.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Tape numbers: Throughout the study there are many references to the transcriptions of tapes recorded during the fieldwork. The tape numbers, contained in square brackets after the quotations, are all shortened versions of the reference numbers assigned by the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore Archives. The tape number is cited first (usually copy C of the tapes), followed by the Archive Accession Number (e.g. 71-48).
- c. (circa): denotes an approximation (usually of a date or the length of an object).
- Transactions: Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in the Scots of the Codroy Valley only one week after my arrival in Newfoundland in 1967. At the time, I was staying with my father in a motel about a hundred miles from St. John's. As a new immigrant to Canada from the Scottish Hebrides, I was surprised to hear from my father, also a Scottish immigrant, that a native Newfoundlander who spoke Gaelic and had a background very similar to my own was staying in the same motel. Hector MacIsaac, then about sixty years old, was at the time working some five hundred miles from his home in St. Andrew's, which is in the Codroy Valley on the west coast of Newfoundland. Mr. MacIsaac and my father had become acquaintances and had discovered that they had common roots in Scotland; my father was born and raised in Scotland, and Mr. MacIsaac's people came from Scotland three generations back.

The meeting with Hector MacIsaac was a memorable one. There were no formal introductions. My father quietly pointed out to me the man he had told me about, and I went up to him and greeted him in Gaelic. Mr. MacIsaac responded with great delight, shaking my hand all the while he spoke. He could hardly believe that there was any young person left with a

knowledge of his mother tongue. He said that all the younger generation of the Codroy Valley learned English as their first language, and now even the old people who had spoken nothing but Gaelic in their youth had very little opportunity of speaking the language.

Hector MacIsaac described to me his home community, his Gaelic-speaking family, and the Scottish Gaels who inhabited his native part of Newfoundland. The Valley, as he called the area, seemed unique in Newfoundland as regards language and culture, as it is in fact the only area of its kind in the Province where many of the early settlers were Gaelic-speaking Cape Breton Scots.

My initial interest in the Codroy Valley was revived about a year later when a newspaper headline, "Cameras visit Codroy Valley", along with the photograph of a piper caught my attention in the television entertainment section of the paper. Recognizing that it was the same place that Hector MacIsaac came from, I watched the program which was a half-hour documentary film illustrating features of the traditional way of life of the English, French, and Scots who settled there along with camera shots of the picturesque scenery.

What I saw, and particularly the pipe music, Gaelic songs, and the milling, made such an impression upon me that I took a clipping from the newspaper [see Plate I]; and for the only time in my life, I determined that I would go and visit someone I had seen on television, namely the Codroy Valley Scottish



This Land of Ours

Allan MacArthur, 85-year-old farmer youngsters and for viewers of CBC-TV'S and piper of Codroy Valley in western This Land of Our Series, in Valley of the Newfoundland, plays for a group of Winds, Saturday at 7 p.m.

Cameras visit Codroy Valley

Saturday at 7 p.m. CBC cameras pay a visit to the Codroy Valley, in a program on This Land of Ours, entitled Valley of the Winds. The valley is one of the most picturesque farming areas in Newfoundland where the wind sometimes blows through at 100 miles per hour. It's an area where traditional methods are still used and where a way of life counts for something.

Viewers will meet Mrs. Emily McDougall, the valley's official "wind watcher". From her reports, the railway determines if it's safe to send rolling stock through the area, where on two past occasions high winds have blown trains right of the track.

Also seen on the program are Alf Gale,

a farmer whose family was among the first settlers in Codroy Valley; and Allan MacArthur, an 85-year old farmer and valley piper. An old-time milling dance, put on specially for CBC is also shown. Host is John Foster.

Plate I

The Evening Telegram, St. John's, Vol. 91, No. 27, Feb. 7, 1969, p.15.

piper, Allan MacArthur.

As I waited for the long, snowy Newfoundland winter to pass so that I could have an opportunity to carry out my intention, I was very much encouraged by two events; firstly, my parents moved out to the west coast of Newfoundland to a place only eighty miles from the Codroy Valley; and secondly, I spoke to Professor Herbert Halpert of the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland who, on seeing my interest, said that he would lend me tape recording equipment from the Folklore Archive, and if I wished to pursue this interest in any great depth, he would enroll me in the Graduate Studies program in folklore and would himself undertake to supervise and guide my research.

The following summer, I set off on the five hundred and twenty mile drive from St. John's to the Codroy Valley to visit this Allan MacArthur who had made such an impression. On the way there, I stopped at Stephenville to invite my mother to accompany me to the one place that she would be able to speak in her beloved Gaelic which she missed from the time she had left Scotland. Fortunately, she accepted, in spite of her "you can't just walk up to his door, can you?"

A sight-seeing drive through the Codroy Valley showed it to consist of a number of closely knit settlements, rather like the houses that are strung out along the country roadsides in Scotland, with one village merging into the next. On making this comparison, I concluded that, "just like at

home," people most likely knew exactly who lived in every house of their community. The local Grand Codroy Provincial Park seemed the obvious place to stop; and after a few words with the kindly park attendant, Mr. Con Gabriel, he said he would be more than pleased to have the opportunity of bringing some of Allan MacArthur's fellow Scots to visit the old man.

As Con Gabriel predicted, Allan MacArthur was delighted to meet anyone from Scotland and particularly from one of the Gaelic-speaking areas of the Highlands and Islands that his mother and grandmother, who had come from Scotland, had so often told him about. A very alert man in his eighties, he talked spontaneously about his Scottish background as he was extremely proud of his ancestors and enjoyed having an audience with whom he could share his interest. Although he spoke in English for the most part, for by the time we first visited the MacArthurs they had been using it as their main language for about eight or nine years, he enjoyed making occasional remarks in the Gaelic. He asked questions about Scotland as we knew it in the modern generation and made comparisons to the things his mother and grandmother had told him about the country they left in the 1830's "when they sailed to America." He also compared Scotland to the Codroy Valley, based on the traditions from his family and on the material he had read about the mother country.

If the television portrayal of Allan MacArthur impressed me, then the man himself more than lived up to any expecta-

tions that I could possibly have had. Before long, our "cellidh" [visit] revealed that we had a common love for Gaelic songs and Scottish music, and Allan MacArthur's musical background was very similar to my own, even though we were of different generations. He had learnt many Gaelic songs from his mother, and he had learnt to play the bagpipes from his uncle and other relatives. For my own part, I had been brought up surrounded by music in a household where we, like the MacArthurs, also made our own entertainment, as my mother, a fine Gaelic singer, taught me many of "her songs", and my father, being a piper, influenced my great love for the bagpipes.

Although Mr. MacArthur had, for the most of his life, been a very popular piper in the Valley, at the time of our visit he no longer had his bagpipes as he had decided that he was getting too old to play. It had been his wish for several years that one of his sons, Sears, who was also a good piper, should have his pipes after he died, and only that year he had given them to him lest there might be some misunderstanding after his death and his wish would not be carried out. While he regretted that there could be no pipe music to add to our afternoon of conversation and songs, he said that he would look forward to hearing a real Scotsman play when my father would come down to the Valley on another day.

We left the MacArthur's home after an enjoyable visit

with the invitation to "come back again soon," and convinced that there was every reason to return, we promised that we would. Having sampled only a taste of the wealth of the Scottish Gaelic traditions in the MacArthur home, I reported back to Professor Halpert who, as he had said, accepted me as a graduate student in the Department of Folklore.

The next opportunity I had of returning to the Codroy Valley was at the beginning of 1970 during the New Year's celebrations, this time accompanied by both parents. While the MacArthurs heartily welcomed all of us, old Allan showed additional interest in us individually--my mother had grown up on a croft on the Isle of Skye where they spoke nothing but Gaelic among their family and friends; my father, though a Lowlander, was an accomplished piper with a large repertoire of tunes and a great interest in all kinds of Scottish bagpipe music; and although I was the same generation as Allan's grandchildren, who at the time showed little interest in the things of the past, I had grown up on the Isles of Skye and Lewis, surrounded by the Gaelic culture with "more than a smattering of the Gaelic" and a keen interest in everything pertaining to it and the traditional way of life of the old people.

It soon became apparent that Mr. MacArthur had been anticipating our return visit, as he had in the meantime requested that his son return his bagpipes to their family home, with the understanding that he could go there whenever he wished to

play them and that he would again own them on his father's death. While Allan's interest in playing them again had been revived, the pipes themselves were in need of overhauling and replacement of reeds. Like most pipers, my father carried the necessary materials and replacements in his own pipe case and was only too happy to season the sheepskin bag, wind some new hemp on the drones and chanter, and replace the reeds that were needed. Since the items essential for keeping the bagpipes in good working order were unobtainable in Newfoundland, it gave Allan great pleasure to see his old pipes restored to their former condition; and during the renovations, he equally enjoyed discussing at length his interest in the pipes and their music since he and his son were by that time the only two pipers left in the Valley. Like most musicians who meet in similar circumstances, the two pipers followed this with a session of exchanging tunes and taking turns in playing each other's instruments, something which Allan had not had the opportunity of doing for many years.

As our "ceilidh" continued and the topics of conversation and types of music and song varied throughout the afternoon, it became quite clear that Allan MacArthur was more than the "farmer and piper" that the newspaper article had mentioned: he was a singer, accordionist, story-teller, historian, sportsman guide, and craftsman into the bargain. As I was soon to find out from talking with many people all over the Codroy Valley, he was one of a kind, the last of a particular type of

person who, with his wealth of knowledge about his Scottish culture and topics of interest in the Valley in general, had over the years come to gain great respect and admiration for his remarkable memory and his lively personality. Realizing, then, that I had the good fortune of meeting with the last real stronghold of the Scottish Gaelic traditions of the Codroy Valley, I saw the urgency of trying to preserve as much as possible of Allan MacArthur's recollections of the early days of settlement in the Valley along with his repertoire of songs and his memory of the old-time stories, cures, and crafts that were all part of the way of life of the first Scottish settlers.

Although Allan's children, aged between thirty-two and fifty-five, all had spoken Gaelic as their first language, they no longer used it except on very rare occasions, such as at a party when they might bring up a childhood memory for +their amusement. In spite of the fact that they were familiar with their father's repertoire of Gaelic songs and could name the titles when requesting that he sing one, they knew only very few of the songs themselves, and most of them could only sing the chorus or a repetition line.* Most of his grandchildren, who had grown up with English as the language of the home, could only recognize the tunes and in most cases could not even give names to them. Allan, who had learned all his songs from his mother and who was the proud bearer of his Scottish Gaelic traditions, knew all too well that the

language which he had grown up with and loved, along with the lore that had been handed down through the Gaelic, were to his sorrow likely to disappear from the Valley with the passing of his own generation.

It was perhaps not surprising, then, that Allan MacArthur welcomed the opportunity of having someone whom he could regard as another link in the chain of tradition bearing, and having the advantage of a similar Highland background in a Gaelic-speaking area, I became the repository that he was looking for. *He regarded the tape recorder that I had brought to his house as a wonderful tool which could be used in this eleventh hour effort to preserve some of his traditions and memories; and in spite of some initial embarrassment by the rest of the family, he firmly defended my use of it. Most of the time, he seemed quite unaware of its presence, and just as we were about to bring our second visit to the MacArthur home to a close, I recorded quite by chance Allan's closing remarks at the end of a fine afternoon of music and reminiscences: "Well, I'd like to see you coming every week." [C868, 71-48]

From the seemingly small beginnings of two ceillidhs, my relationship with the MacArthurs, and especially with Allan and his wife, Mary, grew steadily; and over the five summers that I spent in the Codroy Valley, I acquired as much of the Scottish Gaelic traditions as they chose to teach me during the closing years of their lives. Although, unfortunately,

they did not live long enough to see the complete documentation of the wealth of material they passed on to me, it was important to the MacArthurs to know that they had done their part in preserving many of the Scottish traditions of their Codroy Valley.

The surviving generations of the MacArthur family, along with several other Codroy Valley families, have now come to realize that since the old folks have passed away, many of the traditions went with them, especially as the one they used to look upon as the "grand old man", whose memory they once relied upon as a ready source of reference, has gone. This realization has led the family especially to become more interested in their history and culture; and as a result, they frequently follow the pattern of their parents by informing me of various customs from their childhood or anecdotes remembered from their past. Equally often, however, they come to me to remind them of the words of "one of Dad's songs", the name of one of their forebears, or the date of an incident or event from their family history. While they sometimes express regret that they did not "pay more attention to all that while the chance was there," they generally agree that it was a good thing that I had "time to do all that," to save it being lost forever.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Once I had had the opportunity to establish rapport with the MacArthurs, I kept in touch with them occasionally with small reminders, such as picture postcards from the Highlands of Scotland sent while I visited my own family there, which pleased Mr. and Mrs. MacArthur and kept them assured of my continued interest. I had already explained to them that it was my intention to return to the Codroy Valley for about three months that summer so that I could spend considerable time in the area making tape recordings and notes of various aspects of the Scottish Gaelic traditions, in hopes of one day compiling a written account of them. With this in mind, I spent the other seasons of the year attending university where, under the guidance of Dr. Herbert Halpert, I began to learn the basic skills involved in folklore collecting and annotation.

One of the first tasks to be done before spending this period of time in the Codroy Valley collecting oral history was to make myself familiar with the written history of the area. I anticipated the mere looking up of a Newfoundland history book in order to do this but discovered that there was no such all-inclusive book available. Historians at the

University informed me that there was very little written material available on the Codroy Valley, and the Memorial University Library Centre for Newfoundland Studies had only very few specific references to the Codroy Valley on file which, as it turned out, were only of very limited use as far as historical background was concerned. Fortunately, with the assistance of Miss Agnes O'Dea, Head of the Centre, who explained to me some of the subtleties of historical researching, further search in the "Newfoundland Room" did prove fruitful, with much relevant material being found in books by travellers, surveyors, geologists, and priests; and in newspapers, magazines, and government documents. Selections from these readings were made, and the information kept with a view to including some of it in the final writing, along with any anthropological or sociological data which I came across during my library searchings.

Although I had made no definite plans about what I would do once I got to the Valley, I realized that first and foremost, I would require suitable accommodation for the three months I was to spend there. A preliminary visit there just before the onset of summer took care of this problem, as the MacArthurs' daughter, Mrs. Leo Cormier, helped me to find a trailer that was for rent during the summer months, situated in Great Codroy, only two miles from the MacArthur's home at Upper Ferry.

Living in the area was a convenient arrangement, and the

fact that I was living alone allowed me to plan my time according to the needs of my fieldwork. It also permitted me to return some of the hospitality I received in the Valley as I could invite informants to visit with me.

One of my early aims of collecting folklore in the Codroy Valley was to obtain as many sources of information as was possible during the fieldwork, as it seemed that the best way of obtaining a fair picture of the oral history and legend was to hear several accounts from different informants. Commenting on the compilation of oral history, W.L. Montell states: "It is necessary to collect as many accounts of an event as possible and collate the data into an archetype in order to obtain a complete story."¹

It was not possible, however, to carry out this intention as almost all informants interviewed responded by directing me to Allan MacArthur whom they considered to be an authority on almost every subject asked. Not only was he considered the best source of information on the history of the Valley, but also for legend, song, and information on material culture of the area.

Regarding the thesis topic itself, there were many questions which in fact could not have been answered without actually spending time in the Codroy Valley. It became more apparent as I stayed there that Allan MacArthur would be my main informant for the Scottish Gaelic traditions which I

¹ William Lynwood Montell, The Saga of Coe Ridge: A Study in Oral History, (Knoxville, Tennessee: 1970), p. 195.

hoped to collect. Questions regarding the organization of my time answered themselves, and the fact that I would be spending much more time with the MacArthur family than any other was justified by the fact that other members of the community considered Allan MacArthur was "the person to ask".

At first I was hesitant to visit the MacArthur home on a daily basis as I had a fear of imposing on the family too much. Although I had received many invitations to "come anytime", I was not thoroughly confident of doing so until I had been in the Valley for almost a month. One day, the MacArthurs' granddaughter remarked to me that her grandfather would often sit outside his house, scanning the road on the north side of the river where I lived to see whether or not my car was there. She said that he would look out for me coming in the direction of their house, as he looked forward to my visits. The realization that I could provide Allan with some enjoyment in his old age by sitting down and talking to him and listening to his accounts of the early days in the Valley was great encouragement for me. It also assured me that folklore fieldwork need not be a one-sided concern.

The feeling of being accepted in the society of informants made collecting much easier from then on. I adopted the procedure of going to visit the MacArthur family almost daily, with the intention of holding recording sessions only on the days when I was sure that it would not be over-taxing on Mr. MacArthur's health and strength. Looking back to the summer

of 1970, I realize now what I was unable to comprehend at the time: this was the last summer that Allan MacArthur was well enough to be up and about among his family and friends. Even then, he indicated often that he felt his health was failing. During that summer, many days were spent with him when I collected no additional notes or recordings for my project, but I have never considered any of those days wasted. Usually, the old gentleman was feeling tired or unwell; and on these days, he often wished to sit back or lie down and would sometimes ask me to tell to him stories about Scotland, about my home there, and the domestic and agricultural practices; sometimes, he would ask me to sing Gaelic songs which I had learned from my mother; other times he lay down on the kitchen day-bed while I spent time with Mrs. MacArthur. The luxury of being able to do this was one of the greatest advantages of living in the community for a number of months at a time. I soon got to know Mr. MacArthur well enough to detect when the time was or was not suitable for recording sessions, for often he was reluctant to admit to his own physical limitations.

Throughout the summer, there was rarely an occasion when the tape recorder was far from my reach as I usually put it in my car whenever I set off on one of my visits to the MacArthurs. Although I did keep a notebook to record my daily events, on several occasions I would rush back to the trailer to write down some observation lest it would slip my memory; nevertheless, the tape recorder was the most important instrument

in preserving the songs, music, and information that were given to me.

There were many times when I wished that there could be some way of capturing Allan MacArthur's reactions when he listened to recordings of his own singing or playing the pipes, played back on the tape recorder. At first, he was amazed and somewhat amused at being able to listen to his own music; later, as he became more accustomed to the idea, he seemed quite convinced that this was a wonderful way of preserving all his songs which, at one time, he feared might have been lost forever.

His attitude to the recording of conversation was somewhat similar. On occasions when Mrs. MacArthur reminded her husband of the presence of the tape recorder or appeared slightly embarrassed that the reminiscences of an old man should be recorded, he would sit back and say that he was "only telling the truth". He said that they knew how things were in the Valley many years ago because they had been born and brought up there; what happened before that was told to him by his mother, so that also could be nothing other than the truth. On no occasion throughout my many visits did Mr. MacArthur lose any of his enthusiasm or willingness as an informant.

There were a few occasions when the tape recorder method presented problems to me; but after some trial and error experience, I learned how to deal with these situations. For

example, I quickly realized the danger of becoming too dependent on the machine, especially for certain technical descriptions which, when transcribed from the tape, would produce almost worthless information such as: "There was a spar of wood about this long, joined this way on to another piece of wood about this long..." It was all too clear that a recording like this, with no details of dimensions or angles was useless, even though it had been perfectly valid with the actions of the informant as he spoke.

Rushing home to jot down details in my field notebook, though better than nothing, was risky. So also, was depending on finding another occasion to ask someone like Allan MacArthur to repeat details, as he was most likely to tell me that he had already discussed that information on a previous occasion, and promptly choose another topic to talk about. The method I found most successful was fairly simple, and it involved making quiet comments of my own in a very low voice which could be picked up by the microphone, yet would not interfere with the person who was speaking. For example, transcription from a tape recording describing moccasins would, with my own mutterings in square brackets, read as follows:

You'd take a piece of leather about that long, [eighteen inches] and you'd have to shape it to fit around here, [ankle] and some of them would be made long enough to come up to here [kneel].

As already mentioned, my Scottish background was of great advantage to me in the Codroy Valley. Naturally, many of the

local people were curious as to what I was doing there, and some were even suspicious. The MacArthurs were of great help in alleviating some of this, and I was relieved of answering many of the questions asked, for Mr. MacArthur was only too pleased to answer for me. His favourite way of introducing me was as a performer. He would volunteer my singing to many of his friends and family, just as a proud father might ask his child to sing or play to the family visitors. He had made a point of mentioning that I had sung on C.B.C. radio and television programs; and if they had not heard or seen the programs, he would just about have them persuaded that they had. At the very least, he would have them think that they must surely have seen me before and perhaps forgotten.

In this setting, my success in establishing a good relationship with the people of the area largely depended on how much I, as an outsider, was willing to contribute to or participate in activities of the community during my stay there. An acquaintance with the parish priest led to my taking part in the local Annual Regatta program, originally held for boat racing on the Grand Codroy River, but in more recent years, much of the two days has been taken up with amusement stalls, selling of crafts, and entertainment. My contribution was arranging for my father to play his bagpipes on the river bank during the boat races and later giving a few of my own songs at the concert which had been organized for the evening. The pipe music was especially appreciated, for in previous

years, Allan MacArthur had faithfully provided it, but for the first time was unable to do so because of his failing health. A short time after the Regatta, the parish priest showed his confidence in me by allowing me to look at the Parish Records which were held in a safe in his house.

As a result of frequent participation in the music of the Valley, my parents and I became acquainted with many people who invited us to their homes especially when they held house parties. The people of the Codroy Valley love to make their own entertainment, and it was on evenings when we attended house parties that there was ample opportunity to record fiddle and accordion music from the Valley. It was interesting to notice that on no occasion like this were we in company that did not include at least a few members of the MacArthur family. It seemed that an identity with them had established itself in the Valley to the extent that some people actually asked if I was a relative of the MacArthurs!

Mr. MacArthur himself was generous in referring me to other people whom he considered to be better informants than he was regarding certain topics. In particular, he referred me to a family, that of Mr. and Mrs. George Cormier, who were prominent bearers of the French traditions in the Valley. The occasion arose when Allan MacArthur was describing some aspects of the wool industry; and although he had grown up in a home where tweed was woven by his mother and had seen this many times and could describe it, he himself was no weaver.

In this case, he directed me to Mrs. George Cormier who, until recently, wove cloth and was considered to be a very fine weaver. Mr. MacArthur also recommended that I visit some of his own Scottish contemporaries in order to find out some more of the traditions of the Valley.

Among them were three MacIsaac brothers, one of whom was my first Codroy Valley acquaintance, from St. Andrews. Mr. MacArthur thought that Sandy MacIsaac, the oldest brother, would be especially good as an informant. Sandy, however, was a rather reluctant informant, and it was only after he had drunk down a "dram or two" that his friend, Allan, persuaded him to sing. There ensued a most amusing episode where Sandy sang the song requested by Allan, but he did so prompted at the beginning of every verse by the one who requested it. Allan MacArthur would not sing the song himself, not even in Sandy's absence. ✧ It was, after all, "Sandy's song"; nevertheless, Allan MacArthur still had such a remarkable memory that he knew the whole song off by heart.

In his discussion of oral history, Montell reaffirmed his earlier statement on the necessity to have several sources of information:

Rarely does an individual informant know all there is to be learned about specific historical occurrences. It is necessary to query several people and collate their traditions before the complete picture can be seen.

[Montell, The Saga of Coe Ridge, p. 195]

Allan MacArthur himself did not consider that he knew all about historical events of the Valley; nevertheless, this was the way in which he was seen by others in the community. Mr. MacArthur made it amply clear on occasions when he felt that his knowledge about a topic was lacking; in fact, he was sometimes reluctant to give any information at all on a topic about which he only had part of the information needed to complete the picture. When asked questions, he never gave an answer simply to please the one who asked; if he was not sure or if he did not know, then he would say so. Almost all of the interviewing with Allan MacArthur was conducted when he was eighty-six years old. At that age, he was extremely perceptive, letting nothing slip by if he thought an incorrect impression had been conveyed or false assumptions made about any aspect of his Scottish history or culture.

Having an informant with a memory as remarkable as Allan MacArthur's sometimes presented its problems. Not only did he have the ability to remember details of historic events, but he would remember what he had told me on previous occasions and considered that I, too, should remember. Early in the fieldwork when I was new to the ways of both collectors and informants, there were times when Allan MacArthur sang me one of his songs or told an interesting story which I failed to record. For example, there was one time I called in to visit him when he was in the midst of singing an unusual milling song with five of his sons; and while I was there for the entire

performance, I did not record it as I felt uneasy about beginning to record immediately I had entered the house. Some time later, I asked Mr. MacArthur to sing the song again, but he reminded me that I had already heard it and that there was no need for him to do the same thing twice, but he would instead sing another of his own choice, and I never did get the first song again. The same thing happened when I asked him to relate an account which he had dealt with on a previous occasion, even when that occasion was more than a year before. There was no place for admitting to failures of memory or even machinery, as far as he was concerned; his own mental note of what he did or did not deal with was too accurate for that. For the items which I wished to have repeated for the purposes of recording, I had to use a different approach if there was to be any hope of having a repeat performance. The one which I found worked best was to bring along a third party, usually my mother, to visit with Mr. MacArthur; I would then explain to him that I had already tried to describe to her the content of a particular item or song, but due to my lack of ability to do justice to what he had sung or told me, I felt that the only way she would be able to have the same pleasure that I had at the original performance would be at another performance by Mr. MacArthur himself. Most times, he was happy to repeat the item for the sake of my mother and would perform the song or story directly to her as though there was no one else in their company. I did not consider that this

was an unfair way of compensating for my own technical failures. It was, in fact, realistic; had I been able to record the item in the first place, I would then have been able to do justice to Mr. MacArthur simply by playing back what I had recorded.

*On no occasion did Allan MacArthur rehearse the performance of a song or story. He was spontaneous throughout all recording sessions and was so at ease in the presence of the tape recorder that I am almost convinced that most of the time he was unaware that it existed at all.

Forming an identity with the Codroy Valley Scots was something which for me happened almost unconsciously. To begin with, my own background made me familiar with so many aspects of their way of life that I was always in danger of taking for granted certain features which had always been known to me. For example, I would omit seemingly obvious details when describing the way of life in the Codroy Valley, erroneously assuming that most people would have made butter or turned hay as I had done throughout my childhood. It was only after numerous "obvious" questions from Dr. Halpert that I realized this was not so. I also became personally involved with the MacArthur family and out of this close relationship came a feeling of great respect and an unspoken trust. Because of this personal involvement, however, at times it was extremely difficult for me to become detached from the situation in order to write about certain aspects which seemed so apparent

to me. I have attempted to correct this in many instances, but there will undoubtedly remain several areas where I have failed to include information which others may feel is essential to the observer of the Gaelic traditions of the Codroy Valley.

Having amassed a collection of some fifty half-hour tapes, numerous field notebooks, dozens of pages copied from old library references, and a box full of bibliographical material, I was then faced with the problems of selection and analysis of the material. I began by transcribing a selection of the tapes, choosing first those which contained historical information recounted by Allan MacArthur. The transcriptions contained details on a wide variety of topics. These included not only historical facts relating to the migration of his people from Scotland and their settlement in the New World but also accounts of how they cleared the land, cured the sick, took care of their animals, made their own clothes, produced all their own food, and adapted their skills to meet the many needs of living in a new land. Interspersed with all of this information were numerous songs and examples of instrumental music which were then indexed, many of the songs also being transcribed.

Some time later, my mother came to St. John's; and while we had the opportunity of working on the tapes again, she painstakingly transcribed the sections that were in Gaelic and the Gaelic songs. There were many occasions when she

listened again and again to individual words or phrases and brought in other Gaelic-speaking friends so that we could all try to make out some of the syllables which had almost been obliterated by interference on the tape, such as the ringing of a telephone or scuffle of feet during the performance. Unfortunately, by this time there was no going back to the Valley to check it out with the singer, as Mr. MacArthur had passed away in the meantime. There were a few words of his English songs which, over a year later, I showed to Mrs. MacArthur and several other members of the family to seek their help in filling in one or two blanks. I also made some attempt to write down the names of some sixty tunes played on the bagpipe, accordion, fiddle, mandolin, organ, and concertina in the Codroy Valley. I decided, however, not to attempt a complete list of these tunes because, in addition to the many songs collected, they warrant a separate study.

While one of my original intentions has been to annotate the songs and have detailed discussion on the many aspects of Gaelic songs in the Codroy Valley, it became apparent that I had by this time been dealing with more than I could cope for the one study. As a result, and with the guidance of my supervisor, Dr. H. Halpert, this study concentrates attention on a representative selection of the Scottish Gaelic traditions of the Valley. Most of the songs and music, along with numerous aspects of folk medicine were therefore excluded and reserved for future study. I was particularly sorry to have to omit my

own fascination with the "cancer doctors" and with various aspects of material culture pertaining to the area.

With a clearer definition of what was to be included in the study, the task was somewhat easier; although I was constantly faced with the problems of narrowing down the material, both from the oral sources of tapes and notebooks and the bibliographical references. Where possible, I decided to use the words of informants, directly transcribed from the tape, with no attempt made to "correct" their usage of the language, as I felt that no matter how I arranged my description or observation, nothing was closer to the truth than what I was actually told while in the Codroy Valley.

In order to place these traditions in their own setting, I will first give a geographical and topographical description of the area and indicate its relation to the rest of Newfoundland. Following this description is a history of the settlement of the Valley, drawn both from the printed sources and from oral tradition as remembered by Allan MacArthur. It is important to give this background, as many of the hardships, labours, and satisfactions of the pioneers undoubtedly influenced the generation that was born after them, producing descendants like Allan MacArthur, who were proud of the accomplishments of their forebears, whose diligence and perseverance succeeded in taming the wild coastal area into "Newfoundland's Garden" or "God's Little Acre" as the Valley was sometimes called.

After writing the history, which depended so much on Allan MacArthur's information, I realized that this study would be seriously lacking if I did not attempt to acquaint the reader with Allan MacArthur himself. For this reason, then, an entire chapter is devoted to the great tradition bearer himself. A composite account of his life is given, from what he told me supplemented by further details from his family, along with some observation on his personality from his friends, relatives, and my own knowledge of him.

The chapter which follows this concerns the "ceillidh", an important feature in the way of life of all Highland Scots in days gone by which has for many years been instrumental in passing on all the old traditions from one generation to the next. As far as this study is concerned, the "ceillidh" in fact is a crucial point upon which most of the material dealt with depended. The topics which are taken up in the ensuing chapters all hinge on this one aspect of the old way of life, the "ceillidh", and are arranged in two groups: there are two chapters concerned primarily with oral traditions, followed by two chapters which deal largely with aspects of material culture. There is, however, no clear-cut separation between the oral and material traditions for as every Highland Scot knows, most skills, whether they be milking a cow, rowing a boat, or simply rocking the baby to sleep, were once performed to the accompaniment of a song suited to the task.

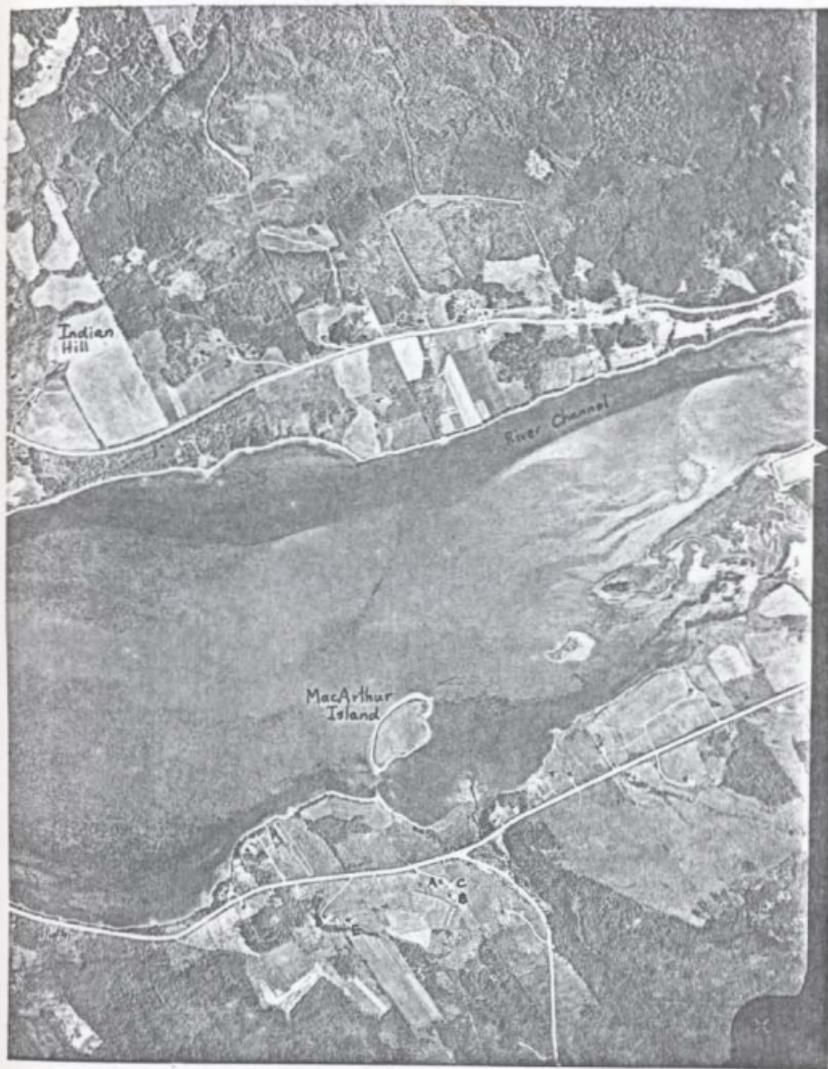
The final chapter ties together the various aspects of the Scottish Gaelic traditions dealt with in this study with some comments on the changes that have taken place in the traditional way of life of the Codroy Valley Scots.

CHAPTER III

THE CODROY VALLEY: A DESCRIPTION

The Codroy Valley is situated in the south west of Newfoundland between the Cape Anguille Mountains and the southern end of the Long Range Mountains. [See map inside back pocket] It is drained by two rivers, namely the Grand Codroy and the Little Codroy. As they enter the Gulf of St. Lawrence, both rivers have long sand spits which extend across most of the mile-wide mouths of the rivers leaving only a narrow opening for access to the sea. The Grand Codroy River is a slow-flowing river; its wide estuary extends approximately seven miles inland, much of it silted up, leaving only a narrow channel of deep water for navigation. [See map and aerial photo, plate II] Some thirty small islands are situated in the estuary of the Grand Codroy. [See plate III]

To the present-day visitor who usually approaches via the Trans Canada Highway, the name "Codroy Valley" presents some confusion. People living in the area, who have grown up with this local name, cannot understand why incomers sometimes make mistakes; and some have been visibly annoyed by confused visitors who have referred to the entire area as "the Codroy". They will insist that visitors call the entire area either by the more formal name, "the Codroy Valley", or



- A - Allan MacArthur's house
 B - barn
 C - shed
 E - Frank MacArthur's house
 - barn

Plate II-

Aerial photo: MacArthur land on the Grand Codroy River.

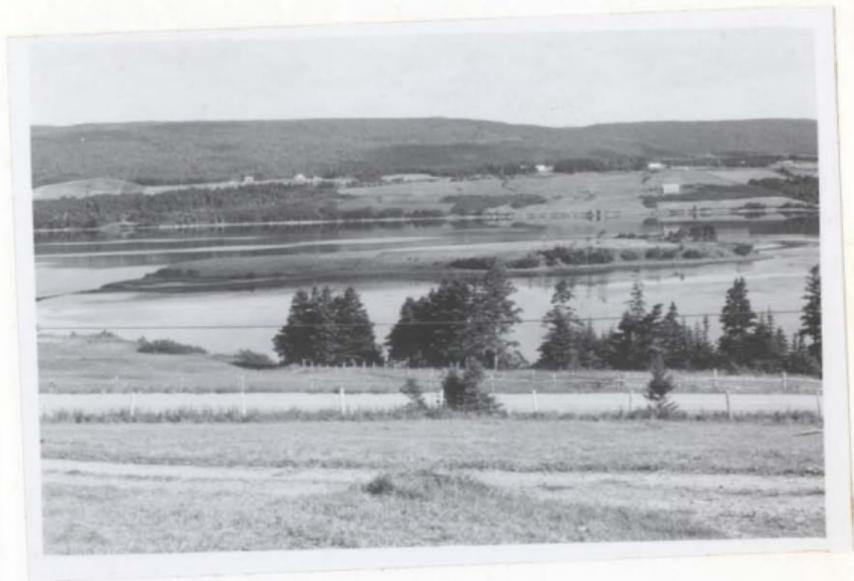


Plate III .

MacArthur Island: One of the many islands in the estuary
of the Grand Codroy River.

(This is the view from the front door of the MacArthur home.)

by the local name, simply "the Valley". No other term of reference is acceptable to the residents. Nevertheless, confusion of the name seems inevitable, as the Codroy Valley itself has little to do with the community of Codroy which is situated outside the physical structure of the Valley. Further confusion arises when the older residents state that the two rivers were not always known by the names Grand Codroy and Little Codroy but were formerly known as Grand River and Little River. Perhaps the relevance of the use of the name "Codroy" can be seen more clearly by looking at the history of the region.

While most people who go there today do so by a land approach, this was not the case when the earliest settlers arrived. Until the 1820's the Codroy Valley had been approached entirely by sea, and it is in this fact that one might find the reason for the choice of name given to the entire Valley. Records show that by the early 1820's, the community of Codroy was well established as a fishing port and the base for the operation of the French fishery in the coastal waters from Cape Ray to Cape Anguille. Anyone approaching the Valley in those early days would do so by way of this established port of Codroy. This, then, may well be the reason why the entire valley came to be named the "Codroy Valley".

Like the rest of Newfoundland, the Codroy Valley has a temperate marine climate. Situated on the west coast of the

Island and consequently much closer to the land mass of Canada, it experiences greater extremes of temperature than the rest of the Province. Spring arrives late, and although the summers are generally the warmest in Newfoundland, from the farmer's point of view, the growing season is short. The area has an annual rainfall of forty-seven inches.

Road and rail communications in the Valley mainly follow the river banks and the sea coast; and since the pattern is somewhat difficult to describe, it will be necessary to refer to the map to get a clearer impression of the description that follows. The two river mouths are about five miles apart at the coast, then, following the rivers upstream, they flow within two miles of each other approximately five miles inland before taking their courses in opposite directions towards their sources. At the section where the two rivers flow closest together, the roads following their courses join the main arterial road which links the Valley with the rest of Newfoundland. This road, which is part of the Trans Canada Highway, continues westward along the floor of the Valley between the two rivers, and then it turns north to Corner Brook, about a hundred and ten miles away. Going southward, the Trans Canada Highway crosses Little Codroy River and continues for twenty-five miles till it reaches Port aux Basques, the point of departure for the ferry connecting Newfoundland to the mainland of Canada. The railway line follows a route which is very close to that of the Trans

Canada Highway, and when it reaches the Valley, there are two stations, one at Doyles, and the other at St. Andrews.

The area of St. Anne's Parish in the Codroy Valley is composed of several settlements or "sections" which are situated mainly along the banks of the rivers. They are connected to one another by road [See map] part of which was being paved during my field work in 1970. When driving in the area, one finds a network of gravel backroads connecting settlements and outlying farms, a feature which might seem unusual to those familiar with the rest of Newfoundland. Commencing with the "section" which is furthest inland and continuing along the south bank of the Codroy towards its mouth, are the settlements of Codroy Pond, North Branch, Coal Brook (sometimes called Cold Brook), South Branch, Tompkins, Doyles, Upper Ferry, and Searston. Along the north bank of that river are O'Regans, Great Codroy, and Millville. Between the two rivers is Loch Lomond and at the mouth of the Little Codroy is the settlement of St. Andrews, once called "Little River". Beyond Millville, settlements extend outside of the actual valley, and at the foot of the Cape Anguille Mountains along the sea coast are the settlements of Woodville,¹ Codroy, and Cape Anguille.

¹ On one available map of the region which I have seen used frequently, produced by the Survey and Mapping Branch, Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Canada, 1958, the settlement of Woodville is misrepresented. It is shown to be on the south bank of the Grand Codroy River, but is in fact situated on the north bank, just east of the settlement of Codroy. According to the residents of the Valley, it has always been there. Fortunately, I have been able to obtain a more up-to-date version with this correction made, released by the Survey and Mapping Branch in 1972.

The Roman Catholic Church at Searston and the Anglican Church at Codroy would be seen easily in a seaward approach to the Codroy Valley, perhaps representing the old orientation to the sea, while the third church, the Roman Catholic Church at St. Andrew's, lies further inland, at the meeting of two roads.

To the person who is familiar with much of the rest of Newfoundland scenery with its predominance of coniferous woodlands and barrens, the Codroy Valley forms a noticeable contrast. There are large scenic areas of arable and pasture land in the Valley with the upper slopes of the hills richly wooded. When the area was settled in the nineteenth century, the early settlers took it upon themselves to clear the growth of trees from large areas of land to allow them to cultivate the fertile valley soils. This land clearance still continues to a great extent today, for not only does the Newfoundland Government offer substantial monetary subsidies for every acre of land cleared, but several of the farmers have undertaken land clearance on a large scale in order to expand their farms. [Stated by local farmers]

Largely an agricultural area, the Codroy Valley is a patchwork of large, fenced fields. The farmers keep a variety of animals, usually cows, sheep, horse, hens, ducks, geese, and a few pigs. While the number of sheep in the Valley has declined in recent years (for reasons which will be dealt with in a later chapter on the wool industry), the number of

cattle and hens has increased with one farm, for example, having about ninety cows and nine thousand hens. Several sizeable dairy farms have made the Valley one of the main suppliers of produce for the west of Newfoundland.

Most of the houses in the Valley that are over forty years old are generally two storey, larger than, and of a different style to the several types that can be seen in so many of the Newfoundland outports. [See plate IV] According to Allan MacArthur, one of the earliest house types built in the Codroy Valley [Plate V] was the fashion at the turn of the century when a number of Cape Breton carpenters came to work and settle in the area. This style of house has largely disappeared, however, as many of them were remodelled during the 1940's and subsequent years when the large two storey house (or a bungalow) was preferred because of changing fashions. [Allan MacArthur's house, typical of the two storey type, will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter V.]

Usually the farms have a fairly large barn situated twenty or thirty yards from the house, and the most common type of barn has a mansard roof. [Plate VI] There are often numerous other out-buildings near the houses such as a hen house, a storage shed for tools or small farm implements, a shed for storing bottled fruit and vegetables and for keeping meat frozen in winter, or a convenient place for barrels of salted meat and fish. Root cellars are not typical in the



Plate IV

Typical two-storey house: Popular style of the 1940's.



Plate V

Cape Breton house type: Popular at the turn of the century.



Plate VI

Typical barn with mansard roof.

(Located behind Allan MacArthur's house.)

Codroy Valley, as most people store their vegetables in the dug out basements of their houses which keep cool all year. They are, however, common in the area from Codroy to Cape Anguille, and this pattern seems to be more like that found in most other Newfoundland outports.

This description of the Codroy Valley is relevant only to the area within the actual physical valley structure, for as one leaves the "section" of Millville, northwest towards the sea coast, a change of scenery emerges. The topography becomes more rugged, especially at Cape Anguille where the coast is very wild and windswept. The three coastal settlements of Woodville, Codroy, and Cape Anguille differ in more than scenery: the emphasis is no longer on agriculture but on fishing; the houses are situated much closer together than those in the Valley itself, and they are of a different type. Many have only one storey, and they are much smaller houses, brightly painted, and resembling the small colourful houses of Newfoundland's Port au Port Peninsula. And lastly, it is interesting to note that the residents of these coastal settlements are of the Anglican faith while the other "sections" mentioned are almost all Roman Catholic.

Saw mills are another noticeable feature of the Valley, and several families own one of their own or share a saw mill with another family. The larger timbers are cut down and sawed into planks in the saw mills so that the wood can be used for building. The outside strips of wood, which are

cut off when squaring the logs before cutting them into planks, are used for firewood. The young teenage boys in a family spend time cutting these outside parts into lengths approximately a foot long (usually called "slabs") and pile them up in wood sheds or outside the family home. Many people also cut wood especially for fuel. For this purpose, most prefer the hard birch wood.

The conifers which grow in the Codroy Valley include white spruce, balsam fir, and black spruce. There are also some hardwoods such as maple, birch, and witch hazel. Winter wood cutting of coniferous timber supplements the income of many families while there is a lull in the activities of farming and fishing. The wood is cut in measured lengths and sold at a set price per cord to Bowater's Pulp and Paper Company of the west coast of Newfoundland. Throughout the year, there can be seen at the side of some of the backroads neatly stacked wood, all cut in a certain length and measured in cords, awaiting transportation by truck or train to Bowater's mill in Corner Brook.

Fruit-bearing bushes and shrubs are plentiful in the Codroy Valley. Raspberry bushes grow in great numbers along the roadsides and in areas where trees have been cut down and no agricultural activities take place. There is an abundance of wild strawberries, and perhaps a little more difficult to find are gooseberries, choke cherries, and applies. On some marshy areas near the river and in several swampy depressions within the "backlands" and mountains grow bakeapples (cloud-

berries), and marsh berries; and there is a good annual harvest of partridge berries and blueberries from the barrens on the edge of the Valley.

The Valley is noticeably rich in wild flowers, ferns, and other shrubs and plants. Although there are wild flowers all over Newfoundland, they are not nearly as plentiful as they are in the Codroy Valley where they can be seen growing in roadside ditches, along the banks of rivers and streams, in fields and among woodlands. There is an abundance of wild roses, sea-pinks, blue iris, harebell or Scotch bluebell, campion, bird's-foot-trefoil, speedwell, wild orchis, violet, celandine, pitcher plant, marsh marigold, and water lily, along with many other flowers and ferns. Alder bushes thrive in the damper areas near the rivers, where there are also several kinds of reeds and many mosses. In both the woodlands and meadows one can find several species of mushrooms.

Wildlife also abounds, and the early guidebooks noted the fact that the Codroy Valley was an ideal place for the sportsman:

The angler or tourist who arrives in Newfoundland by ss. "Bruce" reaches some of the best salmon rivers in the Island almost at once. The railway from Port-aux-Basques (as will be seen by the small sketch maps) runs alongside the Little Codroy and Grand River Codroy for several miles.²

The Valley is still a popular place for visiting tourists and

² D.W. Prowse (ed.), *The Newfoundland Guide Book*, 3rd edition, London, 1911. (First published 1895), pp. 78-79, with maps on p. 178. Although the sketch maps do not accurately represent the coastal outline of the area, they show detail of the names of the best fishing pools used locally.

sportsmen; and during the salmon fishing and trouting season, there are many who visit to enjoy the sport of the fishing pools along the rivers. The local fishermen also fish in the coastal sea-waters for cod, herring, mackerel, and lobsters, and several fishing boats can usually be seen tied up to the wharf at Codroy. The wharves and nearby areas are used to stack up the lobster pots used in the lobster fishery. Today's fishermen are conscious of the fact that the fishery of their area has for many years been on the decline and is now nothing like the concern it once was. Local people in the Valley also fished in the rivers for eels and noted that the Indians had also engaged in this.

Hunters have for many years been known to visit the Codroy Valley to take advantage of the large numbers of caribou, and in later years, moose which are found on the mountains further back from the settlements.³ Local people have also hunted the Arctic hare and rabbits for their meat and lynx for their fur. The Arctic hare is thought to be very rare in Newfoundland, but there are still reports of it being seen in the Codroy Valley though not as plentiful in numbers as it once was in the days of the early settlers. There are also black bears, beaver, muskrat, some of the weasel family, and several other small animals. There are no reptiles in Newfoundland, and the older inhabitants of the Codroy Valley men-

³ In his book, Newfoundland and its Untrodden Ways, London 1907, J.G. Millais wrote a description and guide for hunters in Newfoundland. His work is concerned mainly with caribou hunting as it was written prior to the introduction of moose into Newfoundland. In his section dealing with the Codroy Valley, he describes caribou hunting there.

tion that there are no amphibians either. However, having seen many frogs in the Codroy Valley, I am convinced that this is no longer true, though I do not know when they first appeared in this area.

Compared to many other areas of Newfoundland, birds are noticeably numerous in the Valley. The local people hunt several species of game birds, including ruffed grouse, spruce grouse, black duck, and snipe. Along the many sandy beaches and the shores, there can be seen great numbers of sea birds, while in the summer, huge flocks of swallows and swifts congregate above the fields near the sandy mouths of the rivers; often they are lined up in rows along the telegraph wires. There are also robins, red-wing blackbirds, and other members of the thrush family, along with chickadees, juncos, and other small birds.

Although the automobile has largely taken over as the main means of transportation in the Valley, it is not unusual to see a horse and trap stopped outside the main grocery store waiting to take its owner home along with the weekly groceries, or driving along the roadside. [See plate VII] Nor is it unusual to see young boys riding bareback on horses, going on errands for their parents. They do not seem to show the excitement of engaging in a new experience but have an air of acceptance of what might be a daily chore. At other times, they can be seen taking off at a gallop across fields or along the road, obviously enjoying the freedom of their

outing.

Today's visitor will notice the unsophisticated and apparently uncomplicated way of life in the rural area of the Codroy Valley. There has, however, been a great number of changes there since the first settlers arrived.



Plate VII

Going on an errand with the horse and trap.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORY OF THE VALLEY

There is no general history reference book and relatively little printed information on the settlement of the west coast of Newfoundland, particularly the Codroy Valley, and the standard history books give only sketchy descriptions. Reference material includes reports of land surveyors, geologists, travellers, priests, and clergymen, along with government documents, magazines, and newspapers. I was very fortunate to be able to obtain information orally from some of those who lived there, notably one informant. Since my description of the Codroy Valley would be very meagre if I had to depend only on written sources, I shall refer to printed sources for the early history of the Valley and then present the history as seen by those who heard it orally from the first settlers.

The Codroy Valley was visited by several travellers whose writings contribute information on the early history of the area. Prominant among these were William Epps Cormack who journeyed across Newfoundland in 1822; Archdeacon Wix who kept a journal from his missionary visit to Newfoundland in 1835; Geologist J.B. Jukes who also kept a record of his travels in Newfoundland in 1839 and 1840; and Bishop Field who came to the coastal Newfoundland settlements in 1849.

Several of these references I shall be using at different points during the ensuing discussion, though not necessarily in chronological order. It is quite clear that some of the printed accounts were written from oral tradition and some from the writer's own observations. While oral history has its drawbacks in that, for example, there is little possibility, if any, of corroborating and therefore verifying the facts, it is undoubtedly useful to the historian or folklorist, who is attempting to present an account of the way of life of a particular society.

Perhaps at this point, and to justify my own considerable reliance on oral tradition, I should refer to some of the discussion of the validity of oral history, a topic which has in recent years been of much interest to the folklorist. In his article, "The Folklorist as a Social Historian," Philip D. Jordan, himself a historian, states that unless the historian is willing to look further than printed documents, he does not have the complete account of the history of a society. He suggests that traditional oral material can make a valuable contribution to the historian's understanding of the society he studies.¹ The folklorist, too, Montell says, "can come to the aid of the historian, whose analysis of statistical data and historical documents seldom permits conclusions regarding the ways of life on a local level."²

¹ Philip D. Jordan, "The Folklorist as a Social Historian." Western Folklore, XII:3 (July, 1953), pp. 194-201.

² Montell, The Saga of Coe Ridge, p. xx.

It is frequently the case that historical events are recorded by someone whose roots are not in the society about which he writes. For example, priests and schoolmasters have often taken upon themselves the task of writing histories. From my own readings of written accounts of the Codroy Valley--those by visitors like Wix and Field and resident priests such as Thomas Sears--it seems to me that the pressure from other tasks and the shortage of time dictated that the mere outlines of events be recorded. As a result of this, many details were omitted.

From such historical accounts, one does not usually get an impression of the actual feeling or attitudes of the local people towards the event being described. In traditional oral material, however, the bearers of the tradition passed down their own pictures of events. They had more time to embellish with detail, and they described an event in terms of what it meant to the community, including the impressions it made at the time. From my own collecting, I have found that the topics chosen to be recorded by the local priests frequently differed from the choice of items passed on in oral tradition.

Many specific details of the oral traditions reported here can often be confirmed by referring to written historical evidence. In some instances the written confirms the accuracy of particulars such as dates, of the spoken; in other cases, the traditional oral account complements the written outline,

adding details and contributing to our understanding of their significance. It is not the purpose of this study, however, to elaborate on the long-standing debate on the validity of oral history.

In the Codroy Valley, it is clear that eighty-seven year old Allan MacArthur, my chief informant, was regarded by the entire community as the foremost local authority on the history of the Valley and the principal custodian of its traditions, like his mother before him. This was indicated to me time and time again by the number of people who referred to him when themselves questioned on aspects of their history. The importance of detail and accuracy were a high priority to him, as was demonstrated, for example when he repeated identical information, including dates, in accounts of an event which I recorded at an interval of two years.

Considering the fact that Mr. MacArthur had no access to any of the printed material which was later made available to me at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, one would surely draw the conclusion that the traditional oral history has been accurately and carefully preserved. As he himself stated somewhat indignantly: "Anything my mother learned me I never forgot." [C882, 71-48]

In the Codroy Valley, Allan MacArthur was, in his day, the outstanding bearer of the Scottish Gaelic traditions. He had the combination of talent in performing, a great interest in his own culture, and a remarkable memory; the latter he

attributed to the "schooling he got from God".

According to the MacArthur family, the one who stood out as a memorable bearer of their Scottish traditions in the old days was Grandmother Jessie MacArthur, mother of Allan. One reason for this was that she out-lived her husband by more than twenty years, so was naturally better remembered by her grandchildren. But apart from this, she was undoubtedly a very talented woman. She had a remarkable memory and was thoroughly versed in her culture: the singer of songs, the narrator of history, tale, and legend, and also the skillful craftswoman. As an outstanding tradition-bearer, Jessie MacArthur was in her generation what her son, Allan, was to become in his.

The language of the MacArthur home, like that of the other Codroy Valley Scots, was the Gaelic; needless to say, this was also the language in which their traditions were passed on. For the most part, however, the interviewing for this study was conducted in English since this had been the language used in the entire Valley during the preceding five years.

The history of the migration and settlement in the new country is written here as closely as possible to the actual narration of Allan MacArthur. He did not talk about his family genealogies simply for genealogies sake; he would mention his forebears only if he had a point to make. There will therefore be no reconstruction of MacArthur or MacIsaac gen-

ealogies here, but anything that borders on this may emerge from accounts given by Allan MacArthur himself of the emigration of his family from Scotland to America.

When the first immigrants, thought to have been Micmac Indians from Cape Breton, arrived in the fertile Codroy Valley early in the eighteenth century, it was already inhabited by Newfoundland's native people, the Beothics. J.B. Jukes, Newfoundland's first geological surveyor, wrote probably the best description of early settlement in the area. Although he did not visit the Codroy Valley until 1839, his information which is based on the oral traditions learned from his Micmac guide, Sulleon, goes back to a much earlier period. He described the earliest account of settlement as follows:

At the beginning of the last century [i.e. the eighteenth century] a body of Mic Mac Indians, partly civilized and converted to the Roman Catholic faith, either came or were sent from Nova Scotia, and settled in the western part of Newfoundland. These were armed with guns and hunted the country, making great havoc amongst the game. A quarrel soon arose--perhaps on this account--between them and the Red Indians; and Sulleon gave me a confused account of a battle that took place between them at the north end of the Grand Pond about seventy years ago. [i.e., c. 1762] In this the Red Indians were defeated, as they were armed only with bows and arrows, and, according to Sulleon's statement, every man, woman, and child was put to death.³

Although the last Beothic known to have lived in Newfoundland died in St. John's in 1829, Jukes reported that in 1839 his companions "were in continual dread of meeting the Red

³ J.B. Jukes, Excursions in and about Newfoundland During the Years 1839 and 1840, (2 vols., London, 1842). Vol. I, p. 172.

Indians" while travelling in that area and "evidently looked upon them as wild animals of a pernicious character."⁴

The first person to cross Newfoundland from east to west who wrote and published an account of his travels was William Epps Cormack. He journeyed across Newfoundland in 1822 accompanied by his guide and companion, Micmac Indian named Sylvester. Cormack visited the Codroy Valley where he observed that "at the Great and Little Codroy Rivers, towards the southern extremity of St. George's Bay, there are twelve or fourteen families, amounting to seventy or eighty souls, who catch annually four or five hundred weights of codfish, and about fifty barrels of salmon, and obtain a little fur."⁵

Cormack does not, however, make it clear what their nationality was. He may have been assuming that his reader would take it for granted that these "seventy or eighty souls" were not foreign; that is, they were not foreign to Cormack, and from this point of view, then, probably they were English. He made the unusual comment:

It may be that on the west coast of Newfoundland there is neither Scotchman, Irishman, nor rat to be met with; nor, it is said, had any member of these European families taken up an abode west of Fortune Bay.⁶

Perhaps his odd phrasing suggests that there were English people there, but it is not clear exactly what he meant.

⁴ Jukes, Excursions, Vol. I, p. 173.

⁵ William Epps Cormack, Narrative of a Journey Across the Island of Newfoundland in 1822, 2nd edition (London, New York, and Toronto, 1928), p. hereafter cited Narrative of a Journey.

⁶ Cormack, Narrative of a Journey, p. 105.

Nevertheless, Cormack was aware of the fact that the Indians and French were living in the area, and he described the situation he met in some detail:

Owing to the shelter and anchorage for shipping at Codroy,...and to its immediate proximity to the fine fishing-grounds about Cape Ray, it is the central point of the French fisheries in summer. Many square-rigged vessels are here loaded with dried codfish for France; and hundreds of bateaux brought from France in the fishing-ships scatter hence in all directions over the fishing-grounds...We crossed the gut or entrance between the sea and the extensive shallow entrance of this river in a boat of one of the residents. The entrance is barred with sand, and has only about six feet of water. There reside here five families with their servants, amounting to twenty eight souls. They catch about forty barrels of salmon annually, which, with herring and a trifling cod-fishery, are their chief means of subsistence...There were at this time ten Indian families encamped for the winter on the banks of the Great Codroy River, about ten miles from its mouth. The chief attraction for the Indian here is the abundance of eels and trout.⁷

In 1835 an Anglican Priest, Archdeacon Wix, made a missionary journey round the coastal settlements of Newfoundland. He sailed south from St. John's, then along the south coast to Port aux Basques and from there up to Codroy. Archdeacon Wix mentions that he "saw a new vessel of seventy or eighty tons, which some Basque people, from the French Island of St. Peter's, had, contrary to treaty, built last winter on Codroy

⁷ Cormack, *Narrative of a Journey*, pp. 99-100. There is in the Valley today a place on the north side of the Grand Codroy River near Millville which is locally called "Indian Hill". Allan MacArthur made the point that spearing eels in the river was one of the few skills which the rest of the people learned from the Indians, as they were generally very apprehensive of having any communications with the Micmacs.

River."⁸ This is one of the earliest written references to boat building on the [Great] Codroy River, although oral tradition reports much earlier instances.

Archdeacon Wix visited parts of the Codroy Valley; first he stopped at the settlement at the mouth of the Little Codroy River where he baptized several children, then went on to Great Codroy River where he also stopped to hold services. He rowed across from the port of Codroy to Codroy Island, a small island directly opposite the port, in order to hold Sunday church services. On this island, Archdeacon Wix could see much evidence that the French had a thriving fishing industry. Even though it was Sunday, the French fishermen were busy "brimming or caulking their boats, and their crew were fishing in the offing, as upon a week-day."⁹

The type of land and the climate of this part of Newfoundland impressed the Archdeacon. He noted in his diary that:

From Cape Ray, to this place, [i.e. Codroy] the soil is so much improved, that it is quite capable of being brought into cultivation; cattle are very numerous here already.¹⁰ Between Cape Ray, indeed, and the Bay of Islands, there is decidedly more land capable of being brought, with very little trouble, into cultivation, than in all the parts of Newfoundland with which several pretty extensive tours had made me previously acquainted. There is another advantage too, peculiar to this part of the

⁸ Archdeacon Edward Wix, Six Months of a Newfoundland Missionary's Journal, from February to August, 1835, (London, 1836), p. 127.

⁹ Wix, Newfoundland Missionary's Journal, p. 135.

¹⁰ I can find no reference which would ascertain who first imported cattle, when it was, or where the cattle were imported from.

coast; there is so little fog and dampness of atmosphere, that fish may be laid out to dry here with much less risk than elsewhere of its becoming tainted.¹¹

Jukes, whose reports have already been mentioned, made some interesting observations about the north bank of the Great Codroy River. He had "heard reports of coal having been seen by the Indians up the Codwy (sic) River"¹² and was attempting to obtain more information on its exact location. He had hoped to secure a guide from the Indians, but they were reluctant to impart any information to him and gave him several reasons for this:

I was also told that an Englishman, named Gale, who lived on the south side of the river, and who had the reputation of being very rich, had strictly charged the Indians to give no information. Those Indians who resided all the year round were sometimes dependent on the English settlers for food, and dare not disobey them and the latter were particularly churlish and incommunicative, especially old Gale.¹³

This mention of "old Gale" is particularly interesting since oral tradition takes us back to the source of this report, some generations before the Gale mentioned by Jukes. Gale is one of the more common names in the Codroy Valley today, and so far as I know, none of the written accounts of the settlement of the Codroy Valley explain how or why the Gales settled there. The following account is from oral tradition and was given to me by one of the oldest Gales in the

¹¹ Wix, Newfoundland Missionary's Journal, p. 135.

¹² Jukes, Excursions, Vol. I, p. 176.

¹³ Jukes, Excursions, Vol. I, P. 176.

Valley who heard it from his youth from older members of his family. Since he would not permit the use of the tape recorder,¹⁴ the text here is almost as I wrote it in my field note book immediately after my visit with him. At the time, I was accompanied by a friend, and after leaving the house I wrote down all that I could remember of his story, as far as possible using his words, and then read it to my companion who agreed that this was close to what we had heard:

The first Gale was John Gale who came to the Valley about two hundred years ago. He came over to Newfoundland on a ship from England and came up the river on a long boat. They found an ideal place on the Great Codroy River to build a schooner--probably it was about the place where Gillis' Cabins are now. [This is a few hundred yards west of the Grand Codroy bridge; see map.] And when the boat and crew were about to return home, John Gale asked permission to stay, and he asked them to leave what was left of the nails and other materials used in building the schooner. Well, he thought that much of the Codroy Valley.

He stayed in the Valley and became very friendly with the Indians who lived there at the time. After about three years in the Valley, he took the boat that he had and went up around the coast, and he came back with a woman. No one knows where he got her--she wasn't an Indian woman. And he settled in the Valley with her. Now, no one knows if he married her or not--he probably just took her and lived with her! But they had a family, say, seven sons; and so it went on, and that's how there's so many Gales around. And some moved up and settled in Port au Port, some in Robinsons, and others in White Bay, but you don't hear of many around St. John's.

Now, there's thousands of dollars belonging to the Gales over in England, but they can't get the money out.

¹⁴ Some weeks later, Mr. Gale overcame his diffidence to the tape recorder and gave me a great amount of information on other subjects. Nevertheless, he would not allow this story to be recorded though he did not give any reasons for this. However, as the account contains somewhat sensitive information regarding the origins of the family, his reluctance is quite understandable.

Mr. Gale also told me that the older men in the Valley who were familiar with the woods set back a good way from the Great Codroy River knew of a graveyard which, they said, showed the earliest written record of the death of a Gale in the Codroy Valley. They refer to the gravestone of John Gale which is dated 1815, and are of the opinion that he lived in the area for many years before his death. This would date the arrival of the first Gale in the second half of the eighteenth century and would confirm Mr. Gale's estimation of about two hundred years ago. This is considerably earlier than indicated by any printed sources.

Another point of interest around the story of John Gale is the fact that his gravestone is a six-foot long slab of stone; and because of its size, the local people are of the opinion that it is certainly not of local stone. I asked Mr. Afra Gale if he could take me to see the gravestone, but he considered it to be accessible only to strong young men, accustomed to the woods. He said that the area was "grown over years ago," and very difficult to reach.

A few years after Jukes made his visit to the Codroy Valley, the first Scottish immigrants arrived from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. A Roman Catholic priest and historian, Rev. Michael Brosnan, who based his writing on the church records which were available to him in the 1930's,¹⁵ described the

¹⁵ Unfortunately, some of the St. Anne's Parish Records were lost in a fire which consumed the Searston Church in 1930 after a lightning storm. Although those records which were kept in the priest's house were saved, Father R. White said that there was "no telling" what those housed in the old church might have contained.

arrival of the first Scots some ninety years after it took place:

The first arrivals seem to have come about 1844, but the immigration at the time was almost negligible. The lure was the stories that travelled to Nova Scotia of the wonderful fertility of the soil in many parts of the West Coast of Newfoundland. It was also well known that it was easy to get a block of land which was gratis if one could hold it. Taxes were almost unknown.¹⁶

Brosnan states that by 1844 the Scottish names found in the Codroy Valley included "McNeill, McIsaac, and McLean."¹⁷ Others followed later and began to set up homesteads and clear the land for cultivation.

As far as I can gather, the main reason why the Scottish immigrants came to Newfoundland when they did was their concern for land-ownership. In the first place, those who came from Scotland to "America", as they called it,¹⁸ did so because they had been ousted from their crofts during the ruthless dispossession of the lands during the infamous Highland Clearances to make way for vast sheep farms. They had been forced to leave their native land and attempt to build for themselves a completely new life in a new country, and North

¹⁶ Brosnan, Pioneer History of the Parish of St. Georges, p. 13.

¹⁷ Because the majority of priests who wrote the church records before Brosnan were of Irish extraction, it is perhaps not surprising that they wrote Scottish names such as MacNeill (or MacNeil), MacIsaac, and MacLean in the Irish fashion, a fact very obvious to any Scot. They were also known to have written some of the French names, such as Auccoin, to sound more Irish, such as the changed form of the name, O'Quinn.

¹⁸ Old people both in Scotland and in the Codroy Valley still refer to people "going to America", meaning any part of North America.

America offered an opportunity for such settlement. Many ex-patriot Scots settled in Nova Scotia.

It seems they had not been long in Nova Scotia, however, when the question of land-ownership became a problem once more. The Scottish immigrants, who felt threatened that they might have to face the same situation they had already faced in Scotland at the time of their eviction, were consequently dissatisfied with the land tenure uncertainty in Nova Scotia, which was especially the problem of those who had arrived too late to take advantage of the earlier attractions that met the very first migrants. Since their sole concern was to own a piece of land which they could cultivate, many families, according to Allan MacArthur, migrated within a decade or so to Newfoundland where they heard they would be free from heavy taxes and troublesome landowners.

The Scots were probably the first to settle in the Codroy Valley with the sole aim of owning land for farming, as up till their arrival those who were settling did so for the reason that most of Newfoundland was settled, namely for the cod fishery. There appears to be little written about the early days of the Scottish settlers in the area, though much has been passed down orally from that time.

From this point, I shall present the history of the Codroy Valley Scots, from the year 1844, as described by Allan MacArthur who was regarded as the chief authority on Scottish

history in the Valley. Wherever possible, I shall quote his actual words transcribed directly from tape recorded interviews with him; and in some areas where the information was given on different occasions in a fragmented fashion, I shall make a composite account, using his own words and descriptions given on the separate days. Interwoven with this, I shall continue to refer to the relevant printed sources throughout.

In the mid 1800's, Angus MacArthur, Grandfather of Allan MacArthur, left the Isle of Canna in the Inner Hebrides at the age of twenty-two to emigrate to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. His younger sister followed on a later boat, but she managed to return to Scotland soon afterwards as she disliked Cape Breton. Allan MacArthur considered that she was one of the few lucky ones:

A lot of people when they arrived in Cape Breton didn't like it, but they had to stay as they couldn't go back. It was a wild place in those days; there was nothing like there is today.

[Field notebook, July 25, 1970]

Having left Scotland to be rid of the hard regulations of landowners, it must have been disappointing to immigrants such as Angus MacArthur to find a similar state of affairs in the new country. Much of the land was already owned by people who had emigrated many years earlier and had obtained land tenure on large areas. One such landowner whom Allan

MacArthur mentioned was Alexander MacDonald who came to Nova Scotia and settled in Antigonish around 1784; and although Mr. MacArthur was not absolutely certain of the accuracy of the date he gave, he did know that his grandfather, Angus MacArthur, like several other Scottish immigrants, lived and worked on MacDonald's estate for some time after his arrival. From oral tradition in Nova Scotia, Mary L. Fraser has obtained a parallel account of a man who is presumably one of this same MacDonald family:

Catholics began to come from the Highlands in 1785. They settled for the most part in Antigonish County and Cape Breton. Among the first arrivals was a great-hearted Highlander named MacDonald. He had built up a comfortable home before the full tide of immigration came in. His kindness to his fellow-countrymen on their arrival was proverbial. In one winter alone, no fewer than nine newly married couples among the immigrants were given big weddings at his house. One event of this kind would give much trouble and expense, for it meant entertaining the whole countryside with the best of everything that could be procured. Nine such events must have taxed even Highland hospitality.¹⁹

If indeed they were the same MacDonalds that Angus MacArthur stayed with upon his arrival in the mid-eighteen hundreds, then their hospitality was no less than in the early days. Although Angus MacArthur did not settle there permanently, as his grandson said, he nonetheless gained from his several years of living there:

He married my grandmother, Sarah MacDonald, you know, from [the family of] Alexander MacDonald that came out years before that.

[C867, 71-48]

¹⁹ Mary L. Fraser, Folklore of Nova Scotia, (n.p., n.d.), p. 8.

For several years, they lived in Cape Breton where they had a large family; and Lewis MacArthur, the father of Allen, was one of their sons.

Living in Cape Breton, they were still no nearer to land-ownership, and Nova Scotia was in the midst of its lengthy pre-confederation debate. The fact that any slim chance that might have existed for them to own land seemed to be threatened all the more by the prospect of Nova Scotia joining confederation led to their decision to leave.

Several Scots families had already made the decision to move to Newfoundland by this time. Allan MacArthur dates the MacArthur family move as being a few years after the migration of his mother's people, the MacIsaacs, who came to Newfoundland in 1854. The children and grandchildren of these families must have heard many times the account of why their people settled in Newfoundland:

They started moving from Cape Breton on account of the hard rules and everything else--Cape Breton was a poor country too, but they were under confederation rules and that was bad rules at that time; but the prices [this probably refers to the prices which were paid to farm workers for their cattle and produce] was so small, and the land, well in confederation rules you don't own the land, you don't own the house, you don't own the furniture, you own nothing if you don't pay the taxes. Well, that's the rule. (But we got confederation since 1949, but we haven't got the bad rules of confederation that Cape Breton used to have.) And they couldn't live under it. And those people, a lot of them left that settled from Scotland out to Cape Breton, and they lived there for a good many years, some of them not too long, probably ten, fifteen years, and they heard of Newfoundland, you

see. Well Newfoundland was a free country for anybody. And it was the Responsible Rules that we had. Well, the Responsible Government it didn't start the first starting of the people settling in Newfoundland, but it started years after. But...probably eighty years ago or a hundred years ago you could come to Newfoundland and you could take up two, three, four hundred acres and you owned that. You owned that and there was no tax, there was nothing to pay; it was yours. And you could work on the farm and make your own living but you had to do everything.

[C868, 71-48]

Allan MacArthur's mother's maiden name was Jessie Mac-Isaac. Her father was from Moidart and her mother from Glengarry, both places in Inverness-shire, in the Highlands of Scotland, which were once entirely Gaelic speaking. The family emigrated to the New World about 1844 when Jessie was a very young child. Whether or not her account of their voyage across the Atlantic and their landing in Nova Scotia can be attributed to her actual memory as a four-year-old child is of little importance; her parents probably spoke of it often enough to refresh any memories she had of their emigration from Scotland, and she in turn passed it on to her own children:

You can leave an t-Eilean Sgiathanach today and back home again tomorrow...but when my people came out, the McIsaacs, it took them seven weeks on the boat from the time..bho'n deach iad air bata ann an Tobermhoraidh, agus...landed on the Gut o' Canso. Nuar a' chunnaic mo Sheanair 's mo Sheanamhair an t-ait, nam biodh long a dol a dh'Alba air ais cha tigeadh iad air tìr, ach bha 'm bata dol do dh'Australia, agus...they would never have landed if the boat was going back to Scotland.

[C882, 71-48]

Since the Gaelic was the language in which his mother narrated all her stories of their history and legend to her family, it was natural for Allan to revert to his mother tongue while re-telling this. Re-written entirely in English, the passage would read as follows:

You can leave the Isle of Skye today and be home again tomorrow...but when my people came out, the MacIsaacs, it took them seven weeks on the boat from the time...from the time they went on the boat in Tobermory, and...landed on the Gut o' Canso. When my grandfather and grandmother saw the place, if the boat had been going back to Scotland they wouldn't have landed; but the boat was going to Australia, and...they would have never have landed if the boat was going back to Scotland.

Allan MacArthur added that at one time he attempted to find out in Nova Scotia the name of the boat on which his forebears came, but he was unable to do so. This, he said, was because their boat had left Scotland after most of the immigrant boats, and the record of its sailing was not along with those of other immigrant lists of boats and their passengers who sailed from Scotland to Nova Scotia.

The McIsaac family settled in Inverness, Cape Breton where they farmed along with other Scottish immigrants. For several years, they made their home there although they owned no land:

They lived ten years down in Inverness, in Cape Breton, and then they got burnt out, you know, lost everything they took from Scotland; then they moved to Newfoundland.

[C607, 69-37]

It was on account of the hardships they met with in Cape Breton that the Scots left and migrated to Newfoundland, but it was not hard work which deterred them. If they endured that in Cape Breton, they were required to do so all the more in Newfoundland. The most important thing was that they could at last own land. In order to be able to work the land, they were required to clear large areas of timber as the Codroy Valley was heavily wooded. The Scots were the first people to come to Newfoundland for the sole purpose of farming, as most of those who came before them did so for the fish, the timber, and the fur of the Island.

When the Scots immigrants such as the MacArthurs and the McIsaacs came to Newfoundland in the 1850's, the Codroy Valley was nothing like it is today:

After they came to Newfoundland...there was nothing ahead of them, only the forest and the river and the brooks. There were no roads, no post office, no stores, no church, no nothing like that--no mail, no mail at all; you wouldn't get the mail at all probably for six months, and that would have to be brought from in St. George's with a dog team over the hills, and no guides, only old marks, you see, for to follow over the mountains. That's the way they lived.

[C868, 71-48]

They thought it was a wild place to live in.

[C607, 69-37]

Each member of the family had to help in setting up the family home when they arrived in Newfoundland. They came up to a place where there was not even a hut for them to shelter

the night they arrived. The McIsaac family spent the first few nights under the shelter of a large tree until they had built their first dwelling:

The first three days they spent...and they had a lot of children, brothers, and sisters, and they lived under a great big tree up there where Hughie McIsaac lives, (where his father lived). And then they start building a camp (sic), you know, kind of a shed for to shelter themselves. And the girls, there were quite a lot of girls in the family, and boys too...well, the boys and their father went out fishing, you see, for to get fish, and the old woman, the mother, and the girls they start building the camp. And according as they put up the logs, you see, the girls was in the woods picking up moss, you see, for to cork [sic, caulk] you see, the logs between to make it warm, you see, like if you were building a ship or a boat, you'd have to use oakum, and you'd have to use this marline rope and everything. And they were three days and then they built that house, and they lived in it.

[C867, 71-48; This account is also described by Allan MacArthur's son, Frank, on C878, 71-48]

While it would be difficult to find a tree in the Valley today that would be large enough to camp under, it is obvious from the size of the floor planks in some of the old houses which remain that the size of the first growth timbers must have been huge.

Land clearing was heavy work. The new settlers cut down the large timber, and much of this wood they used in the building of their homes. They then had to dig out the deep roots and burn them in order to prepare the land for cultivation. The entire family shared in the work of preparing and planting the "burnt ground". When describing the work done by the people of the Valley, Allan MacArthur had special regard

for the diligence of the women, not only in the earliest days but also during his own childhood and earlier adulthood:

When the babies would be about three weeks old, and she'd go out in the burnt ground, she'd make a little place for the baby along side of a stump, and cover him up after feeding him, and she'd go on planting potatoes. You won't find women today who would do that.

[C882, 71-48]

It was an accepted fact that the women bore the greatest burden as far as work was concerned. For several generations after the first settlers arrived in the Valley, this was the case. One of Allan MacArthur's sons, Frankie MacArthur, spoke of how difficult it was for the early settlers in the Valley, who, he said "had it pretty tough":

...and especially the women; it was the custom, as far as I know, especially with Scottish people here, you know, Scottish men, you know, they expect an awful lot of their women. They expect them to do an awful lot of work. The men took it much easier than the women. I had an uncle, he told me one time, he said that when a man got married one time, he said, the first thing he got was a woman, then he got a hoe for her, then he had it all to himself. If you got a woman and a hoe, you made your living then.

[C882, 71-48]

In spite of the fact that living in Newfoundland presented many hardships to those who came, they were nevertheless happy with their new land. They were relieved to know that at least they would never be short of the things they had lacked in Cape Breton and Scotland before that:

That's what they met in Newfoundland, but they were glad because they were clear of confederation rules.

We had a free country here; you could do what you liked. You could claim land, and catch fish, and catch game. The wild game was plenty all around, you know, like caribous and salmon and trout and eels and rabbits and the other kind we call the hare rabbits [Arctic hare]--they was twice as big as the normal ones...You'd never starve because the woods was full of wild game.

[C867, 71-48]

Apart from the fact that every family which settled in the Codroy Valley had to work hard as a unit to establish the individual homesteads, there was another important aspect of settlement which cannot be ignored when describing the shaping of the Codroy Valley: that is, the development of the entire Valley itself, as opposed to the numerous family units within the Valley.

Family traditions, such as the Scottish Gaelic or French traditions, tend to be best preserved by the actual families involved. On the other hand, there were a few incomers to the Valley who were able to look at the area from a wider angle, thus taking in a larger, overall picture of the interaction between the various groups living there. These particular incomers also differed from the other immigrants in that their purpose of coming was not to obtain land to set up a family homestead but to provide certain necessities to the lives of those who did. Most of these particular people were Roman Catholic priests, and fortunately a few of their interesting observations have been preserved in writing.

Today, the people of the Codroy Valley are very much

aware of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church has been the greatest driving force behind most of the development of their area. Their influence was not upon who settled in the Valley, or where or when; it was rather in working for better living conditions for all the settlers. They aimed to obtain for the residents what they considered to be essential to the lives of the people: namely, someone to administer to their spiritual needs, a means of educating the children, and a program of road construction to alleviate some of the problems of isolations.

The work of the Roman Catholic Church was harrassed by several difficulties, as Thomas Sears said, the "greatest draw-back being the want of roads or other means of communication".

To describe the annoyance and inconvenience arising from this defect...just imagine three thousand souls dispersed over some eight or nine hundred miles of sea-coast--(it will take that distance when we compute the various indentations of our bays over which the messenger of the Gospel must pass)...It is easy to conceive what obstructions this isolation casts in the way of administering to spiritual wants, and the hardships of the missionary in undertaking such journeys, journeys which for him will never end, with no road, but the trackless forest, the sea-beaten land-wash, or the still more unpleasant alternative of going either in an open boat or a cranky fishing skiff along this whole coast.²⁰

Soon after his arrival on the West Coast of Newfoundland in 1850, Fr. Alexis Belanger realized that he was faced with a language problem in the Codroy Valley area. Fr. Belanger

²⁰ Thomas Sears, Report of the Missions Prefecture Apostolic Western Newfoundland. (n.p., 1877), pp. 21-22.

wrote his records in his native French and was able to administer to the needs of all those who spoke English and French since he was bi-lingual. However, this was not sufficient to meet the needs of all the people in his district:

The settlers who had come in from Inverness, Cape Breton, almost without exception used the Gaelic language as the language of the home. Though many of them had a passing knowledge of English, they had not sufficient command of it to make their confessions with facility and to their own satisfaction.

[Brosnan, Pioneer History, p. 15]

Fr. Belanger attempted to secure a "yearly visit from a priest versed in the silver speech of the Gael, the mother tongue of so many of his people." He was successful in doing this in the years 1866, 1867, and 1868, when the Gaelic-speaking priests Fathers Shaw, Chisholm, and Fraser visited the Valley. [Brosnan, p. 15]

Most memorable of the early priests was Father (later Monsignor) Thomas Sears who, in 1868, became the first resident priest of the Parish of St. George's. He remained there till his death in 1885. Thomas Sears, who was born in County Kerry, Ireland in 1824, emigrated to America with his parents at the age of eight. They settled in Nova Scotia where this Irish Gael gained experience of the Scottish Gaelic of Cape Breton.

A number of weeks after his arrival in Newfoundland, Father Sears wrote down his impressions of the Codroy Valley in a letter to the Bishop of St. John's, the Right Reverend

J.T. Mullock, D.D. Written twenty-four years after the arrival of the first Scots, it seems to be the earliest detailed description of the Codroy Valley, along with his views on its development and potential:

This seems to me to be a very important portion of the grand Island of Newfoundland. This Bay, with its tributary rivers, as well as several other localities along this coast, affords better inducement--at least in my estimation--than the United States to the fishermen of St. John's and other places who are emigrating. In this Bay alone there are now as many vessels at anchor as will require, it is estimated, 70,000 (seventy thousand) barrels of herring to load them; still, although herring did not strike in till after the 22nd of this month [November, 1868] such is the quantity taken the last five or six days, that they are all in hope of getting fair cargoes. They tell me that the Codfish is quite plentiful in the Bay if they could attend to it. There is another advantage, I perceive, that this Bay enjoys, and that is the fertility of its soil, and the magnificent forests which line the Bays and rivers especially. It seems that there is no land superior to this for the cultivation of green crops and hay; potatoes grow as well as in any part of North America; oats and barley, of course, will do as well; cabbage can be produced in abundance. There have been two saw-mills erected here lately; one will be in operation in a few days; it is constructed on the most improved principle and will drive as many saws as will saw the largest pine log in a pass. The pine is of enormous size, as large as any I ever saw in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, and farmers who came here from Prince Edward Island, say that the land is far superior here in point of fertility to that of the Island. Add to this the fact of this Bay having--as it is calculated--always been the winter resort of all the Labrador herring, which swarm along the coast, and which can be taken in the dead of winter as well as in summer, when people are idle in all the other harbors of our fishing coast. I am very much mistaken then if this Bay does not hold out an inducement to the poor fishermen who have to leave other parts of this Island, superior to the most glittering prospects held out by Gloucester or any other

fishing districts in the United States, with this great difference, that while in the latter places the fishermen are exposed to such, and so many dangers, that numbers of valuable lives are yearly lost, in this River the fisherman is as safe while catching his fish, as he is while sitting in his house in the bosom of his family.

[Published in The Newfoundlander, No. 6554, St. John's, December 18, 1868.]

In the book which he wrote later, Sears noted that "the inhabitants of the Codroy Valley are principally of Highland Scotch origin with a sprinkling of Acadians and a few Irish." [Sears, Report of the Missions, p. 28.] The Irish people settled mainly on the north bank of the Grand Codroy River, in the place which is now known as O'Regan's, while the English, Scottish, and French settlers also seem to have settled in ethnic groups, each one choosing an area that would not interfere with the Micmacs who had already settled on Indian Hill. According to Jukes, there was harmony among the different nationalities in the Valley:

They all of all nations seem to live comfortably and peaceably together; and the only want I heard expressed was a wish for the establishment of schools in St. George's Bay.

[Jukes, Excursions, Vol. I, p. 12.]

During his sixteen years in the large parish of St. George's, Monsignor Sears travelled to all areas of settlement along the eighty-mile stretch of land, although he located the priest's residence at the southernmost part, in the Codroy Valley. He spent his time in untiring activity in an effort to stir the government, church, and people of Newfoundland

into an awareness of the needs of the region which had, up until this time, been neglected.

By the time Monsignor Sears had arrived, the Scottish population had increased to a number considerably more than the few immigrants who came in 1844. Of them, he wrote:

There is not a race that ever were blessed with a knowledge of God's Church more steadfast than the Catholic Highlanders. There are about sixty families of this class.

[From Brosnan, p. 78]

Monsignor Sears left in his records and letters substantial evidence of what his parish was like and of his aspirations to better the living conditions there; fortunately, Brosnan had access to his writings. Sears was very much aware of the natural resources and advantages of the Codroy Valley, but was equally aware of the needs:

It would be most desirable that the Government of St. John's should do something towards establishing some sort of civil authority, and something for the cause of education on this coast. Another great want is felt here--there are no roads, not even pathways.

[From Sears' letter to Rev. J.T. Mullock, published in The Newfoundlander]

As far as obtaining favourable consideration from the Newfoundland government was concerned, the Codroy Valley was in these days in a politically uncomfortable position. It was part of that controversial territory known as the French Shore, so-called because the French held the fishing rights on this coast from 1713 to 1904. The French Shore at that

time extended from Cape St. John to the Strait of Belle Isle. [Brosnan, p. 70] Although the residents were taxed like other Newfoundlanders, they had no representatives in the House of Assembly. Consequently, they did not receive the same consideration for improvement and development equal to other areas of Newfoundland. In 1881, Sir Frederick Carter, K.C.M.G. who was Chief Justice of Newfoundland, announced in his speech from the throne that the government was authorized to make grants of land on the French Shore and that the residents were to elect two representatives to the House of Assembly. [To date, unfortunately, I have been unable to find an account in the House of Assembly Journals of the procedure carried out for this election or the names of those elected. There are, however, numerous references to the district in which the Codroy Valley was represented, along with reports of petitions made to the government and the progress made in the area.]

It took Monsignor Sears thirteen years of working in the Valley before his plans for road-building began to come to fruition. When the state of taxation without representation ceased to exist along the French Shore, several petitions for road-building on the West Coast were put forward on behalf of the people by their representatives in the House of Assembly, many of which are recorded in the Journals. This resulted in their receiving government assistance to allow them to commence work on the roads which Monsignor Sears had planned; his two main aims were to set up lines of communication be-

tween the Codroy Valley and Port aux Basques, Corner Brook, and St. John's, and to link the outlying settlements within the Valley itself. [Brosnan, p. 72]

In a report on "Survey of Lands in the Codroy Valley", 1883, by James P. Howley, the author stated that he was impressed by the hard work of the people of the Codroy Valley:

My experience of the past season convinces me more than ever that the proper class of settlers of our wild lands, and the only persons who will succeed in turning them to account, are those whose position in life of necessity compels them to labour hard with the sweat of their brows, till by dint of the most persevering toil, they succeed in laying the foundation of comfort and prosperity; if not for themselves, at least for their posterity. Of such a class as this the hardy Cape Breton Hylanders and Acadian French, who for the most part occupy the lands of the Codroys, are a splendid example.

[House of Assembly Journal, 1884, Appendix, p. 512]

From all accounts, it is evident that Monsignor Sears possessed remarkable ability in organizing and encouraging the local people to participate in the projects which were essential to the improvement of the area. Brosnan gave this account:

[Monsignor Sears] taught them and insisted on their learning the lesson that they should also help themselves and each other. His was to educate the people, not to nurse them.

Another means by which he gained two good ends at the one time was by asking for free labor, not alone for the erection of churches and schools and presbyteries, but even for public works such as road-building. His activities in this sphere were successful and won for himself, his people and the fruits of their activities this notable encomium on the floor of the House of Assembly:

'We have marked instances of the superiority of the road labor in that part of the country (Codroy Valley) as compared with other portions. I

have no hesitation in saying that the superiority and management is due entirely to the controlling genius of the one who has proved himself the guardian angel, as it were, of that part of the country since he has gone there. I refer to Monsignor Sears. So heartily are the people there alive to the development of their large agriculture resources, that they have come forward manfully and subjected themselves to statute labor in order to open up new roads and keep the others in repair. This is a condition of affairs not realized in any other district of the Colony.' (Mr. Boone in the House of Assembly, April 19, 1884).

[Brosnan, p. 76. The 1884 Journal of the House of Assembly which is contained in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Memorial University of Newfoundland, does not contain this speech.]

Besides the giving of free labour, there was also the practice of "fishing for the church" which was organized by Monsignor Sears. This involved the donation of the proceeds of an entire day's fishing to the credit of the priest; in this way he accumulated funds for the building of a church. This same idea was also applied to those who were involved in winter wood-cutting, until there was enough money to commence building. They did not operate on the loan system which is common today.

When Monsignor Sears died in 1885, there were schools and churches throughout the Diocese of St. George's, there was a mail service to the area, the telegraph system extended from east to west, and "every important part of the fertile Valley, 'the Garden of Newfoundland', was penetrated with roads." [Brosnan, p. 78] By the year 1897, the railway line from St. John's to Port aux Basques, which passes through the

Codroy Valley, was completed.

In the years that followed Monsignor Sears' death in 1885, several of the priests were very influential men in the Valley. Among them was Monsignor Andrew Sears, a cousin of the first Monsignor Sears. He was in the Codroy Valley from the early 1900's till his death in 1944. The older inhabitants of the Valley often reminisce about the days when Monsignor Andrew Sears was priest. Although it is less than thirty years since his death, many things have changed in the Valley; at times when they consider some of the ideas held by today's young people, the older folk seem to think things might have been different had Monsignor Sears still been there.

Monsignor Andrew Sears was responsible for dividing the Parish of St. Anne's into sections bearing the names of the present villages. He encouraged the residents of each section to take an interest of the affairs of their own section. During his term in the parish, a school was built in each section, and Monsignor Sears planned a church for each. The latter plan was not put into effect, and instead church services were centralized at two Roman Catholic churches; one at Searston at the mouth of the Grand Codroy River and one at St. Andrews at the mouth of the Little Codroy River.

The Roman Catholic church continues to be of great influence in the area. Today the individual schools have been centralized to one combined elementary and high school at

Upper Ferry. The success of this is largely attributed to Father R. White who was parish priest at the time of conducting field work for this study. He continually organized means of raising funds for this school. The section of the Trans Canada Highway from Port aux Basques to the Codroy Valley was paved in 1966; and in 1970, work began on paving the roads within the Valley.

Today's visitor to the Codroy Valley will still be able to encounter people who are conscious of their ethnic background, be it English, Scottish, Irish, French, or a combination of these nationalities. The Micmac Indians no longer inhabit the Valley as the last of them died from tuberculosis or left for Cape Breton in the 1930's during Newfoundland's economic depression. There are, however, a few people who, through intermarriage, have partly Micmac ancestry.

All the inhabitants of the Valley are now English speaking, though there are several people who also speak Gaelic or French. Unfortunately, however, neither of these languages has been passed on to the youngest generation in the Valley today. One reason given for this is that intermarriage between different ethnic groups has been more common during the past twenty years than it was in the preceding years.

There still remains, however, strong ethnic traditions among the Codroy Valley people which are especially noticeable among the older inhabitants. The culture of the Scottish

Gaels is only part of what makes up the complete picture of the Codroy Valley, and there is inevitably much overlapping across ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, there is still much that has always been peculiar to the Scottish Gaels, and it is these traditions, along with several more that cut across the other ethnic groups, which will be represented here.

CHAPTER V

ALLAN MACARTHUR: HIS LIFE AND PERSONALITY

Since the rest of this study deals largely with the material told to me by Allan MacArthur, it is appropriate here to present a biographical summary which may be helpful in setting this material in its context, and to comment in some detail on his personality.

Most of the life history which follows has been compiled from information supplied to me by Allan MacArthur himself. Since he did not systematically relate his own life history, I have tried to piece together the accounts he gave of different aspects of his life. Sometimes he spoke on different days about the same topic and sometimes he made additional comments on a topic previously discussed on a given day. Often, I did not record what he said, and it is therefore not possible to quote his exact words. The information about these occasions is therefore gleaned from the notes written down immediately after I visited him and additional details have sometimes been added from my own memory.

Much of this account will be straightforward quotation of Allan MacArthur's own words because it is through them that much of his character is revealed. In print, however, these words can give only a pale reflection of his personality,

while to me they bring back the tone of his voice, his gestures, his vocal expression, and his gentle old face with its expressive eyes twinkling in excitement as he reminisced. I can only hope that the words will indicate some of his wit, his use of understatement, his love for detail and for adding short anecdotes or small additional pieces of information to keep his listeners engrossed during an entire conversation. As far as his actual style of speaking is concerned, it will undoubtedly be noticed that he is often hesitant and frequently corrects himself. The first of these traits is probably due to the fact that he is not speaking in his mother tongue, and the second shows one of his most outstanding characteristics, namely, his constant concern for accuracy and completeness.

In order to complete Allan MacArthur's life history, I consulted the Records of St. Anne's Parish, held in the priest's house at Searston, for the dates of births, marriages, and deaths that I had not already requested from Allan himself.¹ This was necessary especially for information on some of the

¹ The day after Mrs. MacArthur died, two of her sons showed me a notebook in which she had kept a record of dates of births, deaths, and marriages along with other important events which took place in the Valley during her lifetime. I was quite surprised to realize that she had recorded so much written information, and it brought to mind the fact that I had asked her if her husband ever kept a diary. She told me that he did not but made no mention of the fact that she herself kept her notebook of important events. It was, of course, immediately obvious to me that I had not asked her if she kept any written records but had unquestionably assumed, just as her family and the rest of the people in the Valley did, that her husband was the historian and that she, like the rest of us, admired him and looked upon him as the authority on events of the past.

sadder episodes in his life, as Allan MacArthur hardly spoke of his own personal tragedies; in fact, he supplied barely adequate information to give any picture at all. The comments on his personality which follow the life history are mostly from his own children, in some cases made only after his death. A few of the comments are gathered from the reactions of friends, and some from my own observation. Other aspects of his personality will reveal themselves elsewhere in his study, especially in Chapters VI and VII.

Before dealing with the life history itself, I would like to portray the man in his own home setting as I saw him while he related to me the various aspects of his culture on my many visits to the MacArthur home. [Plates VIII and IX]

The Allan MacArthur I knew, although in his late eighties, was extremely mentally alert. He was interested in all that went on around him and loved to have someone who enjoyed talking with him about history, politics, current affairs, music, or simply the weather. He had a way of turning even a conversation about the weather into a topic of historical interest, like the time he compared today's climate to that of his youth, when, he said, they could start plowing in April, as the winters then, though much colder, ended sooner, and the summers were hotter and longer. Today, he added, they have to wait till June to plow. He philosophised on that occasion that the earthquake of November 18, 1929 had an effect on the climate. "It was never the same after," he said, for even the "eel grass" that used to grow in the river disappeared completely and was



Plate VIII

Allan MacArthur in the early 1960's.

(From Mrs. MacArthur's photograph album.)



Plate IX

Allan and Mary MacArthur, 1947.

(From a framed picture in the MacArthur's sitting room.)

never seen for seven or eight years afterwards. [Field notebook, July 25, 1970] Out of his ability to expand on simple topics such as these came much information which, otherwise, I probably would not have collected.

In his old age, Allan MacArthur had time to enjoy discussions and conversations for he had finally handed over the work of his farm to his sons. Whenever I went into his house, he would usually be found reading, talking, or working at some small task, sitting in "his own chair", a wooden armchair that a friend had made for his birthday many years earlier, which was always at the head of the big kitchen table. If the weather was particularly hot, he would move to the sitting room away from the oil and wood stove that burned daily, regardless of the season. Occasionally, I would find him out taking a walk in his garden of fruit bushes or around the barn or woodpile. Sometimes he simply sat outside his house on a wooden bench in the shade, looking over MacArthur Island where his cattle sometimes grazed, to the north bank of the river and all around him, taking in the comings and goings of the Valley. It was in these various settings, then, and occasionally when we went out visiting together, that he told me all the information contained here.

As was mentioned in Chapter IV, Allan MacArthur's mother (nee Jessie MacIsaac, and sometimes called Jeannie) came from Scotland to Cape Breton as a very young child, while his father, Lewis MacArthur, was born in Cape Breton of Scottish parents. They were later part of the migration from Cape Breton to the

Codroy Valley where their people claimed several hundred acres of land to be cleared for farming. After their marriage, Lewis and Jessie MacArthur settled on the south bank of the Grand River, as it was called in those early days, taking up the island now known as MacArthur's Island and the land along the bank opposite it which stretched back into the woods. [See aerial photograph, p. 31] There they earned their living like the rest of the settlers who had claimed land, clearing more of it each year for cultivation, and supplementing their livelihood with some fishing and hunting.

Allan MacArthur, son of Lewis and Jessie MacArthur, was born in the Codroy Valley on May 12, 1884 in the settlement once known as MacDale. The location of his birthplace is now part of the section of Upper Ferry, and the name MacDale is forgotten by most or has never been known to any but the old people. According to Mrs. Allan MacArthur, MacDale was so-called because of the fact that the land there was taken up by a closely-knit group of Scottish settlers, mostly MacArthurs and MacIsaacs, who made their homesteads there. MacDale ceased to be known by that name when the small Post Office, once operated in the MacArthur's home, went out of use.

By today's standards, most people would consider that Lewis and Jessie MacArthur's family was a large one. Allan recalled that: "There was only fourteen in the family--that's all; there was ten brothers and four sisters." [C882, 71-48] Life was not easy in these early days, and the Parish Records show

numerous deaths due to diphtheria in the 1880's. Several of the MacArthurs' fourteen children died in infancy or childhood, and of those who survived, four were older than Allan and four were younger. The earliest episode in his life which Allan related was that he himself almost died of diphtheria when he was only two years old. Were it not for his sister, Margaret, "who thought so much of him", and who saved him from choking, then he would never have lived to retell his family history and the Scottish traditions of the Valley. As it turned out, Allan outlived all of his brothers and sisters.

The MacArthur family, like all the Codroy Valley Scots of the early days, was entirely Gaelic speaking. The children in those days knew a different kind of life to that of children today. Allan MacArthur told me about when he first started school:

I was nine years old, and I couldn't understand a word of English then, couldn't understand a word of English. I'd know "yes" and "no"--that was all.

[C879, 71-48]

Just as in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in those days (and even in the 1960's) those in authority to appoint teachers gave not one thought for the fact that most of the children to be taught were Gaelic speakers. Disregarding this, they consistently appointed someone from outside the area who spoke only English, who made no attempt to learn the Gaelic, and who expected the pupils to conform immediately to the ways of the outsider. According to one teacher from the east coast of the

Province, appointments were made without even a mention that the children they were to teach could not speak English--but children adapt easily and will soon learn a new language. This must have been the earliest death-blow dealt to the Gaelic language in the Codroy Valley, for there was no Trans-Canada Highway in those days that could be blamed for bringing the compromise. Allan recalled the first year he went to school, around 1893:

Oh, the teachers at that time, they were from what we call Corner Brook, or Bay of Islands.² It was a woman teacher, the first one I went to, Mrs. MacIsaac; she was married to John MacIsaac who died. Her [maiden] name was--well we used to call her Miss Kenny. Kenny was her name.

[C879, 71-48]

When he was asked if she had the Gaelic, Allan replied: "No, no. She was Irish; she couldn't understand it." He went on to describe the early school in greater detail:

The school at that time was at Upper Ferry--the school that I went to, it was tore down years ago; I guess it was tore down around 1912 [when a new school was built in the same place]. The other one [the old school which Allan MacArthur attended] was only small, it might have been twenty-four feet long, or something like that, and perhaps twenty feet wide, no more. No, it wasn't twenty feet wide--it might have made sixteen. But there was no families then, there was no big families. It wasn't ten months of school like it is now; it was only in the winter time and late in the fall that they'd have school. Well, you'd have to be working in the summer-time,

² On first hearing the words "what we call Corner Brook or Bay of Islands" I was under the impression that Allan MacArthur thought that I had never heard of the well-known west coast town of Corner Brook. Later, I realized that this was only another example of his desire to be accurate, for in those days there was no place in the Bay of Islands called Corner Brook, as that town only came into existence in 1923.

planting and weeding, and hay-making, and jiggling, and everything like that. Well, the children had to work, too; when you'd be eight or ten years of age, you'd have to be out working...Oh, I think I quit going to school when I was around fifteen, I think. I didn't go to school very much; I had to work. I was only around fifteen when I start out working.

[C879, 71-48]

From the time he started working on his own at the age of fifteen, Allan MacArthur worked at various occupations and in several different places. During the first nine or ten of these years, he said he worked in the area of the Valley. Much of this time was spent on his father's farm; and for part of the time, he worked on the railroad.

Allan recalled the time when, "around the age of twenty-four or twenty-five", he left Newfoundland and went to Cape Breton where he worked in the mines at Glace Bay. Here is his own account of his years spent outside of Newfoundland.

I worked over in Cape Breton, I worked in the mines and I worked on construction work, among all the mines in Cape Breton--well, not all of them; only in Glace Bay, and out in...not out in Waterford or those places; there was no mines in my time in Waterford. They were starting the road to start a mine in Waterford--that would be in 1907, around there.

And from Cape Breton, I went to Bangor [Maine] and from Bangor, I went to Ellsworth, and from Ellsworth out to Bay Harbout Island--nine miles out to sea, you know, from Ellsworth. I was working on the nursery there--a nursery of plants, you see, out in Bar Harbour Island. That was in 1908.

Oh yes, I liked it, it was really fine. And we used to...well, it was a nursery of plants, and in the fall of the year we used to dig trees, well Christmas trees, and they used to ship them to New York and Philadelphia and all those places for Christmas trees. We'd be digging them, the trees probably

would be...oh, around seven or eight years old, or something like that, and we had to dig the, you know, with the lifter, and we'd have burlap and put it on the ground, and then get wet moss and put it there, and then lay the tree on that, and they'd gather this around and tie it with marline, you see. One year we lifted fourteen hundred trees, and they were shipped out like that. Oh, it was all right...and we'd have to go out to a place called Picket Mountain--that was three miles from the nursery--with a horse and a...well, two horses and a...kind of trailer, like, and the woods were so far apart you could drive the horses through the woods everywhere. And the leaves used to be about, oh, about a foot thick or more, and we used to be raking up the leaves and make up the road, and then the teams (?) would take that out to the nurseries, you know, packing it away, you know, those plants that they'd be shipping. So, I think it was in the fall, in November--no! in December, I think it was in 1909, I left and came home, and I stayed home ever since. Well, my father took sick then, and there was no...the boys were gone and I stayed home with my father and mother. That's what happened.

[C879, 71-48]

A few months after Allan came home, his father died. According to the church records, Lewis MacArthur, age seventy, born in Cape Breton, died of Cancer on April 3, 1910. As far as I could see while looking through the records, this was one of the earliest deaths recorded with the cause of death attributed to that disease.

On February 12, 1913, Allan MacArthur, then twenty-eight years old, married Cecilia MacNeil, age seventeen, also of Upper Ferry. Mr. MacArthur spoke only very briefly and quietly of his first marriage which ended in the death of his young wife only seven years later. Allan and Cecilia MacArthur had

four children, namely, Lewis, James (Jim), Loretta, and Francis (Frank). Only a few months after Frank was born in 1921, Cecilia died at the age of twenty-four. A friend of the family said that she did not have the necessary medical attention after her baby was born and infection was left unattended, thus resulting in her early death.

As a young child, their eldest son, Lewis, was found to be suffering from tuberculosis of the bone in one of his legs. His father took him to see doctors in Port aux Basques and North Sidney, but little could be done for him. On the advice of a doctor, his father spent much time encouraging Lewis to perform prescribed exercises, but he spent the rest of his life crippled from this condition. Nevertheless, his brothers remember Lewis, "a big man", as being tremendously strong both physically and mentally. After a period of severe suffering from his ailment, he died in 1963 at the age of 50.

The only daughter of Allan's marriage to Cecilia MacNeil was Loretta MacArthur who married Bernard MacNeil in 1941 when she was twenty-two years old. Very tragically this marriage came to an end in the same way as her parents, Allan's and Cecilia's had. Loretta grew steadily weaker after the birth of her youngest child, and she died a few months later at the age of twenty-seven, also as a result of an infection which was not diagnosed early enough to administer the necessary medical treatment.

Allan MacArthur married again when he was thirty-nine

years old. The Parish Records note that he married Mary MacDonald, age twenty-seven, of Little River [later St. Andrews] on May 22, 1923. The following year in June, a son, Gerard, was born, but he died at the age of two months of unknown causes. Looking through the records for the last half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, it is very noticeable that there were many infant and childhood deaths and indeed frequent deaths of young people in general. In those days, illnesses such as diphtheria, whooping cough, pneumonia, and even influenza and gastric complaints often proved fatal, as medical facilities were minimal. Those diseases which could not be controlled by local traditional methods were consequently left untreated, resulting in so many early deaths.

Mary and Allan MacArthur had seven other children; beginning with the eldest, they were Martin, Margaret, John, George, Dan, Sears, and Gordon. Unfortunately, this second family was not without tragedy either, for in 1964, the youngest son, Gordon, died at the age of twenty-four as a result of a car accident. I have heard many friends and relatives of Allan MacArthur's remark that "the old man was never the same" after this loss.

From the time he returned to Newfoundland in 1909, Allan MacArthur lived in his parent's house in MacDale [Upper Ferry] and until her death in 1931, his mother lived there also. [Plate X] She looked after the young children from her son's



Plate X

The MacArthur home in the 1920's. Left to right: Mrs. Jessie MacArthur, her son Allan, and an unidentified neighbour.

(From Mrs. MacArthur's photograph album.)

first marriage after their mother died. Later, when Allan married again, his wife, Mary, assumed the role of mother to the four children. The attitude of her step-children to Mary MacArthur was that of love and respect. One of her step-sons, Frank, considered that he could have chosen no better himself.

We were lucky, you know, when the second time father got married. Now lots of times, well, the step-mother, well, she usually don't think too much of the other kids, but we were lucky that way.

[C878, 71-48]

Frank's wife added the comment that "anyone who wouldn't get along with Mrs. MacArthur wouldn't get along with himself."

Although they had seven children of their own, Allan and Mary MacArthur added to their family another child, the eighteen-month old daughter of Loretta. Mrs. MacArthur noted in her notebook of important events only five days prior to Loretta's death: "We took Cecilia, January 12th, 1949."

After his father's death in 1910, Allan took over the farm, but farming was not his sole occupation. It was rather the responsibility of the entire family. Like most of the able bodied men in the area, Allan MacArthur worked for many years on construction work, notably on road building in the area and on Newfoundland's longest concrete bridge, spanning the Grand Codroy River and which, as he proudly told me, was 1144 feet long and was completed in 1926. [Plate XI] During these years, the farm provided most of their food while the construction work provided cash.

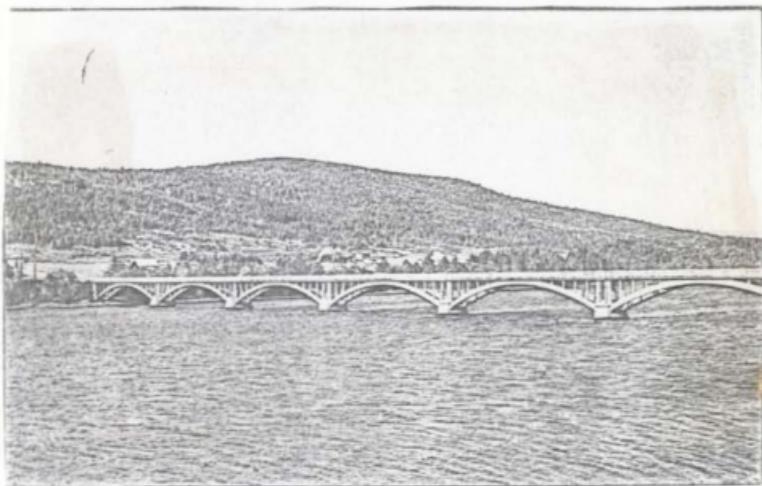


Plate XI

Newfoundland's longest concrete bridge, spanning the Grand Codroy River.

For about thirty years, he also worked as a sporting guide every summer during the salmon fishing season and every autumn during the moose and caribou hunting season. Some years he worked as cook in the sporting camps up the Grand Codroy River, some more years he guided the sportsmen, and at times he did both. He was said to have known the river and the woods like the back of his hand; and while I do not recall him boast of any of the catches that he or the sportsmen made, I was shown several photographs by Mrs. MacArthur. Almost all were photographed beside the sporting camps, and there was one very impressive photograph of Mr. MacArthur standing beside a board on which an immense salmon was pinned. He stood smiling proudly beside the big fish which was pinned by the tail at a point level with Mr. MacArthur's ear, while the tip of its nose was level with his knees. [Plate XII] I do not recall the weights of salmon caught that were quoted to me, but I do remember that Allan MacArthur regretted that the great abundance of fish in the rivers and wildlife in the woods and mountains is almost a thing of the past in the Codroy Valley. For example, the Arctic hare, or "hare rabbit" as they were called locally, were once "plenty as flies" according to Allan, and today they are almost extinct in Newfoundland.

While the sporting season had the advantages of bringing in supplies of food along with additional income to the MacArthur family, it also placed a heavier responsibility on those at home to carry out the work of the farm during the busy



Plate XII

A salmon from the Grand Codroy River. Left: Allan MacArthur; right: the son of a visiting sportsman who was guided by Allan.

(From Mrs. MacArthur's photograph album.)

harvesting season. Allan MacArthur was a hard worker himself, and he expected the same standards of hard work from his family. From time to time, this caused resentment among his children who longed to have more leisure time for all the pleasures of childhood which they felt were denied them.

In the winter time when farm work was minimal and the sporting season was over, Allan MacArthur worked as a wood-cutter. Daily he would go into the woods to cut cord after cord of wood for Bowater's Pulp and Paper Company on the west coast of Newfoundland. At the same time, he expected his sons to cut wood at home in order to keep the house well supplied with winter fuel. His two daughters also had their share of work to do as there were endless numbers of tasks to be done in a household of fourteen people where everything they ate and everything they wore had to be made in the home. There was no place for laziness in Allan MacArthur's home and, in fact, his family wondered at times if even rest was permissible.

His children regarded Allan MacArthur as a very strict father; nevertheless, they seemed to put this down to the times in which they lived rather than to the nature of the man himself, pointing out that as times changed, he changed also. While they were children, however, there was little or no place for play, as there was always work to be done. His daughter, Margaret, recalls that their mother used to be much more understanding as far as the children were concerned. She

would permit them to play in their father's absence, and Margaret described winter days after school when they would go skating on the river just below their house; and the moment they thought they heard their father's horses and sled coming out of the woods, they would race home lest he would see them idling away their time.

As the children grew up, they considered that their father's attitudes became noticeably "more mellow". Considering, however, that when Allan MacArthur was sixty years old, his youngest child was only four years old, I would gather that this "mellowing" did not occur till his old age.

One feature which stood out in the memory of his children was the emphasis that Allan MacArthur placed on detail and perfection; this applied not only to his work and theirs also, but to everything of any interest that surrounded him. According to his daughter, Margaret, even when her father was showing her how she ought to wash the dishes, he demanded what she considered to be almost impossible--the dishes were to be rinsed over in boiling water; and when drying them, no dish was to be touched by hand, but only the clean cloth, for that was the "right way to do it". She also said that he demanded the same high standards in his wife's work, especially in preparing and serving his meals. Allan himself could bake bread and cook any kind of meal for the sportsmen in the camps, and he, in turn, expected to receive the same care and attention when in his own home.

Although Allan MacArthur's children made no comments about their father while he was still alive, many of his characteristics came through during the time I spent in his company. His feeling for detail and desire for perfection were very noticeable while I was taperecording from him, especially when he was singing. If he forgot one short verse of a long song, he felt that he had let himself down and the song besides. Sometimes, he was reluctant to sing at all when he did not have all the words; and in fact, he would not even start to tell a story that he could not remember right through. Even though I insisted that I would be interested in hearing the fragments of stories that he remembered, he was certainly not interested in making an attempt at something he knew he could not finish. He also had his own system of checking to make sure that I had followed what he was saying, for he could stop to add explanations, or to correct me if I seemed to have gained the wrong impression. If my own attention to details did not come up to Allan's standards, he would quietly teach me not to be so negligent in my collecting by refusing to repeat any songs or stories or information which I should have gathered from him in the first place. For example, I had heard him sing a song "Ho ro mo Nighean Donn Bhoideach" in 1969, but did not manage to record it, so I asked Allan to sing it the following year. He quickly replied that he had already sung it, and immediately started to sing another song which I had never heard before. He remembered very precisely what he

had already sung or told me, and that, to Allan MacArthur was ground already covered.

Almost everything around him interested Allan MacArthur. He liked to hear all the local news, as long as he was not being invited to participate in any malicious gossip. If he knew that there were strangers in the area, he seemed to have a kind of curiosity about them, for when he met them and found himself being asked all sorts of questions about the Valley, he would ask them just as many questions about the place of their origin. During the time I spent with him, Allan MacArthur did as much interviewing of me as I did of him; the only difference was that I recorded on tape and in notebook, while he recorded in his mind. Allan MacArthur had that kind of a memory. He enjoyed the anecdotes I told him, and he was especially interested in all aspects of my home country, Scotland, and particularly the Highlands and Islands. He wanted to find out about the scenery, the farming, fishing, and forestry, the history and politics, the way of life of the people, the regional differences, and the changes that had taken place over the years since his people had left in the mid-1800's.

His interest in Scotland seemed to have been from his earliest youth. When I met him first, his eyes lit up at the very mention of the country, and he said he warmly welcomed anyone from Scotland. The first questions asked were by him and were centered around Scotland. Mr. MacArthur said himself

that the very thought of Scotland made the blood rush from his feet to his head, and almost the only time I ever saw him show emotion was when he spoke of Scotland. Whenever he was given a drink of whisky or rum (and he was "fond of a wee dram") he would raise his glass and make a toast:

Scotland thy mountain,
Thy valley and fountain,
The home of the poet,
The birthplace of song.

It was not necessary for his company to be Scottish for him to say this--he would say it proudly in the company of English and French also. He considered that the work of Scottish poets was of the very highest quality:

Well, I don't think there's any country in the world that can put down Scotland for their poetry; I don't think so.

[C894, 71-48]

I asked Allan MacArthur one time if he would like to visit Scotland, and looking at me in amazement for asking such a question, he replied:

Would I like to visit Scotland! Oh, oh, would I!... My grandmother died, she didn't live very long in the Codroy Valley, she died broken-hearted for Scotland.

[C894, 71-48]

There were times when I heard Mr. MacArthur describe Ben Nevis and the Highlands of Scotland as if he himself had been there; he talked of the Battle of Culloden, the Highland Clearances, and the devastating effects they had on the Highlands and Islands. He recalled almost every description he had ever heard

or read, and continually sought after more. He had a few picture postcards he used to look at, along with an old-fashioned stereoscope which he had bought in Boston in the early 1900's. Allan did not have any large collection of books, but he greatly treasured what few he had. One of his most valued was a copy of John MacKenzie's Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach: The Beauties of Gaelic Poetry and Lives of the Highland Bards, (Halifax, 1863) which his friend, Angus MacLennan had given him before his death many years previously. It was well-worn, and had no cover, but Allan kept it well out of reach of anyone who might not give it the care and respect it deserved so that he could enjoy reading the English biographies of the Scottish Gaelic bards, and trying to recognize some of the songs that were entirely in Gaelic. This particular book, which was one of the earlier Gaelic books to be printed in Nova Scotia, was apparently very popular among the Highland Scots there who welcomed and valued it in their Gaelic-speaking families. [Dunn, Highland Settler, pp. 49-50] Presumably, Angus MacLennan originally got it on a visit to Cape Breton as there has always been considerable communication between people in the Valley and their compatriots in Cape Breton.

Allan MacArthur had the same interest in print as was typical of many Highland Scots of his generation, although he did not have the same access to books as they did. This is understandable, however, considering the fact that the Scottish

education system of the nineteenth century was one which strongly emphasized literacy in all children, while Newfoundland, being a relatively new country, did not have the same urgency towards literacy until much later. The respect that Allan had for any printed material which entered his house must have been quite unmatched, for there were many Saturdays when I watched him go through the same procedure upon the arrival of his weekly newspaper. It was the weekend edition of the "Corner Brook Western Star" which consisted of two or three sections and a "Weekend Magazine". As soon as it arrived, he would take a long darning needle with some homespun grey woolen yarn and then he would make a few large book-binder's stitches down through the centre folds of the pages to secure them. Only after he had done this would he sit down and enjoy reading it. Needless to say, no other member of the family would read it either until it had been treated in this way so as to withstand a week's wear. By the time the next weekend's paper arrived, he would have read the previous one from cover to cover.

*Allan MacArthur could not read Gaelic, but he had a few books and Cape Breton newspaper clippings which contained Gaelic songs. If he studied the words long enough he would recognize whether or not he knew a certain song, but he could not learn any new songs by this method, and he could not write down the Gaelic words of the songs he had learned orally, as the spelling and pronunciation system in Gaelic is completely

different to that in English.

I recall one afternoon when my mother was with me. Mr. MacArthur brought his old copy of Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach to her to show her a certain song. He pointed out that there were verses printed which he did not know and asked her if she would read them to him and teach him the words. I was sorry I was not able to record the session while the two of them sat down and read and repeated the words until Mr. MacArthur knew them to his own satisfaction. Even at the age of eighty-six, he said that there was always something new he wanted to learn, and I got the impression that literacy in the Gaelic language was high on his list.

It was only in the early 1960's that Gaelic ceased to be the language of the MacArthur home. Allan MacArthur said that up until that time they spoke nothing else except when they had company who could not understand Gaelic; then they would speak in English. It was obvious that Allan MacArthur regretted their change of language, as he showed when he quoted the proverb:

Mun d'thubhairt e: 'Bho'n chaill mi Ghaidhlig na
b'fhearr cha d'fhuair mi.
[As he said: Since I've lost the Gaelic, nothing
better have I found.]

[C872, 71-48]

All of his family seemed to have regrets also, their main one today being that they can no longer feel competent enough to speak in their mother tongue even if they so wished. Frank

MacArthur spoke of his family's attitude to the Gaelic. He said that as young children going to school, they became bilingual almost immediately, yet there was no question but that the older MacArthurs regarded English as the inferior language. Although the children were allowed to use both languages freely, Gaelic remained the language of the home while they "learned their lessons" in English. There was one lesson, however, that always belonged to the Gaelic, as their grandmother and father insisted that the children continue to say their bedtime prayers in Gaelic. As Frank's wife, Margaret, put it:

That's what he [Allan] thought, you know, that if the prayers were said in Gaelic they were a lot more impressive in God's sight than if you said them in English.

[C878, 71-48]

The image of Allan MacArthur as the strict father disappeared when his children described how he used to put them to bed when they were young. Frank laughed heartily as he remembered this feature of his early childhood:

I remember, I was pretty small, I guess, then, I'd go in and my father would be teaching me my prayers at my bedside, and then when my prayers would be over--[he'd say:] "Falbh ruisgte 's thig mallachd! Go naked and evil will come! "Falbh ruisgte 's thig mallachd!" And he'd laugh at that, you know!

[C878, 71-48]

This often-repeated proverb of their father's did not strike an amusing note until the children were much older; rather, it puzzled them, considering the fact that the prayers seemed so serious.

The Catholic Church played a big part in the lives of the Codroy Valley people. Perhaps some of the people had a biased view of their priests; and according to what Frank MacArthur was told, the Scottish people certainly seem to have had an incorrect impression of the nationality of most of them:

In their time, well now, the priests that used... that were here, well the most of them--of course, I suppose they could probably speak some English too, but they were Scottish. Although some of them, according to the old people, well they didn't have too much English.

[C878, 71-48]

In fact, the priests, many of whom were of Irish origin, were all fluent in English, and some of them also spoke French. This is confirmed by the Parish Records and various church histories.

Frank MacArthur himself could not see that it made too much difference whether the priest spoke English or Gaelic:

Well even from the first, our church service was always in Latin, you know, until up to a few years ago. But see, that was drove into some of them... I mean the old Scotch people here, boy, well, they just felt that Scotch was... Well, the French people too, and the Irish, well they felt too, that if you were a Frenchman you were all right and if you were an Irishman you were all right, you know. That was in, you know, years gone by. But that's after changing now.

[C878, 71-48]

Frank, however, seems to have overlooked the point mentioned in Chapter IV (see p. 70) that what was important to his grandmother's generation was their wish to make their confessions

in Gaelic, the only language in which they felt they could really express themselves.

This preference of Gaelic over English did not seem to influence Allan MacArthur's attitude to the people in other language groups, for he and his family socialized with the English, French, and Irish, besides the Scots. They were always welcome in his home, for Allan MacArthur had a liking for people. Although I have already stressed so much of his seriousness about work, this was only one side of him and the side seen mostly by the family. To the rest of the Valley, he was very much a social being--someone to spend an evening of conversation and wit, music and song; the one who would immediately come to mind when planning a party or a celebration; someone the school children could rely upon to play the bagpipes at their special events; and always the one to ask for details about the history or Scottish culture in the Codroy Valley. As far as Allan himself was concerned, he described himself simply and aptly: "I like company, and I like music, and I like songs and everything." [C880, 71-48] This was very evident in his home, for although the entire family had to work hard to provide all the necessities for living, some of these "necessities" might have been considered luxuries by others. In order that he might be able to give his children the opportunity of learning a musical instrument if they so wished, Allan imported a fiddle, a guitar, and a button accordion from Nova Scotia, and a set of bagpipes

from Scotland. Allan himself played the bagpipes and the accordion, and he took the time to give piping lessons to two of his sons who wished to learn. [Plate XIII] He laughed as he recalled his own first interest in the bagpipes as a child:

There was a wonderful piper here at one time, I was only probably, I was only little, well I wasn' a baby, but I was two. His name was Donald MacQuarrie, and he was six foot two, you see, and a wonderful piper. And he was to our place one time and he was leaving the home, he was playing the pipes going down the hill here to the road. And my sister had to take me up on her shoulder, you know, and I was watching him playing down the road. And the first time I heard the pipes, it was my Uncle Archie MacIsaac--and I started to cry! I was frightened!

[C607, 69-37]

On long winter's evenings, they could have a house full of music and dancing, as there were several musicians in their own family alone. Provided it was in its rightful place, after the work was done, Allan MacArthur set no limits on this kind of leisure. In the early 1930's, the family added a gramophone to their collection of music-makers, which was one of the earliest in the Valley. There are still a few 78 rpm records at the MacArthur home, reflecting that their taste in music in those days was heavily in favour of Scottish tunes and Gaelic songs, mostly on the "Thistle" label, a Nova Scotia record company.

Story-telling also had an important place in the MacArthur home, and Frank MacArthur described his father as having a "wonderful memory" and he said he could "talk history" from morning till night. [C878, 71-48] But histories were not the



Plate XIII

Allan MacArthur playing his bagpipes at a picnic, approximately 1965.

(From Mrs. MacArthur's photograph album.)

only narratives in his repertoire, for before his children went upstairs to bed he would tell them a bedtime story. The favourite was usually a cumulative tale told in Gaelic.

Apart from being well-known in his community for his wonderful memory, his music, and his stories, Allan MacArthur was also known for his wit and sense of humour. I recall one afternoon in his home when there was a group of young men who were discussing the coming winter's wood-cutting. One of them tried to tease the old man by asking him if he would be going with them to cut wood. "No," he replied, "but I'll be there to measure the cords after you have it all cut." There are many other similar stories in the Valley of his witty, sharp, retorts. He was known for his way with words; and although he spoke English latterly, he was quite aware of the finer shades of meanings of some words which he sometimes used to catch people unawares. This was not so that he could have the satisfaction of "getting one over" on anyone, but it was rather a reflection on his continual attention to detail. For example, there was one occasion when Allan described a song that his brother had made many years ago, then he sang the song. After he finished I asked him if his brother had written many songs, to which he replied: "He never wrote a song." When I objected with "well, he composed that one!" Allan drew my attention to my own inaccuracy in the first instance by saying: "Well, he did, he composed it, but he didn't write it, you see. He couldn't write Gaelic, you see." [C882, 71-48]

People loved to have Allan MacArthur in their company; and if there was a house party in the area, he was almost sure to be invited. In his last years, he was not always able to attend because of his failing health; jokingly, he would say that if he was "out drinking with the boys one night," then he would have to rest up the next. In fact, this was just what he had to do, and he would lie down on the kitchen day-bed or in his room until he felt well enough again.

On one occasion when he had to refuse an invitation to an evening out, he told me that if I could record some of the music then he could listen to it the next day, and that would be nearly as good. At that time, towards the end of summer 1970, he was beginning to feel weary of his failing health. He said to me:

You got to keep the best side up, but I got a job to do that now [Taking life at an easier pace]. Well, that's no good because the disease is there, and the trouble is there, and there's no cure for it. You're pining away all the time when you get so old, and you're not going to get better; only getting worse little by little. You can have courage and everything else, but still, this is going to come.

[C879, 71-48]

A year later, on September 10, 1971, Allan MacArthur died from cancer of the liver and stomach.

Today almost four years since his death, he is very much alive in the minds of those in the Codroy Valley who had the privilege of knowing him. Sometimes they repeat anecdotes about his wit or remember his talent on the pipes and in Gaelic singing; often they wish they could ask him about the history

of settlement in the Valley, or for some other piece of information that he would have been able to supply. And so many times they simply comment that "there was no one like him".



Plate XIV

Allan and Mary MacArthur, September, 1970.

CHAPTER VI

CEILIDH AIR MHCARTAIR: A VISIT WITH THE MACARTHURS

To the old Gaelic speaking people in Scotland and the New World, the word "ceilidh" simply meant "a visit". The word was applied to both the common, informal situation where a neighbour called in to see the people next door for a visit, however brief, and also to the formally arranged social gathering of family and friends invited to a particular house for the purpose of enjoying an evening together. Many books discuss the ceilidh as a source of entertainment, usually music and dancing, as if that were its only function. In fact, today the word has taken on a new usage, meaning a concert to the Scottish, a dance to the Irish, or occasionally elements of both,*for it has been misused by English-speaking people to such an extent that even some Gaelic speakers accept it, as the use of the Anglicized plural "ceilidhs", by Gaelic-speaking people clearly attests.

According to Allan MacArthur, a "ceilidh" meant in his own English words, "if you were going visiting friends, like Ceilidh air MhicLeoid" [like a visit with the MacLeods; C607, 69-37]. The ceilidh was, in fact, largely responsible for keeping alive all the Scottish Gaelic oral traditions both in Scotland and in the parts of America settled by Gaelic speakers.

In his youth, Allan MacArthur was, as he sat listening to the conversation, songs, and stories belonging to the generations of his parents and grandparents, a link in the chain which carried on those traditions to the next generation. From his earliest childhood there was, of course, no radio or television to distract him or clutter his mind as he sat in the company of adults, acting like the other children of his generation, who remained silent throughout the duration of any visit, whether their family were the guests or the hosts. By the time he reached adolescence, he had heard the old people telling and retelling stories of their migration from Scotland to America, and of the pioneer days in the Valley. The ceilidh provided the ideal opportunity for the older people to sit near the hearth, perhaps busy with some task, telling about and listening to things of the past.

Allan MacArthur listened to a great diversity of topics discussed at the ceilidhs. He heard descriptions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, historical dates which he committed to memory of important events in the lives of the Scottish people, interpretations of ideas about the Battle of Culloden, the Highland Clearances, Bonnie Prince Charlie, and other characters in Scottish history, such as George Buchanan. He listened to a fund of general information on life in the new country also, such as how to cure certain ailments, when to carry out the various duties required when

caring for their livestock and farmland, how to forecast the weather, and whatever the older people cared to talk about when they were together. Along with all of this, he heard songs, stories, and instrumental music, and watched the best step-dancers of the day.

Parents and grandparents in those early days, while they demanded a strict code of behaviour from children, allowed them to begin to ask a few questions or make a few comments when they approached adulthood. They liked to know, nevertheless, that the young people were there, interested in the traditions of their culture and learning about it as they had done for generations before. *When he reached his old age, however, Allan MacArthur found that times had changed, and unlike the days when his grandmother was alive, the young people, his grandchildren, had become preoccupied with other pursuits and did not seem to have the same interest in hearing all the history and information he had heard in his youth. In the meantime, his children were busy coping with their own families and work load; and while they were proud of their father with his keen mind and his ability to relate history, they only occasionally found the time to visit with him; and even then as they said themselves, they did not pay sufficient attention to the things that the old man remembered from his early days.

It was for these reasons, then, that I become the surrogate, with both Mr. and Mrs. MacArthur looking upon me as the

next link in their chain of traditions. Consequently, it was in the very context of the many dozens of ceillidhs with the MacArthur family that I was given a wealth of material from the traditions of the Codroy Valley as they knew them. Just as they, in their youth, heard all their traditions filtered through their elders, so they also selected the aspects which were most important to them, and which they wished to pass down to the following generation. Rather than having their material consciously collected by a folklorist, then, Allan MacArthur was the key figure in controlling what went on.

The many dozens of ceillidhs that I shared with the MacArthurs were very much in the old style of ceillidh as opposed to the kind of visiting which is common today, where guests and hosts will be quite likely to spend the time following a favourite television serial. And in the old style, I was a participant at the ceillidh, sometimes singing a song or two, and other times providing the comparisons which Allan MacArthur wished to make between the way of life in the Valley and the Scottish Highlands.

There were many occasions at a ceillidh when I heard topics raised among the large group of people, and where being their guest at the time, it was impossible for me to follow up a topic with questions which, as a folklorist, I felt ought to be pursued. To have interrupted with questions in an inappropriate place would have been forward and rude, and probably embarrassing to the MacArthurs. Fortunately, I did

get some additional information on some of the subjects, mostly on quiet visits with Mrs. MacArthur after the death of her husband. This study, consequently, is largely the work of a participant observer.

A ceillidh did not necessarily have to be planned in advance. It could simply be an impromptu visit with a neighbour, usually in the afternoon or evening. This was the kind of ceillidh at which those involved would be most likely to have talked about their familiar stories of the past, although a song or tune would certainly not have been out of place. Or a ceillidh could develop out of going to a neighbour's house with a specific kind of work in mind, which was met by an invitation from the neighbour to come in and have some tea or maybe a "dram".

For example, there was one instance when I was taking Mr. and Mrs. MacArthur by car to a house in the next community so that they could have their hair cut by their friend who had a fine reputation for barbering. We set off, giving no advance notification to those we were visiting, but we were made welcome when we arrived in the early afternoon. Before long, several neighbours had gathered to join the ceillidh, for no doubt some of them had seen their old friends, the MacArthurs, arrive at the house. Since Mr. MacArthur at the time rarely had the opportunity of going very far from his own garden, they were happy to avail of the opportunity of spending some time with him. Several hours later, after

two haircuts, nine songs (excluding my own few), over twenty-five fiddle tunes, several toasts, some step dancing, and a lot of conversation and laughter, we all went home. [C894, 71-48 and C895, 71-48].

This particular unplanned ceillidh could only have turned out the way it did because of the fact that there were about seven people present in their seventies and eighties who were not confined to a specific work schedule or to the responsibilities of their land, since these had been taken over by younger members of their families. There was another side to the unplanned ceillidhs which I have seen at many times, mostly at those attended in the MacArthur's home. There was usually an impression of business, with the traffic back and forth from the kitchen to the living room, or even inside and outside the house, as the family attempted to get on with the tasks which had been started or which had to be done. Most of the time old Mr. MacArthur sat with the visitors, having reached an age in his life when he considered that he was exempt from the numerous tasks while his sons were there to take over. He allowed himself the time to enjoy the company he had, as he loved to have an opportunity to participate in conversation and music which reminded him of the old days in the Valley.

In his younger days, however, (like the hard-working people in the Valley today) his role at such a ceillidh would have been different. If someone called at his neighbour's

house to have a ceillidh during the day, it would not follow that the people in the house being visited would down their work simply to socialize. In the old days especially, there was far too much work for that, with butter to be churned, baking to be done, carding, spinning, knitting, and weaving along with cobbling, harness-making, or any other work done by the men, to say nothing of all the outdoor work of which they all had to take a share. Those in the house would simply carry on, for the most part keeping an eye on the tasks at hand and their ears to their visitor while taking it in turns to pay some additional attention to him. If the man of the house were at home, he would usually attend to the drink while the woman would offer tea and something to eat during their stay. On the other hand, if a ceillidh was planned in advance, which was almost always in the evening, then the host would be prepared to spend all the time socializing with the guests with the exception of the occasions when the ceillidh was planned to take the form of a spinning bee or a milling when all would work, guests and hosts alike.

Most organized ceillidhs (but not spinning bees) were held in the evening during the late autumn and through the winter when the days were shorter and much less time could be spent doing outside work. The women, of course, did not have the same limitations of daylight hours on all their chores as there was always work which they could do in the house. It was quite acceptable, however, to sit knitting or crocheting

while visitors were in the house as these activities could be done without creating a busy atmosphere.

As Charles W. Dunn said in his definitive study of the Scottish Gael in Nova Scotia: "When the dusk of evening crept over the land and the tasks of the day were abandoned, the people gathered at the home of the most talented local entertainer." [Dunn, Highland Settler, p. 45.] It is not surprising, then, that almost all the ceilidhs I attended were in the home of Allan MacArthur which, for three generations, has been a meeting place for all who were interested in the activities of the ceilidh.

At virtually all the evening ceilidhs and some of the day-time ones as well, the visitors would be offered a drink. If someone happened to call on an evening when there was no alcoholic beverage in the house, the host would make an apology to his visitor for being caught with nothing to offer him. He would not feel any obligation, however, since no advance notice was given. It was also customary for visitors to bring a drink to the house which they visited in order that they might be able to reciprocate after they had finished a drink with their host. The first drink usually elicited a toast from one of the company, frequently one of the older men. Among the Scots, and even from French and English, the toast "Slàinte mhath" [good health] was often heard.

Allan MacArthur had several toasts which he used as he

raised his glass to all that were in the room with him. One that he frequently used was:

Scotland thy mountains
Thy valleys and fountains
The home of the poets
The birthplace of songs

[C868, 71-48 and other tapes]

Sometimes after several drinks he would raise his glass as if about to make a toast to his company and then he would say laughingly:

When I'm dead and in my grave
For no more whisky I will crave
But on my tomb those letters wrote:
'Many's the glass went down my throat!'

[C868, 71-48]

While these were toasts which he would say to anyone who was in his company, there was, however, one toast which he kept for his compatriots alone. Repeating what he had heard from the first Scottish settlers, he would raise his glass and say with feeling:

"Deoch sláinte chuairtear a ghluais bho Albainn!"
["Here's health to the traveller who left Scotland!"]

[C882, 71-48]

and on one occasion when there happened to be a non-Gaelic speaker in the company, he apologized saying:

"I'm sorry that you don't understand nothing [i.e. anything of what I'm saying] but I'm going back to Scotland with that toast, you see, to my own people in Scotland."

[C894, 71-48]

Observing these social gatherings, particularly in the

evening, it would appear that the alcohol played a significant part at the ceillidh where many of the activities were centered around the fact that most of the men and some of the women who so wished would have a full glass to drink or bottle of beer beside them. The ceillidh offered an opportunity for people to drink in an acceptable setting; and even those who did not drink, or only drank very little, would frequently welcome the fact that certain members of the community who were known to be good musicians, singers, or dancers could more easily be persuaded to perform after they had had some alcoholic stimulant.

Frequently, in the Valley a ceillidh was organized to celebrate a special occasion, such as a birthday or a wedding anniversary, when a bottle or two of whisky or rum would be bought to help celebrate. There was one such ceillidh that Allan MacArthur told of when a close friend of his made him a birthday gift of a wooden armchair in which, from that time on, Allan always sat by the kitchen table.

While the celebration of birthdays and anniversaries may seem commonplace to many, this particular consideration of family and friends infinitely surprised me since I had never heard of these annual celebrations in my own Scottish Highland Presbyterian background. In fact, my mother never received a birthday card until after she had left her home on the Isle of Skye, and her parents never in their lives had a birthday remembered with a card or a gift until they reached

the age of eighty. A friend from the Isle of Lewis reports that this was the pattern when she grew up also. Some of the Highland customs, or the lack of them, such as not celebrating Christmas because there is no Biblical references to celebrating the birth of Christ, are sometimes explained by the fact that there was great emphasis placed upon reading the Scriptures and following them. The Psalms were especially well taught, with children reciting them from an early age, often reminding them of the more solemn aspect of life, such as:

'S iad laith' as bliadhna mar an ceudn'
 tri fichead bliadhna' 's a deich,
 No, feudaidh bith, le tuilleadh neart
 ceith'r fichead bliadhn' do neach:
 Gidheadh cha-n 'eil 'nan spionnadh sud
 ach cradh is curadh geur:
 Oir sgathar sios gu h-ealamh e,
 is siubhlaidh sinn gu leir.
 Salm XC: 10

[Translated from the Gaelic Metrical Psalms of the Scottish Psalter into the equivalent Metrical Psalm in English:

Threescore and ten years do sum up
 our days and years, we see;
 Or if, by reason of more strength,
 in some fourscore they be:
 Yet doth the strength of such old men
 but grief and labour prove;
 For it is soon cut off, and we
 fly hence, and soon remove.
 Psalm XC: 10.]

The birth of a child was, however, celebrated in the Highlands, presumably in accordance with Psalm 127, and so also was the fiftieth wedding anniversary: "Bithidh an deicheamh bliadhna sin agus da fhichead 'n a Iubile dhuibh." ["A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you." Leviticus 25: 11.]

But the reading of the Bible and committing it to memory was not the concern of the Catholic Highlander, who unfailingly attended Masses and recited prayers which showed his faithful devotion to his own church.¹ Allan MacArthur was interested in the effects of the Scottish Reformation of the way of life of the Scottish Highlander; and while he may not have understood this attitude to certain celebrations and the fact that we did not ever hold a ceilidh on a Sunday, he was quick to point out that a special event, like a birthday, was not necessary for a ceilidh, as the simple desire to get together with family and friends was occasion enough.

A ceilidh of the kind that was planned in advance with the "word sent around" was considered "good" by those who attended if they spent an evening at a home where there was a moderate supply of food, plenty to drink, and as many songs, stories, and lively tunes on the fiddle, guitar, mandolin, accordion, and bagpipes, with the most ostentatious show of step dancing that could possibly be packed into the one night. The "men in one room and women in another" feature of Newfoundland parties or "times" which is strictly observed in many other areas of the island is not encountered in the Codroy Valley. The women, of course, always have to spend some time in the kitchen preparing the food which was served there.

¹ In his chapter titled "Virtues and Vices" in Highland Settler, Dunn has an interesting discussion on the carry-over of religious faith to the New World. He brings out many aspects of the religious faith of those who came from Scotland along with comparisons between the Catholic and Protestant immigrants.

After everyone had gathered at the house and was served with a drink, the first half hour or so was usually spent in conversation, when friends and neighbours caught up with each others' news, or told amusing anecdotes they had heard since they last met. Before long, and usually with very little persuasion, someone would strike up a tune on one of the musical instruments. In no time at all, then, the entertainment would be in "full swing". The bagpipes were always thought of as being a good instrument for "getting in the mood", setting the right atmosphere, or in some instances were a good-natured method of "shutting some people up" so they could all "get the thing [ceilidh] off the ground". The bagpipes were regarded as the best instrument for an old-fashioned eight-hand reel and for "set" [square] dancing. The accordion, while good for these old dances, was especially well liked for old fashioned waltzes. The fiddle, also suitable for any kind of dance performed in those days, however, was the favourite instrument of the step dancers as its volume was not too overwhelming to drown out the percussion effects of the feet on the wooden floors.

At any organized ceilidh in the Valley, there was always a strictly observed code of ethics among the musicians, dancers, and singers. Just as it would be considered rude for the person concerned, and also boring for those who had to listen if one person took over an entire evening's conversation, scarcely allowing anyone else to speak, so also

would it be considered rude if a musician or singer "hogged the whole show." No matter how popular the music, songs, or dancing of one performer might have been, he always called a halt of his own accord, and in so doing, would invite another performer in the company to "take his turn." Those who were not performing were also expected to show courtesy. While the fear of disapproval by the others was generally enough control over behaviour, on a few occasions, one of the elderly men in the company gave a quite sharp reprimand to anyone who was rude enough to talk out aloud while someone was singing a song.

Step dancing, which people from other parts of the island often say is a "different style" in the Valley to what they usually see, has always been extremely popular at a ceillidh. It is not unusual for people from Scotland who visit the Codroy Valley or Cape Breton to assume that this step dancing, since they have not seen it in Scotland, must have been "invented on the other side of the Atlantic." This conclusion does not follow, however, as the old style of step dancing which exists in the New World is something much older than the Highland Dancing popularized in Scotland and standardized by Military Regiments who taught it during more recent years.

At most of the ceillidhs I have been to, the step dancers would usually listen to a tune or two on the fiddle before getting out on the floor. Usually two or four people got out

in the middle of the floor, and with the rest of the company sitting or standing around the edges of the room ready to watch every move, they would begin dancing. Facing one another, the step dancers would begin with one of their least spectacular steps. As the music got livelier to the shouts of "Suas e! Suas e bhodaich!" the dancers would not only dance more quickly to keep up with the music but would also progress to the most complicated steps they knew. This phrase, "Suas e! Suas e bhodaich!" which can still be heard in the Valley even though it is now almost entirely English speaking, is addressed to the fiddler. Literally, it means "Up with it! Up with it, old man!" and the equivalent to it heard in some other areas of Newfoundland would be "heave it out of you, ol' man", the phrase used when the fiddler is being encouraged to step up the tempo of his music. [Plate XV]

While the dancers might start off doing the same step, each danced the sequence of steps of his own choice trying all the time to outdo the other dancers, not only in style and complexity, but also in stamina. Throughout the dancing, there would be shouts of encouragement and praise to the dancers and to the fiddler who could play as long as any dancer could last out on the floor. The entire display of step dancing would come to an end after all but one dancer, usually the best one, would sit down out of fatigue, thus voluntarily eliminating themselves from the competition. The dancer who was left would dance one or two solo steps and



Plate XV

Johnnie Archie MacDonald (brother of Mary MacArthur) playing the fiddle for a step dance.

then, like the others before him, would sink into a chair laughing. Simultaneously, the fiddler would draw the last few strokes of the bow over the strings, and everyone would applaud, praising the dancers with comments like "Well, by golly, he's good," or sometimes clapping them on the back saying, "Well done, yourself".

Allan MacArthur had a life-long interest in dancing, and even into his eighties he still step danced to the lively music at a ceilidh. His contemporaries could be heard making remarks such as, "By gosh, he was good in his day, boy," while Allan's own great pride was in watching his son, Frankie, dancing. Frankie, in fact, has for many years been the pride of the entire Codroy Valley when it comes to dancing. Those who spoke of him used to remark on the fact that he "could dance with both feet" meaning that unlike most people he could use both feet with equal accuracy and agility. They drew the comparison between this rare quality in a dancer with the rarity of finding an artist who could draw equally well with either hand. There were many people in the Valley who praised Frankie MacArthur's dancing, and no doubt aware of this, his father did not sing the praises of his own son or, in fact, even mentioned him when he spoke of step dancing:

And they knowed a lot of steps here, because we had people here that taught step dancing, the Scots dancing. And the women, mind you, some of them was good too. There was one woman here, she was a MacDonald, she could dance sixty steps, different steps, and it

was all the right dancing, you know, taught by step dancers. Oh, I tell you, they were pretty lively, and there was good violin players here a long time ago. Well, they were taught over in Cape Breton, in Inverness, and all around those places. They knewed the tunes, a lot of them from Scotland, you see, who came out there and they followed the tunes from Scotland right down.

[C607, 69-37]

Instrumental music was not, however, the only accompaniment for dancing for, as Allan MacArthur said, "some of the step dancing tunes they used to be in Gaelic." [C607, 69-37] Just as in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, these tunes in Gaelic, "puirt-a-beul" or "mouth music" as they were generally called, were very popular in the Valley. Since this type of singing requires exceptional breath control in order to sing long enough for a step dancer, there were never more than a few people in the Valley at the one time who had mastered this art. Consequently, during the performance of mouth music and step dancing together, the audience at the ceillidh were doubly excited, watching the feet of the dancer and listening to the accuracy of the singer who, if he took a breath in the wrong place or a split second too long, might lose the beat and spoil the entire effect.

Mouth music had another function, however, which was to teach a piper or violin player a new tune. Most of the musicians, including Allan MacArthur, could not read music; and if they wanted to learn a new tune, they memorized and played by ear. A musician could assimilate some tunes into

his repertoire simply because he heard them repeatedly, but there were many instances when a conscious effort was made to learn a new tune, and where better to do so than at a ceillidh. Allan, like virtually every piper in Scotland, had sat down and learned tunes from the singing of a fellow musician:

A lot of them tunes that they played, the old people, a lot of them here, those that used to play music anyhow, they used to know them in Gaelic, you see, they would sing it and then play it for step dancing.

When you know the words and the air of that, that's just as good as the notes, pretty near. I couldn't play by note, but by ear, you see, but for fast tunes, and the old tunes, and when you know the Gaelic words of it, well you had the run of it, you see, if you were to keep time for the step dance.

[C607, 69-37]

He was also familiar with the pipers' special syllable language for transmitting tunes, namely "canntaireachd" which he demonstrated on tape C882, 71-48. He knew the great importance of having a tune first of all firmly in the mind before transferring it to the chanter of the pipes.

Entertainment at the ceillidh was not all loud and lively with music and dancing. There was also a place for serious song, and indeed they were often a welcome change of pace. In fact, it was usually at a ceillidh that the songs which were not work songs could be heard, such as the old ballads from Allan MacArthur's mother's repertoire, "She had a lot of songs with no chorus in them, like war songs--as well as the milling songs, that is." [C607, 69-37]

One example Allan mentioned was a song about Napoleon on St. Helena. Not only were his mother's songs of interest, but the background of the composition was valued by singers and listeners alike:

Now every song my mother knew, she knew why it was composed, and everything. There was a history behind the songs. Well, that was better than the song in a way because she would tell you first why the song was composed, you see, and then she would sing the song, you know, to compare with the history, you see.

[C882, 71-48]

In fact, during the early days especially, every song and story among the immigrants presented an opportunity to give the background and thus link their culture to the past and the Homeland.

Apart from the old songs which told stories, no ceildh was complete without several good stories; and in fact, there were many ceildhs at which the emphasis was almost solely upon story telling. There were also a few people who, if they were present, would always be called upon to recite at least one of the recitations from their repertoire. Unfortunately, I managed to record only one Gaelic recitation, although I heard several others in English. The people in the early days especially had a great love of hearing and telling stories--of the land they left behind them, of their pioneer days in the land they came to settle, of adventures on the high seas or in the lumber woods and, of course, the many aspects of the supernatural which were always of interest

to the Scottish Highlanders.

At a gathering of family and friends in the Valley today, people still love to talk about how their forebears settled the land, how they healed the sick, or buried the dead. The "real old stories," which will be dealt with in a later chapter, have now disappeared, although there is still a lively interest in retaining the pattern of conversation topics which was adopted about thirty years ago after the generation of the first settlers had passed on. Today's ceillidh would include anecdotes of weddings and wakes, of the witty, wise, eccentric, and simple folk, of fun-making and prank-playing, of the old-time milling frolics in the days when they made everything they wore, and of the days when the "real old ceillidhs" were much more a part of their way of life.

What I had the privilege of attending, because of the MacArthurs, was really a series of the old-fashioned ceillidhs. Most of my collecting was merely a recording of the occasions I went "air cheillidh" [on a visit] with the MacArthurs. It made it much easier to take in an impression of a number of different situations in separate homes in the Valley because someone as talented and well-liked as Allan MacArthur would invariably be invited to the homes of others. And he, as was his right as an invited guest, was free to bring along his own guest to a home where the host and hostess did not already know me.

What follows in this study is primarily a selection from the many topics given to me in the context of these ceillidhs.



Plate XVI

A ceillidh with the MacArthurs. Back row: David Clow and George MacArthur. Front row: Margaret Bennett Knight, Allan MacArthur, Florence Clow, and Mary MacArthur.



Plate XVII

Frank MacArthur playing the button accordion at a ceillidh.

CHAPTER VII

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

Until as recently as the 1960's there was one time of the year, the Twelve Days of Christmas, which stood out as being especially memorable for the Codroy Valley people who used to celebrate the festivities in the "old-time" way. During the Twelve Days from Christmas Day, December twenty-fifth, to Old Christmas Day, January sixth, they had more ceillidhs than any other period of time during the year.

There was much to get ready for the Christmas season, and the preparations began well in advance of it when everyone looked forward with eager anticipation to the biggest highlight of their long winter. Although there was so much work to be done, Allan and Mary MacArthur's daughter, Margaret [Mrs. Leo Cormier], said that everyone "used to love for Christmas to come, for it was all fun and frolic."

While the term "the Twelve Days of Christmas" could still be heard in the Valley until well into the 1960's, the actual activities involved in the celebrations were modified as the years went by, until finally there were no longer any Twelve Days set aside to be observed in the traditional manner. Consequently, some of the description here is only applicable to the very early years in the area, while much of it typifies

what went on during the last forty years.

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My initial interest in the Twelve Days of Christmas was aroused by Allan MacArthur, although he himself did not give the bulk of the description in this chapter. In January, 1970, when my parents and I visited the MacArthur family to bring our traditional New Year's greetings to our fellow Scots, Allan sat surrounded by his family and friends enjoying the warmth of a winter fire. As we all welcomed in the New Year that marked the beginning of another decade, Allan showed obvious pleasure that his old homestead, which had been the gathering place of family and friends since the turn of the century, could still be the centre of a real ceillidh. There was still a considerable amount of the Gaelic spoken by most of the people there, with more than enough English* added to make sure that no one was left out of all the conversation. As the afternoon progressed, it was filled with all the things which characterised an old-time ceillidh which could have been held during the Twelve Days of Christmas that the old people once knew. There were reminiscences of the past, interspersed with exchanges of Gaelic songs between Allan, my mother, and myself. There were comparisons of pipe tunes between the two pipers, Allan and my father, along with lengthy discussions on the making of the pipes, the piobaireachd, the MacCrimmon pipers, and the wealth of bagpipe compositions which seemed to be misunderstood by those who could not see past the hackneyed, worn-out "Scotland the

Brave." There was discussion among the old people on how they used to cure pleurisy, cancer, and pneumonia in the days when "we had no doctors, but we had women at that time that was better than some of the doctors that we got today."

[C868, 71-48] And as was the tradition, there were toasts galore, with a "wee dram" to fill the glasses whenever the host or the visiting men considered it to be their pleasure.

Allan, who was at the centre of almost all the activities, steered the conversation along its various channels, prompted the songs from his visitors and suggested the pipe music. It came to him naturally and without effort to include all his company in what went on at the ceillidh, and he invariably knew the potential of each person to contribute his or her talent in the different areas of interest which he balanced with contributions of his own in the conversation, songs, and music. But it was not only my good fortune in observing and participating in this ceillidh during the Twelve Days of Christmas that sparked off my interest in finding out more about the festivities at this time of the year. It was equally the fact that during the course of the afternoon, I saw Allan's own special interest in comparing his memories of the old way of celebrating the season to my mother's recollections of the old days on the Isle of Skye. Although I had spent my childhood on my mother's native island, I had known nothing of this aspect of the life there until I heard the discussion between her and Allan MacArthur.

Over a span of five years following this memorable ceillidh, I was given more of the details of the Twelve Days of Christmas during a series of other visits with the MacArthur family. In all, there were four members of the family from three generations who described their recollections of the Twelve Days, and it was interesting to notice the different points of view which they took on the separate occasions when they gave their accounts.

Mrs. MacArthur gave me much of the information on the preparation for the festive season and on the role of the women in general. From her report, the preparation sounded as if it were not out of the ordinary, but her daughter, Margaret, confirmed my suspicions of her mother's modesty as she remembered how much hard work was so willingly undertaken by her mother and grandmother, and the women of their generations, in order to make the Christmas season a success. Margaret also added a considerable amount to fill in the gaps when her parents were no longer there for me to rely upon. While she remembered many of the details, I was able to observe yet another facet of tradition-bearing in the Codroy Valley when her own children, ranging in ages from ten to twenty-one, became interested in hearing their mother talk of days gone by. The rest of the details came to me from Angus MacNeill, grandson of Allan MacArthur, who was born in the early 1940's. Viewed from their separate generations, each gave accounts which concentrated on different aspects, with

all four complementing each other.

From here on, this chapter, which will be coloured by Margaret's comments throughout, will first deal with the preparation, followed by general observations of the Twelve Days of Christmas, then the recollections of Angus MacNeil, and finally some details of the New Year recorded from Allan MacArthur himself.

Since the preparation of food and drink will be dealt with at greater length in a later chapter, only a sketch of it will be given here. Mrs. MacArthur recalled the getting ready which began well in advance of Christmas when a keg or two of wine or beer, or both, were put aside by most families after the autumn berry picking. There were also a few men in the Valley who prepared moonshine specially for the Christmas season. The women baked cakes in October and November, usually one or two large dark fruit cakes and a light fruit cake. They put them away (sometimes wrapped in muslin soaked in rum to add to the flavour and texture) in air-tight containers to mature for Christmas. There was other baking done as well, but they would usually wait until much closer to Christmas before baking shortbread and some of the other treats they prepared. In the autumn when all the housewives were busy bottling fruit, vegetables, and meat for the winter, they took into account when calculating the amounts to bottle that they would need a considerable amount to set aside for the Twelve Days alone, when they could expect to feed many extra visitors

during the days of the festivities.

The food, however, was only a part of all the preparations, for there were many other tasks to be accomplished before Christmas Eve arrived. During the autumn evenings when the children were in bed, the women busied themselves knitting, sewing, or crocheting items of clothing which were to be given as Christmas gifts to various members of the family. Margaret recalled that no matter what else they got for Christmas, as children they always got socks which their mother knitted. She considered them to be special Christmas socks, and rather than making them the standard grey colour she used to dye them shades of bright green or red: "More than once Mom used to be up late, dyeing our socks, a couple of nights before Christmas."

As Christmas Eve drew closer, they had to be especially busy cleaning the house and putting everything in order, as it was very important that nothing should be out of place or in need of cleaning, tidying, or mending during the Christmas season. As a result, the women, already busy as a rule, found themselves working harder than ever to make sure that the Twelve Days could be spent attending only to the activities of the season without unnecessary housecleaning or mending to interfere with all the socializing that went on. This did not mean, however, that the women finally found time to sit back and rest; it was rather the case that they directed their energy towards the additional preparation and cooking of meals

and catering to visitors, rather than towards their usual, everyday tasks.

As Christmas approached and most of the larger house cleaning jobs were completed, the family turned their attention to decorating their home for the festive season. In the earlier days, the only decoration they knew was the greenery of spruce, fir, holly, or some other evergreen twigs and branches which they used to twine around the doorposts and window frames on the outside of the house and around the larger picture frames on the inside.

Not long after her marriage to Allan MacArthur in 1923, Mrs. MacArthur decided that she would try the idea novel to the Codroy Valley of having a Christmas tree in her home decorated for the occasion. Although she did not mention it herself, her daughter, Margaret, told me that her mother was the first person in the Valley ever to have a Christmas tree; and when her neighbours saw her taking it into the house, they all wondered "what in the world she was doing". Margaret did not know where her mother had heard of the idea which was already popular in other parts of America, but it is possible that it may have been from her husband who told her of the year [1910] when he used to work in a nursery which shipped Christmas trees from Maine to other parts of the United States. Allan may also have described to her how he had seen the trees decorated while he was in the "Boston States." Whatever the source, the new idea soon caught on, and from the 1920's

onward, it has been the custom throughout the Valley to have a Christmas tree each year. [Plate XVIII]

A few days before Christmas Eve, all the children of the family who were old enough to be able to walk in the woods would set off along with their father or an older brother to choose a Christmas tree. There was always a great feeling of excitement about this event because, for the children, it marked the beginning of their involvement in the Christmas season. Having made their choice of a well-shaped tree, usually a fir, they would chop it down and drag it home through the snow; or if they were fortunate enough to have been taken out by the horse and sleigh, they would tie their tree on to the sleigh, jump aboard, and head for home. There they would brush the snow off the tree and leave it outside the house for a few days before carrying their prized tree into "the room" on Christmas Eve. "The room" was the name which was always given to the best, and seldom used, sitting room of the house where the family kept all the finest dishes, ornaments, framed pictures of their forebears, and their most elaborate Holy pictures, crucifixes, and usually a very ornate Sacred Heart. In my own grandparents home on the Isle of Skye, we also referred to the best sitting room as "the room", which translated directly from the Gaelic term, and although there were none of the features of Catholicism, it served exactly the same purpose as in the Valley--it was the special place which was kept for visitors, for special



Plate XVIII

Mary and Allan MacArthur beside their Christmas tree,
early 1960's.

(From Mrs. MacArthur's photograph album.)

occasions such as a wedding where the family could gather on their own special celebrations, or Christmas time. It was also the place where the dead were laid out during a wake.

After the Christmas tree was safely anchored firmly in a bucket of sand, the children would set to work on decorating it. By today's standards, they had nothing elaborate but simply a few home-made ornaments of coloured paper, with fluffs of raw wool to simulate snow. As the years went by, however, and commercially-made decorations became available, they moved along with the times towards today's lavishly decorated trees that are part of almost all North American homes at Christmas.

In the meantime while the children decorated the tree in the room, their mother and perhaps the oldest girls in the family would be in the kitchen baking a few last minute cookies and pies and making the final preparations for the family Christmas dinner which they would cook the next day. Margaret recalled many Christmas Eves when her job was to ice the cakes her mother had made.

On Christmas Eve, the very young children were put to bed and were usually looked after by their grandmother who would stay in the house. The rest of the family would wrap up warmly in their winter clothing about eleven o'clock at night all ready to attend Midnight Mass in their local church. When the horse was harnessed and a rug or old blanket put on top of the sleigh, they would all get on it and with a feeling

of excitement and anticipation of the pleasure they looked forward to during the Twelve Days, they would set off in the crisp winter air to the Parish Church. They would usually try to get there at least a quarter of an hour earlier than the Mass began as they knew the church would be packed, and a large family would have little chance of sitting together if they arrived at the last minute. Normally, this would not seem important, but since Christmas was a time of family unity and reunions, they liked to begin all together on the very first celebration of the season, namely the Midnight Mass.

After the Mass was over, there would be a great atmosphere of excitement outside of the church as they stopped to wish relatives and friends a "Merry Christmas", or among the Gaelic speakers "Nollaig Chridheil". Generally, they did not wait outside the church for very long, partly because the winter nights were cold but mostly because they were anxious to get the family back home to greet the person who had "kept house" and to begin their own family Christmas.

Upon arrival at their home and after taking off their outdoor clothing, the family would gather in "the room" where they completed their Christmas wishes. The younger children who had been allowed to go to Mass and who were probably very tired by this time were given a glass of milk, a piece of "bonnach" [bannock],¹ and a goodnight kiss and were sent to

¹ Although "bonnach was a staple food of the Scots, eaten all year round, there was a time when Christmas Eve (or Yule E'en) was called "Oidhche nam Bannag" which means "Night of the Bannocks". Mary MacLeod Banks, British Calendar Customs: Scotland, IV Vols. London and Glasgow, Published for the Folk Lore Society, 1941. Vol. III, pp. 202-06.

bed with the exciting reminder that Santa Claus would be coming. The rest of the family would then sit around the kitchen table which had been set while they were at Mass. Usually this meal consisted of cold meat prepared earlier in the day, some home-bottled pickles, home-baked bread "bonnach", and the first of their Christmas cake, along with a cup of "good strong tea". When the kitchen chores were finished, all those who had not gone to bed sat together in "the room" where they would enjoy a few drinks to wish each other good health; and in some families, the adults exchanged their gifts or opened any that awaited them at this time.

In the early days and right up until around the late 1940's, Santa Claus did not generally have the task of filling stockings in the Codroy Valley, as the children there had never heard of such a thing. Margaret Cormier recalled that she had never seen a stocking hung up during her childhood, and it was not until after her first child was born in the early 1950's that she became familiar with the custom which, by that time, had been introduced in the Valley. Not that Santa neglected the children, however, but as Margaret said, "he used to leave each child a package under the Christmas tree which would usually contain an apple, some candy, a pair of socks and sometimes other clothing, and one little toy. While Margaret's own children were astonished at the contentment of their mother's generation with the seemingly meagre gains from Christmas--after all, children nowadays can have

candies, apples, and clothing any day of the year, and small toys are only small rewards--their mother assured them that they used to get as much or more pleasure out of their little Christmas package as children today get out of their annual "haul". She recalled with amusement one Christmas when her uncle asked her brother, Martin, what Santa Claus had left for him; quick as a flash came the eager reply: "Candy², * ubhal, stocainnean, agus reatha beag." ["Candy, an apple, socks, and a little ram"]. Although she had no idea where her parents had obtained Martin's little toy ram, she did know that he was more than delighted with it.

During the earlier days, the gifts exchanged by their parents were by no means elaborate, and typical "adult gifts" were fancy handkerchiefs for the women, socks and ties for the men. Margaret emphasized that the gifts were not their main enjoyment of Christmas, but it was "all the fun and frolic" they used to have during the Twelve Days of Christmas which they looked forward to the most. Her children seemed rather dismayed that they had never had the privilege of participating in a Christmas such as their mother knew or even their older cousins who were in ages mid-way between their generation and their mother's. For example, Angus MacNeil, Margaret's nephew who was born when she was in her teens had Christmas memories which were closer to Margaret's than to those of his younger cousins whom he regarded as a new generation. Angus MacNeil's recollections of Christmas did not

² Charles W. Dunn, Highland Settler, pp. 142-44 discusses the borrowing from English words which did not exist in the Gaelic.

compare in any way to descriptions from today's children who place almost all the emphasis on the gifts. His was rather the excitement of being part of an adult celebration. While he mentioned the gifts only in passing, he said nothing of the Christmas dinner that his grandmother had once described when the family used to kill and roast a couple of hens or a big rooster or have a big roast of pork, along with all their own vegetables, followed by a "Washington Pie" which was two sponge cakes with bottled raspberries in between the layers and whipped cream on the top. Christmas dinner, though today not identical to what it was in the days they produced the ingredients in the Valley, would always be with them. It was the fact that their way of celebrating the Christmas season, with all its tradition and excitement, had changed so drastically from what the old people had once known and what Angus had seen during his childhood that he regretted.

It was very late during one night of his grandmother's wake that Angus sat by the kitchen table where they had always gathered as children. He remembered the days when the home of his MacArthur grandparents was the centre of their family traditions, where the Gaelic was spoken all the time, and where they loved to gather with family and friends, especially during the Twelve Days of Christmas. As he sat there telling me the things he remembered from his childhood during the 1940's, he reminded me that I "should be taking note of all these old things now that the old folk are gone", and reassured

by the fact that I took a pencil and a scrap of paper, he and one of his contemporaries reminisced and laughed together relating the pranks they played at school, the pranks other people were said to have played at wakes and weddings, and the fun they used to have during the festive season. As Angus spoke fairly quickly, I jotted down as much and as fast as I could; and as far as possible, I have tried to write his account as I heard it:

They used to celebrate the Twelve Days of Christmas here at one time. I remember when we were children, they would arrange to have a big "time" [party] in a different house every night during the "Twelve Days of Christmas", and usually they'd have the first night here at Grandpa's [Allan MacArthur's] house. They [the adults who were attending the "time"] would harness the horse and sleigh, and they used to take the children and wrap each one up in a blanket and put them on the sleigh, and then the whole family would set off for the "time". When they would get to the house, they would put all the children up in the bedrooms which were pretty cool, and they were told to go to sleep there while the parents went downstairs to enjoy the party. Before they would settle down to that, the men would unharness the horses, take them up beside the barn, and there they would tether them, each one covered with a blanket, and the ten or fifteen horses standing right close to one another to help keep them warm.

Then there would be the biggest kind of a time with Grandpa playing the pipes, and people singing and playing the accordion and the fiddle, and with dancing and step dancing. And, of course, there would be plenty to eat; the women would make a big "feed" with bottled meats and pickles and jams, bannocks, breads, pies, and Christmas fruit cakes, and when they'd get hungry part of the way through, they'd have a cup of tea and a feed. And of course there would be lots to drink all through, with whisky and rum and lots of home brew. Then after they drank two or three gallons of home-brew, they would wake up the children, carry them down in their blankets, and put them

on the sleigh to take them home. Now, you'd be right sleepy, probably at three or four o'clock in the morning, and they'd take you out and put you on that sleigh, and by the time they'd harness up the horse again, and they'd be laughing and feeling good, and you'd be freezing to death, trying to sit closer together to keep warm. They didn't think anything of taking us out like that in those days, but nowadays if you let one of the kids outside the door for a minute and he hasn't been all done up in a snowsuit and cap and mitts to keep out the cold, the old people are there telling you that you're letting the poor child freeze to death! Yes, they used to have some "times" in them days, every night during the Twelve Days of Christmas.

[Noted from Angus MacNeil, January, 1975]

Throughout the season, people would usually attempt to visit all their family and friends in their own and neighbouring communities in the Valley. While an afternoon ceillidh or an evening of merriment such as Angus MacNeil described would probably have taken care of all the visiting they wished to do, there was yet another type of visit which was peculiar to the Christmas season in the earlier days. From Christmas Night to January the sixth, householders could on any evening after dusk anticipate a few visits from local mummers. *These were people who would dress up in some disguise and, with a mask on, would go and visit various homes in their neighbourhood to have some fun and excitement from the various activities of the evening. There was, of course, no advance notice given of their intention to visit any particular house, and the more unexpected the visit might be, the more fun the mummers would be likely to get from it.*

Margaret Cormier remembered that during the years when mummering was an annual custom in most homes "all during Christmas there was a bunch of old clothes and things kept aside for mummering." In her own family, Allan and Mary MacArthur used to keep the clothes in a big barrel in the back porch, so that whenever any of them decided to go out mummering they could delve into the ready supply; and if they so wished, they could wear a different "rig" every night. Margaret added that during her teens and early twenties, she and her brothers "didn't miss a night going out mummering."

The mummering neither preceded nor followed the arranged ceillidhs that were held all during the Twelve Days, but it was cleverly interwoven with them. One could accept an invitation to a ceillidh and go mummering at the same house on the same evening provided some ingenuity was used to fool the host. In fact, Margaret recalled schemes in which she was involved where she actually went mummering at her own house with a friend, without anyone initially suspecting it. Choosing a moment when the evening's activities were in full swing with the house crowded with family and friends, she and a friend "skipped upstairs unnoticed, changed into some foolish rigs, put on masks, and sneaked out of the [seldom used] front door at the foot of the stairs while everyone was so busy having a grand time out in the kitchen." They then went round to the back door where all visitors familiar with the area would have entered, and rapping loudly on the door, they

entered the house without anyone knowing who they were or where they had come from. Eventually, after much guessing and "fooling around", someone would guess who they were, and "everyone would have a grand joke all round." The entire idea of Christmas in those days was to get as much fun out of, and put as much fun into, the Twelve Days of Christmas as they possibly could.

The mummers usually went visiting in small groups such as a typically good night of mummering which Margaret recalled when she and two of her brothers, Sears and George, and her cousin took the horse and sleigh and went mummering at almost every house from their own home on the Grand River all the way over to St. Andrew's on the Little River and completed the loop of road till they were back home. They dressed that evening in "home-made rigs of brin bags" and hardly a soul recognized them. Although the mummers would sometimes make "rigs" such as Margaret described, they almost always dressed in whatever they could find in the way of old or eccentric clothing--old, worn pants, long underwear, old-fashioned or torn dresses, strange footwear such as long rubber hip-waders, old hats, or whatever they could find. Much of the fun was in getting dressed up and laughing at the unlikely costumes of the others in the party, as some men dressed as women and vice versa. Margaret added that "mind you, one of these long, old-fashioned dresses didn't feel so good when you'd be walking through the snow with the bottom of it wet on the last of

it!" One of Margaret's children remembered that sometimes the mummers would carry an old gun, or even a broom to pretend it was a gun, which though in fun generally frightened the children.

The masks they wore were always home made, however, and "there was no such a thing as masks you could buy." They used a variety of materials such as an old flour bag with two holes cut out for eyes, with black crayon or ink around them, and a hole for the mouth emphasized by lipstick around it. Or sometimes, they made a similar mask from a strong paper bag or a cardboard box with pieces of rags attached to the back to look like raggedy hair hanging down.

In his article, "The Mask of Friendship: Mumming as a Ritual of Social Relations"³, John F. Szwed discussed the custom of Christmas mummering in the Newfoundland community of "Ross", his pseudonym for a typical settlement or "section" of the Codroy Valley. He described the mummers entering the house and their subsequent actions:

Uninvited, they enter the houses noisily without knocking, stamping their feet heavily as they approach the door as they pass into the kitchen. Once inside, they begin a jogging, half-dance, half-shake that is the 'mummer's walk'. They often move about the room freely and will sometimes go into other parts of the house; they are aggressive and may nudge or jostle members of the household or begin dancing with them or other mummers. They may make jokes about the family. Frequently, the mummers bring musical instruments and may play guitars or violins, or beat on breadpans. One or two mummers might step dance if asked to do so.

³ Herbert Halpert and George M. Story (eds.), Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 104-18.

Since I was a little puzzled about Szwed's remarks about musical instruments which seemed to indicate to me the possibility of a complete give-away of the identity of any mummer who might have been one of the Valley's more accomplished musicians--and there were nine MacArthurs who immediately came to mind!--I decided to ask Margaret Cormier to comment on the above paragraph and three others which I had selected. Without knowing that "Ross" was the pseudonym for her own Codroy Valley, she took the paragraphs and with attention to detail that I had previously thought was only characteristic of her father, she went through them phrase by phrase, making careful comments as she went. Where possible, I have tried to use her own words which I wrote down as she spoke.

It was true, she said, that they were not invited as the surprise was part of the fun, but they always used to knock loudly on the door before walking in. Usually, they would not wait for anyone to answer the door, but the loud knocks would just give them a moment's warning that the mummies were at their house. Yes, they used to stamp their feet, Margaret said, and when she read Szwed's description of the "mummies walk" she laughed heartily and said that was just what they did, but without showing it she, herself, would find that difficult to put in words. She also agreed that they would go out of the kitchen, usually into the sitting room if they thought there was someone who was missing out on their visit, and there were times when they'd "have a bit of fun" and nudge

someone, but she did not equate this behaviour with aggression as Szwed did. She said that it was only playful, and no one minded especially as they all used to have "real fun when the mummers danced with each other or with the people in the house." When she came to the part where Szwed mentioned that the mummers used to make jokes about the family, she laughed and said that she'd never forget one year when a bunch of mummers came to her own house when her children were very young. She had a new baby in the crib in the kitchen, and one of the mummers looked in and remarked to everyone: "Oh my gosh, don't he look like Paulie Hall!" This type of joke would no doubt have been uproariously funny to everyone, even if it did come as a surprise to Margaret since Paulie Hall⁴ was an old bachelor who lived alone, was reputed to have constantly asked the young girls in the Valley to marry him, and had a multitude of stories told locally about his eccentricities which, though exaggerated, were believed by almost everyone.

When she came to the section where Szwed referred to mummers playing musical instruments, Margaret said that this was true, but generally they would only play the mouth organ which they could do underneath their masks. [In the Codroy Valley, the mouth organ is not one of the more prevalent instruments that might be played at a party; and although "anyone who plays music can play one", they are generally

⁴ This same joke seemed particularly amusing to me in view of the fact that John F. Szwed has written an article about the late Paulie Hall: "Paul E. Hall: A Newfoundland Song-Maker and His Community of Song," in Folksongs and Their Makers, by Henry Glassie, Edward D. Ives, and John F. Szwed (Bowling Green, Ohio: University of Bowling Green Popular Press, 1970), pp. 147-69.

played by children or taken to sporting cabins in the country when it would be too bulky to carry anything bigger.] Margaret could not recall mummering with anyone who played any of the other instruments: "My good gosh, if Sears, or Leonard, or Uncle Johnny, or Jimmie, or any of those played, people would know right away who they were, and what good would there be in that!" She said that they would step dance, however, and even her brother, Frank, who was known all over the Valley for his dancing would "do a few foolish steps, but none of his own" to see if he'd fool them all the more. She also added to the description by saying that whenever they spoke, they would use "mummer's talk", which was done in a high pitched tone while inhaling, and their speech was always very rapid. One of her children remembered one year when their Uncle Sears MacArthur, one of Margaret's younger brothers, went mummering at the house, and he revealed to them afterwards that he had put a button under his tongue to disguise his voice.

In a later part of his article, Szwed mentioned that it was no fun if the mummers were identified too soon, and no fun if they were not recognized at all. [Szwed, "The Mask of Friendship," p. 110] Margaret agreed with the first point and qualified it by saying that "if you walk in and someone said your name right soon, you wouldn't feel like doing anything, you'd just stay right quiet". She was of the opinion, however, that it was all the more fun if no one could recognize

them at all, as they would have a grand time among themselves all the way to the next house, joking about how they "fooled them", and speculating as to what the conversation might be among the people they just left or planning on what they would say or hint to them next time they saw them.

From the moment the mummers entered the house, the people there would try to identify them; and as the mummers played their role, frolicking and taking the liberties which were allowed to mummers, their hosts would ask them questions and carefully study their mannerisms whenever they could. Some of the old people were especially good at recognizing the hands of their friends and even if a mummer came to the house with gloves on, there were a few people who could overcome even that disguise. Margaret recalled her father, in particular, who after a multitude of questions directed at the mummers would, if he still did not know who they were, casually ask: "Can you play crib?" Generally they would, like most Codroy Valley people, be card game enthusiasts and on receiving an affirmative reply, Allan MacArthur would say: "Very well then, let's have a game." Margaret said that her father, who had "pretty well played with everyone he knew at one time or another" would know almost right away who they were by the way they played cards. She illustrated her point by recalling one year before she was married when "this mummer came to the house alone. Now, that was kind of funny anyhow because you wouldn't usually go alone." She described how

all the family were puzzled as to who he was. He was "dressed in the funniest rig", and they just could not figure him out. "By and by, Dad asked him if he could play crib; and as soon as he saw him put out his hand of crib, Dad knew right away because of the way he held the cards in his left hand!" The mystery caller turned out to be none other than Leo Cormier, the man Margaret married some time later!

Once identified, the mummer would, as Szwed noted, unmask and return to the normal role of a visitor when he would be offered food and something to drink. Usually, they were given a piece of Christmas cake or something bake ; and as Margaret said, "there were times when you'd have walked a good long way, and you'd be pretty darned glad of something to eat." If they planned on visiting several other houses, the mummers would generally stay only a short while perhaps ten minutes after they ate; but if they were at the last house on their itinerary then they would stay for a ceillidh with the family as non-mumming guests.

Perhaps the most controversial part of Szwed's article is his remark:

But perhaps more important to the mummer is the aggression which he can freely express towards his host, and yet be protected from the usual reprisals while he is in this "other worldly" or (in Durkheim's terms) "sacred state".

[Szwed, "The Mask of Friendship," p. 113]

Having had this drawn to my attention by an angry young university student from the Codroy Valley who hoped that I "was

not spying on them from the top of a hill as that fellow Szwed must have done", I asked Margaret for a comment upon this final statement from the article. She was most surprised at any mummers who would go out mummering so that they could show aggression towards their host, as she emphasized that they would only go to the houses where they "knew the people real well, or if someone you were with knew them". She wondered how anyone who did that could live in the place afterwards and convinced that it certainly would not have been possible in the Codroy Valley, she said: "My gosh, I can't go along with that--certainly not to my knowledge, and God knows we did enough of it! I wonder where is he talking about anyway?"

The Twelve Days of Christmas were certainly filled with "fun and frolic" as Margaret said, and they "wouldn't miss a night. We'd walk, and walk, and walk, and come home all hours in the night, tired out." Yet, full of energy, they were all set to go again the next night. Although Allan MacArthur himself, as his daughter pointed out, had been a mummer over many years, in talking to my mother at our New Year ceillidh with him, he did not discuss any of the details of the costumes they used to wear mummering nor any of the light-hearted frolic that went on throughout the Twelve Days. His main interest on that occasion was to compare the Gaelic oral tradition connected with the festive season and the ceillidhs that would take place during it.

One particular night during the Twelve Days of Christmas, set apart from all others and recognized by Scotsmen the world over, is New Year's Eve. Allan MacArthur did not, however, refer to this night by the Lowland term "Hogmanay" which, in recent years, has even been adopted by the Highlanders. Even when speaking English, he used the name "Oidhche Challuinn" which his forebears brought over from Scotland more than a century ago, along with the customs which they had continued to celebrate in the New World.

On our New Year's ceillidh with the MacArthurs in 1970, Allan was in his element reminiscing about the old days when he recalled the "Rann na Calluinn" [the rhyme said on Oidhche Challuinn] which they used to say at every house they visited.

I'll say one in Gaelic, about when we'd be going round the houses beating out the Old Year and taking in the New Year. And then we'd get a big jig (?) of rum when we'd, well:

Oidhche chullain Challuinnchruaidh
 Thainig mise le m' dhuan gu tigh.
 Thubhairt am bodach rium le gruaim
 Buailidh mi do chluais le preas.
 Labhair a chailleach a b'fhearr na'n t-or
 Gum bu choir mo leigeil a stigh
 Air son na dh'ithinn-sa de bhiadh
 Agus deuran beag sios leis.

That was in the old times.

[C868, 71-48

Translation:

On a cold frosty Night of the Calluinn (New Year's Eve)
 I came with my rhyme to a house.
 The old man said to me with a frown
 I'll hit you in the ear with a stick.
 Said the old woman who was better than gold
 That I should be let in
 For all the little food that I would eat
 And a little drink with it.]

Although I had never heard of this from my own childhood on the Isle of Skye, it was immediately familiar to my mother who remembered the old folk going round the houses on "Oidhche Calluinn" and saying a rhyme at the door after they had beat around the house with sticks. Allan MacArthur's Codroy Valley rhyme was not identical to the one my mother had heard during her childhood, although the theme of it, which was basically the request for entry into the house and for food and drink, was the same. Although there are many printed texts which cite examples of "Rann na Calluin"⁵ and I have also heard several versions orally from the Isles of Skye and Lewis, I have come across not one that is identical to the one given by Allan MacArthur. The many examples show an individuality peculiar to each which would indicate that the "Rann" differed from area to area with each one incorporating the theme already mentioned.

The disguises worn on Oidhche Challuin in the Valley were much the same as one might expect to see on any of the Twelve Days of Christmas; and according to my mother, the pattern for "guising" in Skye was very similar during her childhood. The original attire of Oidhche Challuinn both in Scotland and Cape Breton is reported to have been sheepskins or cowhides, and according to several written descriptions

⁵For a few Scottish examples see John Gregorson Campbell, Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, (Glasgow: 1902), pp. 230-36. Hereafter cited Campbell, Witchcraft and Second Sight. Also Alexander Carmichael, Carmina Gadelica, (Edinburgh: 1928), vol. I, p. 148. For a few examples from the New World, in particular Cape Breton, see Cape Breton's Magazine, (Skir Dhu: 1973), Number 2, p.2. and Dunn, Highland Settler, p.51.

from both countries, they followed the ritual of circling the house sunwise according to the ancient Celtic orientation of all things following the path of the sun.⁶ This particular aspect of Oidhche Challuinn had completely disappeared by the time my mother was a child on Skye; and although I did not ask him, presumably the same thing had happened in the Codroy Valley, as details such as this would have been the kind to interest Allan MacArthur in handing them down as part of his Scottish traditions. He described Oidhche Challuinn as he remembered it from the days when he and his family and friends used to dress up and go out to bring in the New Year:

The women and the men and the boys and...they'd get together, and .?., and after supper when it would get dark they would club together now like if there were three or four or five from this house, well they would prepare and go to the next house. And when they'd get to the next house, they would start at the door and go right around the house and every one with a little stick in his hand you know, beating the house. They was driving out the Old Year and letting the New Year in. And it was all Gaelic, you see. And every door they would come to, well when they'd go around the house they would knock on the door and the woman would be there and she wouldn't let you in if you didn't have a rhyme or sing. And when you'd go through with the rhyme, you'd come in and they'd offer you know..., a drink of rum or a drink of whisky or something. And then the crowd in that house would get ready and go to the next house. Well, when they'd be crowd enough of boys and girls, and old men with them too, for to dance, well that's where they would stay. And they would put up a dance, you

⁶This ancient ritual is mentioned in Campbell, Witchcraft and Second Sight, p. 231, and in Cape Breton's Magazine, Number 2, p.11. Although he does not mention it, the custom must also have existed in Cape Breton when Charles W. Dunn conducted his research there, since the issue of Cape Breton's Magazine cited contains an interview with an informant who recalled the circling of the house in the direction of the sun ("deiseal"), and the sheep-skin attire, all recorded in Cape Breton in 1973.

know, and they wouldn't be short of whisky or rum either. Well that's the way they used to spend New Year's Night [Eve], you know, probably seventy years ago, or something like that.

[C868, 71-48]

Just as the Gaelic gradually faded from everyday use, so the "Rann na Calluinn" began to be forgotten by all but the very old, until eventually the customs disappeared altogether and the Twelve Days of Christmas became a thing of the past, to be described to children who knew nothing of this kind of Christmas. Allan MacArthur regretted that "it died out here, and it turned to something else," and his daughter, Margaret, told her children: "In those days, we just used to hate to see Christmas ending. Today, it's just a money racket, and everyone is glad when it's over now." With only a few childhood memories of seeing mummers coming into their home during the last years that the customs survived, along with their mother's description of the Christmas season during her youth, even the younger children today have begun to show some regret that they are no longer likely to have any part of the tradition of the Twelve Days of Christmas which their forebears had kept for over a century in the Codroy Valley.

CHAPTER VIII

TRADITIONAL ORAL NARRATIVE

Throughout centuries, the people of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland have been known for their fondness of tales and legends about many different topics, ranging from the ordinary to the supernatural. The old people especially remember the days of the ceildh when they sat by the hearths with family and friends, in the dim light of the fire or the oil lamp, telling the stories that had been handed down through generations.

It was only natural, then, that this custom should also be carried over to the New World with the migration of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was certainly very much a part of the way of life of Allan MacArthur's people, especially that of his mother and grandmother, whom he clearly recalled telling stories by the firelight, and passing on the traditions that they had heard from generations that had gone before them. In his youth, Allan MacArthur had experienced the thrill of sitting in the company of good storytellers, intently listening to every detail, imagining the things they described, and being transported into the world of travellers, pirates, ghosts, witches, or other supernatural beings. He knew the apprehension elicited by the strange

plots of some of their stories; he had experienced the reality of anxiety felt for characters in yet another group of stories; and, like any Highlander who ever sat and listened to a story-telling session, he knew the heart-pounding fear brought on by still another group of narratives, which, if he happened to be visiting in another house, was enough to make him run every step of the way home, terrified at the very thought of the things he had heard and imagined.

⊙ Although the story-telling traditions were once very strong in the Codroy Valley, it was the one feature of the ceillidh which had suffered most from the change in the way of life there that had taken place over the past few decades; and unfortunately, the decline was apparent by the time I first visited the area. In spite of the fact that Allan MacArthur was once a main part of this tradition, it had faded to such an extent that the context in which the stories were once told, with the atmosphere they created by the fireside, were more alive in Allan's memory than the stories themselves. He did recall the various topics about which the Scottish people told their stories, and he especially recalled how the Gaelic was at the very heart of this tradition.

The stories themselves did not exist as a separate genre to be isolated from others at a time kept aside for them alone; but were tied in with the Gaelic song tradition which was generally worked into a certain group of stories which could not be divorced from the songs associated with them in

the days when the interests of the ceildh were the only entertainment they knew.

The narration of history, legend, and folktale was not something unique to the MacArthur family but was common to all the peoples of the Codroy Valley. Today the older people, English, French, Scots, and Irish alike, are of the opinion that there is no longer any interest shown by the young people of the Valley in hearing the accounts of narratives once told by the old folk. Television and other pastimes have taken the place of story-telling. The result is that any old people who wish to retell the stories they heard in their youth have little opportunity of doing so as audiences are scarce. There are, however, still several old people left in the Valley who are lively and interesting story-tellers and are happy to relate the stories which they heard from their forebears.

Allan MacArthur enjoyed hearing and telling "sgeulachdan" [the Gaelic word used to embrace all types of narrative, history, legend, and folktale alike, and frequently used even when speaking English]. As he told his stories, he also took great pleasure in his ability to have complete hold over his audience, although he was reluctant to begin any story to which he felt he could not do justice because he had forgotten important details over the years. He was very much aware of the fact that a story-teller needs to have continual opportunities of recounting narratives in order to maintain his

repertoire, and he regretted that there was no longer this opportunity in the Valley.

The narratives in this study were, except for one folk-tale, collected from Allan MacArthur in 1970, when, as already mentioned, story-telling was a thing of the past; and consequently, they represent only a remnant of what once was. Mostly legend, these stories were told in a setting which was for Allan MacArthur nothing like the original story-telling situation, as he told the few stories here on quiet visits during the warm summer's afternoons--not only were they told "out of season" but the atmosphere and the entire situation could not come close to the real story-telling situation that Allan grew up with. In the old days, after all, most story-telling took place on winter evenings, when no more outside work could be done because of the early nightfall. The women were usually carding, spinning, knitting, or mending; and while the men sometimes helped with the carding, their winter evenings tended to be much more ^{leisurely} ~~leisurely~~ than those of the women. Story-telling was one of the few means of entertainment they had, and besides, it was a pleasant way of making tasks such as carding or mending less monotonous. Alexander MacDonald aptly described the situation in life of the Scottish Highlanders, who, for hundreds of years, knew the tradition of spending long winter evenings engrossed in the story and song of the ceillidh:

Our people could view the coming winter with few or no forbodings of straitened circumstances or pressure of economic conditions, and their minds were free to dwell on things imaginative and ideal;--things pertaining to a higher plane than the mere vegetating bread-earning machine can aspire. To this, then, must be ascribed the idealism, the romance, the chivalry, and the poetry of the Scottish Highlands. In circumstances such as these only could such an institution as the ceillidh become possible; and the ceillidh in the Scottish Highlands became a school in which not only was information acquired and were ideas formed, but in which character and conduct were moulded.¹

On the afternoons when Allan told the stories collected for this study, his audiences were usually made up of his wife, and a few of his old friends who sometimes called to see him, since they also had left their farm work to younger, more able members of their families, along with my mother and me. I cannot understate the importance of having my mother with me during these particular recording sessions; she unconsciously provided Allan with a very real link with the mother country and the customs which he associated with his Gaelic-speaking compatriots. As a child, she also had attended the same kind of ceillidhs that had interested Allan MacArthur; and while not a story-teller herself, she knew the feeling of sitting engrossed with all that went on at such a ceillidh. When accompanied by an older member of her family, she had felt more secure by their presence when the subjects of the stories dealt with frightening aspects of the supernatural. Allan was interested and delighted to hear of the

¹ Alexander MacDonald, Story and Song from Loch Ness-Side (Inverness: 1914), p. 207.

days of her childhood when the host of some of the ceilidhs she attended would show attention to the children present by giving each one a penny, along with directions on how to make it shine like new by polishing it for a long time with the ashes from one of the men's tobacco pipes. Looking back, she said that it was perhaps an attempt to divert the younger minds from the topics being discussed by the adults. She and Allan laughed together as they recalled the times they left the fireside of a neighbour's home, terrified to venture out in the dark lest a ghost, witch, or "each uisge" [water horse] would get them on the way home. And although she could not relate one of the stories she had heard so often, the reality of the situation in which they were told was of equal importance to Allan MacArthur.

On afternoons such as these, Allan would relate history and legend, talk about long-forgotten aspects of rural and domestic life, and recall old songs of many verses during the recording sessions. His remarkably clear memory would immediately impress his listeners, and many of them would remark upon this fact. He himself, however, would often apologize if he could not provide some detail which he wanted to include; he would feel let down that he was "after forgetting", and sometimes would shake his head and say that he was "after getting too old to remember".

Comparing what Allan MacArthur considered to be a "good memory" to what most people today regard as the same, it might

seem that he belonged to another era. Today, nobody is required to amass facts which he can find in easily available reference books. In the early days of places like the Codroy Valley, such books were completely unavailable and printed material of any kind was scarce. There were, however, people who acted in place of these things; they were living reference sources of historical facts and legends. This pattern compares closely with the bardic pattern found in Scotland. The bardic tradition itself was partly oral, partly literary, and the bards were required to have phenomenal memories. D.S. Thompson cites instances in Scotland where songs have survived through three hundred years of oral transmission with no assistance of printed texts.²

Whether in Scotland or in Scottish settlements across the Atlantic, the bearers of this strongly oral tradition displayed remarkable qualities:

In general, they were men of high intelligence and keen minds, passionately interested in tales, widely educated in the oral learning of the Gaelic race.³

Allan MacArthur described his own memory as "the schooling he got from God". He himself could fit into the rare group of people described by Kenneth Jackson who, at the time, was writing of Scottish story-tellers:

² D.S. Thompson, "The Gaelic Oral Tradition", Proceedings of the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society 5: 1-17. 1954. p. 3.

³ Kenneth Jackson, "Folktale in Gaelic Scotland". Proceedings of the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society Vol. IV, No. 3, 1952, p. 123-36.

Their minds were not cluttered with all the miscellaneous rubbish with which we burden ours, and they were not in the habit of pigeon-holing knowledge in the form of written notes and forgetting it till it is wanted again, as we are.⁴

In his youth, Allan MacArthur grew up to listen to people of remarkable memory. Notable in this group were his own mother and grandmother. If one was to be considered a "good story-teller" then it would be expected that he would have that kind of mind which Kenneth Jackson described. By standards today, perhaps it seems that demands were high, but that was their tradition--to be good, you had to have an excellent and well-trained memory. With this kind of background, one can see why Allan MacArthur felt let down at times, when, through lack of opportunities to practice, his memory failed him and did not meet his own standards. Nevertheless, there still remained considerable material from the entire body of narrative with which he was once familiar.

In the homes of the Scottish settlers, the story-telling was always in the mother tongue: "We used to have a lot of that in Gaelic but none in English." [C872, 71-48] They had several kinds of narratives, but Allan MacArthur was of the opinion that the most popular were historical:

Well, the old people here, especially the Scots, you know, they would gather together, well it would be always stories about Scotland, you know, the place they left and how hard it was for them when they left Scotland...came out to America--Canada, and Newfoundland especially--what a hard time they had to get along. And some of them you

⁴ Jackson, "Folktale in Gaelic Scotland", p. 137.

see they were sorry for leaving Scotland, for although they thought it was so hard in Scotland, they found that it was worse out in America...a lot worse.

[C872, 71-48]

Some of the historical legends about Scotland and the times when the emigration took place have already been dealt with in Chapter IV. This chapter will cover the remaining kinds of narratives he told; and for the purposes of presentation, I have divided the stories in groups, and I shall precede each one with a suitable title, even although Allan MacArthur did not assign titles to them himself. Following each of the stories will be a reference to the motifs incorporated in the texts, with occasional references to parallels in other sources of narratives.

Adventure

In the early days, piracy was a topic around which several stories were told "because Newfoundland was full of pirates at one time." [C872, 71-48] The pirates plundered many ships around the coastal waters, and it was said that they sometimes used to bury money obtained in their escapades.

[They buried the money] around Newfoundland in places, and over around Cape Breton too, and Nova Scotia and those places. But Newfoundland used to be a wonderful place for pirates but not so much as Nova Scotia and those places, because they'd have to come so far, you see, Spain, and from places like that.

[C872, 71-48]

It was also said that there were people who had found pirate money:

But you'd never find out. If they got pirate money you'd never find out...Well, I don't know why... they had that kind of a way, you see--their minds, you see. Well another thing, their word was their oath, you see; not so today--the word is not good today. You can't depend on a person telling you anything, but at that time if they'd find out you were telling lies they had no more use for you.

[C872, 71-48]

Allan MacArthur remembers hearing stories about people who had dreams of finding treasure but he was unable to tell any story of this as he had forgotten. There was one pirate legend which he did recall clearly.

The Pirate Ship

In the Gut O' Canso, there was one time a...there was a pirate ship came in, you know, for shelter. And she stole before that; she plundered a ship and killed all except the bo'sun boy--probably he might have been around fourteen or sixteen. And they kept him with them; he was a wonderful smart boy, and the pirate kept him with him. And there was one time...off the coast on the Nova Scotia side, because the Gut O' Canso makes the line between Cape Breton and Nova Scotia. Anyhow, they anchored in the Gut O' Canso where the schooners used to anchor. Anyhow the pirate came in and he stayed there; they were resting, you see. They were after plundering a few ships, and they had whatever they want, I suppose. And then, this little boy, he remembered, he was belonged to Nova Scotia, he remembered that there was one ship that wasn't far that was anchored, not very far from the pirate; and you know the tide runs strong in through the Gut O' Canso where it's blocked off there. But anyhow, this fellow, little boy, when they'd be down below or busy, you know, at something, he'd be on deck, and he'd be always watching the schooner, you see. And what did he do, but he got a bottle and he wrote

a note and he tied a string on the bottle, and he let this string...he put it where they wouldn't see it if they would come on deck. He tied it somewhere, and the string was strong enough so the bottle would go down to the schooner, you see. And by gosh, it was only there part of a day, you see, (it was in the night time, and late in the evening and early in the morning that he would use this bottle) but they picked it up. However, he told them all about that they were pirates, you know, where he was, and everything else. And by cripes, before the pirate got out, you know, there was...war came. And by cripes... and they didn't know what the boy done, but if they had he would have been thrown overboard. But anyhow they caught 'em, and the whole lot of them was killed. Well that happened in the Gut O' Canso. And this boy, you know, I don't know how much money they gave him, because he went about it this way, and he got cleared...He got saved. They demanded him first, the boy.

[C872, 71-48]

[Motifs: R12; surprisingly Thompson does not include a motif of a message in a bottle; c.f. R82; R211.4; Q91; Q111.]

The Supernatural

At one time in the Codroy Valley, it was fairly common to hear accounts of supernatural happenings. People spoke of fairies and witches and ghosts, although one never hears of them today. The stories were convincing and many involved first-hand accounts. Talking of the times when people saw ghosts, Allan MacArthur said it was a common thing in the Valley for people to see ghosts, "when there was nothing only people, no post office, no church, no law, no nothing...but lots of ghosts!" [C872, 71-48] His mother and grandmother who had come from Scotland often spoke of incidents which

happened in Scotland. "The people in Scotland were full of that sort of story, and it came over with them." [C872, 71-48] Mr. MacArthur did not, however, tell many of these stories he had heard in his youth, as he felt he could not do them justice.

Ghost Lights

Several years ago, there used to appear ghost lights at a place by the north bank of the Grand River Codroy, known as Gale's Island. These "ghost lights" as they were called appeared after sundown, but no one could explain why they appeared. Allan MacArthur described his experiences of the lights:

Many's a time I watched it...It was in the same place for years and years. It would stay on the ground for a little while first, then you would see it rising, rising, and it might go up twenty feet. And then it would burst, like, and it would shiver again and turn a different colour, you know, kind of red, and come down to the ground again. And it would stay on the ground probably for five minutes, and then when you'd see it moving again, it would start to get up, rising up and getting bright, and getting bigger. It would go so high. But we were so used to it, we didn't mind. But then it disappeared, after so many years. Perhaps they used to see it for twenty-five years, and then it disappeared altogether.

[C872, 71-48]

[Motifs: K1888. Illusory light; c.f. F491 Will o' the Wisp.]

The Codroy Valley, just like the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, had its legends of the "wee folk". It was not,

however, until Allan MacArthur knew that I was from a background where fairies were spoken of and often believed in, that he abandoned his hesitation about re-telling any of the details about them that he had heard from his mother and grandmother. Allan did not, after all, wish to put himself in a situation where there was the slightest possibility of being ridiculed on account of even talking about the fairies. He did, however, know several stories of encounters with the fairies, and he was familiar with the characteristics reputed to have been attributed to them.

Mrs. MacArthur introduced the topic by describing them as "little people dressed in green". [C872, 71-48] Her husband continued:

And they used to live in places under the ground. Well they wasn't natural people, I don't think... If they would go to a house, you see, and the woman would give them anything, like oatmeal, and whatever dish that they would have, when they would return it there would be a little more in it than what they got...My mother used to tell us a lot about them. And they used to live kind of underground; I don't think they had houses or anything...And once a year they would be shifting from one place to another, the lot of them.

[C872, 71-48]

[Motifs: F239.4.3; F236.1.6; F211.3; F391.2; V410; F258.]

Although reputed to be kind beings, the fairies were not to be meddled with. The people seemed to have a kind of respect for them and would do what was considered to be the wishes of the fairies lest they might have any undesirable dealings with

them.

Mrs. MacArthur recalled that she had heard that the fairies sometimes used to steal babies from their cradles:

One woman lost her baby, and she went to look in the cradle, there was something else in its place. I believe she brought the baby back after a time, I think.

[C872, 71-48]

[Motif: F321.1.]

Mrs. MacArthur did not know how the baby was brought back. Both she and her husband felt that it was mysterious to them how the fairies behaved. According to Allan MacArthur:

They say they used to take babies like that, you know, out of the cradle, whatever they used to do with them, of course, I guess they wouldn't be able to live with them, the fairies anyway.

[C872, 71-48]

It would appear from all accounts that Allan MacArthur's mother often spoke of the fairies to her children. The fear of being stolen by the fairies was a useful threat to keep her children well behaved. Mrs. MacArthur recalled that:

"She [Allan's mother] used to tell the children to be good or the 'sitheachan' [fairies] would come and steal them."⁵

[C872, 71-48] A fear or respect for the fairies was not something only belonging to her children, for old Mrs. MacArthur, Allan's mother, demonstrated that she also had consideration

⁵ Far from being peculiar to the Codroy Valley or the Scots in Newfoundland, the controlling of children's behaviour by verbal threats of this kind is found in many Newfoundland settlements, as discussed at length by John D.A. Widdowson in "Aspects of Traditional Verbal Control: Threats and Threatening Figures in Newfoundland Folklore." (Ph.D. thesis: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972).

for the fairy folk:

I used to hear my mother saying that when they used to be milking the cows in the cow-yard, that they would spill some over in places so that the fairies could pick it up.

[C872, 71-48]

While Allan MacArthur did not say why people spilled milk for the fairies, there is evidence that the same thing also occurred in Scotland. Donald A. MacKenzie states that offering milk and meal were supposed to appease the fairies. and that when it was spilled on the ground it was supposed to reach them in their subterranean homes.⁶

As far as I could ascertain, fairy music which was often spoken about in Scotland, was something which was not heard of in the Codroy Valley. No-one seemed to have heard of fairy musicians or singers, but Allan MacArthur brought to mind one complete story he had heard in his youth about someone who had had an encounter with the fairies:

The Fairy Lover

It's about a girl...they [the fairies] were shifting anyhow, and there was a girl who happened to see one of them, and she took an awful liking to him; well, they wouldn't be coming back till a year's time, back to where they left, the same place. And this girl, you know, she was giving up the world and everything else. And at last she went to a person that use to advise--they say there was people like that there--what to do, and she told a story about this fairy man, and she wanted some advice what was the best thing to do, and he told her that they would be

⁶ Donald A. MacKenzie, Scottish Folklore and Folk Life Studies in Race, Culture and Tradition. (London and Glasgow, 1935.) p. 208.

coming back, to remember the day that she seen him with the rest, and in a year's time, go in the same place and take an apple with her. Well anyhow, this gave her more courage, you see, and he told her "He'll speak to you."

And he said: "Take an apple, and when you sees him, split the apple in two, and you hold one half and pass him the other half." Well now, that happened; he looked at her and he spoke to her...I can't tell the rest [in English], but anyhow he told her that he wasn't belonged to this world, a living person in this world, and he said: 'Tha mi fo'n dreann fhuarach; cha teid m'fhuasgladh a flathanas' thubhairt e. Agus shin e dhith am pios ubhal air as...["I am under another power; I cannot be set free from the other world," he said. And he handed her back the piece of apple.]

What was his name? St. Lucifer, was it, that fell out with God? And they say that probably they [the fairies] were some of that tribe, you see. Well, we don't know what happened, if the likes of that ever happened, that they were drove out of Heaven because they were jealous with God, and he [Lucifer] was turned out, and there was a lot of them followed him. Now that's only stories that I heard...But he gave her to understand that he wasn't of this world naturally, and he passed her the half of the apple back. Of course, it could be true, and it could be only a story. She never got him. And she forgot all about him after that--she was like she was before she ever saw him.

[C872, 71-48]

[Motifs: F235.3; F301; F301.1; F301.7; D1905.2; A63.5.]

Although the theme of a fairy lover was fairly common in Scotland,⁷ surprisingly MacEdward Leach did not come across it in Nova Scotia. In his "Celtic Tales from Cape Breton", he stated that: "There are, however, few long tales of the fairy and no fairy mistress or lover tales."⁸ It is probably

⁷ To cite one example of the many that exist, James MacDougall and George Calder in Folk Tales and Fairy Love in Gaelic and English. (Edinburgh, 1910), p. 133 ff.

⁸ MacEdward Leach, "Celtic Tales from Cape Breton" Studies in Folklore. (Indiana, 1957) p. 52.

more likely that there were examples at least in the early days of the Scots in Cape Breton, which Leach unfortunately did not come across while collecting among the Gaelic-speaking people there. More significantly, however, this only serves to emphasize all the more how Gaelic narratives, such as the few cited here, tend to disappear completely through lack of use of the language and consequently the telling of the stories in the mother tongue of those who heard them from their youth.

The idea of the fairies being fallen angels is one which was widespread all over Scotland and, as Alexander Carmichael shows in his Carmina Gadelica [Vol II, pp. 352-53]. There are also many other references to this motif in much of the literature about Scottish narrative and folklore.⁹

Allan MacArthur's actual narration of "The Fairy Lover" confirmed the impression that he was telling his stories in a situation quite different to what he once knew. He had never heard this, or other stories in English, nor was he himself accustomed to narrating an English version of it. It was, therefore, natural for him to quote the words of the fairy lover in the language spoken by the fairies that he had heard about, namely the Gaelic.

In the same story-telling session, Allan remembered another of his mother's legends, a story about one of the

⁹ Two additional examples can be found in: Hugh Miller, Scenes and Legends, (Cincinnati, 1851), Chapter V, and Donald A. MacKenzie, Scottish Folklore and Folk Life, (London and Glasgow, 1935), p. 224.

MacCrimmon pipers. Having already used his mother tongue for part of the legend of "The Fairy Lover," he was transported back into the story-telling situation which was familiar to him, and he told this next one entirely in Gaelic. An interesting, if not amusing incident followed: Dr. Halpert happened to be there at the time, and, showing his enthusiasm for the story (even although his reactions throughout the Gaelic narration were such that Allan did not notice whether he spoke the language or not) he asked Allan MacArthur if he would mind re-telling the same story in English. Happy to oblige, as he recognized Dr. Halpert's obvious interest, he said that it might be a little difficult for him, but he would be glad to attempt it nevertheless. The following is the English version of the story that we had just heard in Gaelic:

The MacCrimmon Piper

'Se'n uamh 's e'n uamh a dh'abras mise ri "tunnel" [funnel?]. . . well that means it's dug under the ground. [It's a cave, it's a cave that I call a tunnel. . .] And they had places like that in Scotland. Well they used to go a-hide in those places in time of war or if you did a crime or anything and you want to run away. Well you wouldn't have to do much in Scotland at that time, sure you'd be killed. If you steal, you'd be hung--that was the rule in Scotland one time, for that. If you do any forgery, you'd be hung for that. And they had to have places, you know, proper. . . aite anns a' mhonadh [places in the moors]--they'd have placen (sic) for to go a-hide. And perhaps they'd be years there before they'd be found.

Well, this is something like this. An uamh, mar tha Uamh Chreang--bha i cho sean Uamh

Chreang, 's bhiodh na piobairean, bhiodh na daoine air son fhaighinn a mach de cho fada chaidh a' cladhach bho'n talamh anns an fhuaradh 's cha d'fhuair iad a mach riamh bho'n a' thoisich iad air faighinn a mach air 's aileamh nam beothaichean fiadhaich a bhiodh a faighinn ann. Dh'fheuch piobairean ri faighinn a mach 's bhitheas 'g a marbhadh, na beothaichean a bh' ann bhiodh iad a marbhadh nam piobairean 's dh'fheumadh iad a' phìob a' chumail air falbh cho fad 's a bhiodh an fheodhainn air thalamh gu h-ard, gun cluinneadh iad a phìob agus 's e MacCriomain a fear mu dheireadh a' dh'fheuch, agus chaidh esan na b'fhaide na chaidh gin de'n fheodhainn eile, agus rinn e sin, choinnich e na beothaichean a bhiodh a' marbhadh nan daoine, choinnich e pàirt dhiubh sin, 's chuir e port air a' phìob--rinn e fhein am port, "Cha till MacCriomain, Cha till mi tuilleadh," agus thuig iad, an fheodhainn a bha coiseachd air an talamh, thuig iad am port mu dheireadh--"Nach truagh mi fhein gun trì lamhan; da lamh 's a'phìob, da lamh 's a'phìob, da lamh 's a'phìob 's lamh 's a' chlàidheamh.

[Well, this is something like this. The cave, as the Creang Cave, it was so old the Creang Cave, and the pipers, the people tried to find out how far into the ground the cave went, but they never did discover this on account of the wild beasts that were there. Some pipers tried to find out, and they were killed; the wild beasts that were there used to kill the pipers, they had to keep the pipes going so that the people above on the ground could hear the pipes, and it was MacCrimmon who was the last one to try, and he went further in than any of the rest, and he did that, he met the beasts that killed the people. He met some of them and played a tune on the pipes--he composed the tune himself "MacCrimmon will not return, I will return no more", and they understood, those who were walking on the ground, they understood the tune at last--"Hopeless am I without three hands; two hands on the pipes, two hands on the pipes, and one hand on the sword."]

But he couldn't keep the pipes going and kill the animals, you know. And if he had the third hand, you know, he could use the sword, you see keep the pipes going. And shortly after that, the pipes faded away. Well, he was killed, you see, and never returned. He was killed, and I think they gave up trying then, because there was a few pipers, you

know, lost their lives into it.

[C872, 71-48; transcribed and translated by Mrs. G. Bennett]

[Motifs: F757; c.f. F402.6.4.1; c.f. B15.7.1;
N773; K551.3.5.]

The story of a piper exploring a cave inhabited by wild beasts is one which was widespread in Scotland. In the Skye version, the piper is one of the MacCrimmons, hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan. In his book, The High-Bagpipe, W.L. Manson devotes an entire chapter on the theme of pipers in enchanted caves, with his version from the Isle of Skye closely resembling the legend told by Allan MacArthur.¹⁰

This particular story is also a fine example of a legend which would have been followed by a song, if not by the pipe music also, and the ceillidh that Allan MacArthur knew in his youth was the ideal setting for all three. Unfortunately, by the time I recorded his version of the legend, he had since forgotten the song, and he himself had never played the particular lament on the pipes, even though he remembered his uncle doing so. I was particularly fortunate, then, on a previous occasion when Allan had spoken of the MacCrimmons, to have had both of my parents with me to complete the setting of his discussion of these great pipers. My mother sang for Allan the song "Cumha MhicCriomain" (MacCrimmon's Lament) which has in its chorus the words contained in Allan's story: "Cha till MacCrioman, Cha till mi tuilleadh [cha till e tuille]", and my

¹⁰ W.L. Manson, The Highland Bagpipe: Its History, Literature, and Music (Paisley, 1901) Chapter XVII, with the Skye version pp. 248-49.

father followed it with the playing of one of the MacCrimmon pibrochs. [C868, 71-48]

Indians as Witches

At one time, it was said that there were witches in the Codroy Valley. The people had a fear of being witched and would at all costs avoid any situation which they thought might lead to such a thing happening. According to Allan MacArthur, the old people used to talk about witches, and they believed that some of the Indians who lived in the Valley had the power of witching. Mrs. MacArthur recalled that "there was old squaws here that used to witch people." Allan MacArthur said that those Indians who had the power would witch anyone "if you refuse them or make them mad or anything." [C872, 71-48] When asked how the Indians would witch, Mr. MacArthur replied:

Well, there's nobody knows; they'd never tell anybody else, that was a secret among themselves, you see. And some of them were...had more power to do it than others, you see, that's the way; they were afraid of one another, you know, when it comes to that, 'cos there was some of them they could witch worse than others, you see...But all of them couldn't do it, but there was some who could witch you, but not all of them.

Varying circumstances led to people being witched, but it is evident that the Indians did not like to be interfered with:

Well, if you were in the woods, the white people, if they were in the woods or out close to them [the Indians] when they'd be deer hunting or hunting wild game like that, well they could witch your gun so that your gun could fire but you wouldn't kill nothing, and things like that, you see.

[C872, 71-48]

[Motif: G265.8.3.1.1.]

The Indians were also known to have the power to witch animals, as shown by one story told by Allan MacArthur in which he also described some of the features of the way of life of the Codroy Valley Indians:

Well, I tell you, some of them...well there wasn't many who could witch you in my time, but now... they used to make baskets, that's what they lived off, making baskets all the time and making butter tubs and things like that. The Indians, they used to live along, live along clear of white people, and...well, when the trade started around, they used to make baskets and go down to Port aux Basques and sell them. Well, if they'd come across here and they wanted to go to Little River Station, we used to call it then [now St. Andrew's], with a load of baskets and they'd want for you to drive them over, well if you would refuse them, you know, they could witch your horse, you see, that probably he'd be cripple for a while, or something like that. Well, that happened here all right, more than once... yes. But according as they were dying out, you know, this was giving out. Well, now today it's no use to mention anything like that, you know; nobody'd believe you that they could do those things.

[Recorded on November 13, 1970 (1st of 2 tapes); not accessioned by M.U.N.F.L.A.]

[Motifs: G269.4; G265.4.2; G265.7.]

With the disappearance of the Micmac Indians from the Codroy Valley in the 1930's when those who did not die from tuberculosis moved to Nova Scotia, the apprehension which the other settlers of the Valley felt towards them disappeared also.

Place Lore

Fishermen on the Grand Codroy River, and especially those experienced in guiding sportsmen in the Valley are usually

familiar with all the local place names. Several guides still tell the legend of how one fishing pool along the river was named after the child of an Indian family who lived there. Although the legend or the naming of the pool have been given no particular date, the incident which brought about the name predates Prowse who published his Guide to Newfoundland in 1895, as he has included "Molly Chiguanay Pool" on his guide maps for fishermen on the rivers of the Codroy Valley [p. 178]. While his spelling is not identical to the usual spelling heard today, it is still the same pool, as his location is accurate.

For many years, Allan MacArthur was one of the Codroy Valley guides who had a thorough knowledge of the area. Not only did he tell the legend, but he was quoted by some of the other guides as being an accurate and reliable source of information and lore about the rivers. After he spoke of the Indians who once inhabited the Valley, Allan told this legend of how the place in question got its name:

Indian Place Name Story

And a family of them lived out there, and there was one of their children died, and this name they called them Mollie or something like that. And she's buried out there somewhere. And they called it Mollichignic, you know. And then the people came here, they picked up the word and called it Mollichignic; but now they call it Chignic, you see--well they are leaving Mollie out. Well...and the way they used to spell it first, it was M-o-l-l-i-c-h-e-g-e-n-i-c. And it was on account of this child that died and buried up there...Well that may be true and it may be lie, I don't know.

[F1329, 71-48]

Nursery Tales

With these few examples of narrative demonstrating the fact that the story-telling tradition among the Scots of the Codroy Valley was once very strong. I was content to leave the folk narrative at this point, accepting the remnants for what Allan had said they represented. His children had already told me that they did not know even one short version such as their father had preserved in his memory and could scarcely even remember the topics of the tales.

On the last night of my first summer in the Valley, when the MacArthurs were holding a ceillidh to bid me farewell, I was very pleasantly surprised when Allan's son, Frank, laid down the accordion he had been playing and started to recite a story which he and his brothers and sisters had heard at bedtime from their grandmother and father. He immediately had the attention of the rest of the family, who, ignoring the fact that the one who used to tell it to them had just gone upstairs to bed since he was feeling very tired, they all listened to Frank who told it at a considerable speed, and with such fluency in the language that he could only have had if he had heard the tale many, many times. From the reactions of the rest of the family, it was obvious that hearing this story which they had not heard since their childhood brought back many pleasant and amusing memories. For the purposes of this study, only the English translation of this cumulative tale is given here, even although Frank told the

entire story in the Gaelic, and did not himself give any translation, even to those in the company who could not follow it:

Murchan and Mearchan

Murchan and Mearchan I heard last night how they went for nuts. Murchan went up into the tree and as he shook them down, Mearchan would eat them. Murchan came down out of the tree, and he asked Mearchan: "What are you doing now with the nuts?"

"I ate them," said Mearchan.

"What's to be done to you?"

"A stick that beats it. The ones below came. A stick that beats it; the ones above came, beating my bottom."

"Where will I get a stick?"

"Where is the stick?"

"Where are you going?" said the stick.

"A stick to beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get me," said the stick, "until you get an axe that will cut me."

He came to the axe. "Where are you going?" said the axe.

"An axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan, who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh you won't get me," said the axe, "until you get a stone that will grind me."

He came to the stone. "Where are you going?" said the stone.

"A stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get me," said the stone, "until you get water that will wet me."

He came to the water. "Where are you going?" said the water.

"Water that will wet a stone, a stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get me," said the water, "until you get a deer that will swim me."

He came to the deer. "Where are you going?" said the deer.

"A deer that will swim water, that will wet a stone, a stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, a stick that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get me," said the deer, "until

you get butter to rub on my hoofs."

He came to the butter. "Where are you going?" said the butter."

"Butter that will go on a hound, a hound that will run a deer, a deer that will swim water, water that will wet a stone, a stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get me," said the butter, "until you get a mouse that will scrape me."

He came to the mouse. "Where are you going?" said the mouse.

"A mouse that will scrape butter, butter on a hound's feet, a hound that will run a deer, a deer that will swim water, water that will wet a stone, a stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get me," said the mouse, "until you get a cat that will chase me."

He went to the cat. "Where are you going?" said the cat.

"A cat that will chase a mouse, a mouse that will scrape butter, butter on a hound's feet, a hound that will run a deer, a deer that will swim water, water that will wet a stone, a stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get me," said the cat, "until you get a drop of milk from the stable boy over there."

He came to the stable boy. "Where are you going?" said the stable boy.

"A fire for the stable boy, that will burn the cow, hay for the cow, that will give a drop to the cat, a cat that will chase a mouse, a mouse that will scrape butter, butter on a hound's feet, a hound that will run a deer, a deer that will swim water, water that will wet a stone, a stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts.

"Oh, you won't get a wisp of hay for the cow from me until you get a bannock from the housewife over there that I will eat."

He went where the housewife was. "Where are you going?" said the housewife.

"A bannock from the housewife," said the stable boy.

"Hay from the stable boy for the cow, a drop from the cow to the cat, a cat that will chase a

mouse, a mouse that will scrape butter, butter on a hound's feet, a hound that will run a deer, a deer that will swim water, water that will wet a stone, a stone that will grind an axe, an axe that will cut a stick, that will beat Mearchan who has eaten my nuts."

"Oh, you won't get a bannock from me," said the housewife, "until you take this sieve that you will lift up and down in the brook, and that you will get full of water."

He went down towards the brook. "Where are you going?" said the brook. But anyway, he took the sieve with him. He went down to the brook; he filled the sieve with water. The sieve wouldn't hold a drop. A big eagle came over his head. "Rub soft bottom on it, rub soft bottom on it." He rubbed soft bottom on it, and the sieve wouldn't hold a drop.

A big raven came over his head. "Rub stiff red clay on it, rub stiff red clay on it." He rubbed stiff red clay on it. He picked up a sieve-full. He filled the sieve full of water, and he took the water and gave it to the housewife, and he got a bannock from the housewife, and he gave the bannock to the stable boy. He got a wisp of hay from the stable boy and he gave it to the cow. He got a drop from the cow; he gave it to the cat, and the cat got it. The cat chased the mouse that scraped the butter; butter for the feet of the hound; hound that ran the deer; deer that swims water; water that wets stone; stone that grinds axe. And it happened to Mearchan--like his bottom turned red.

[C898, 71-48; transcribed and translated by Lloyd Leland]

[Motifs: Z40; H.1023.2; B455.3; B451.5.]

Although Frank did not recite the accumulating repetitions of the tale with consistent accuracy (such as the point at which he introduced the deer), his small errors did not detract from the entertainment of the tale. None of his family corrected him when he made slight errors, as they were probably astonished that he could remember it at all, particularly as he was reciting at such a speed. The tale itself is an

interesting combination of Type 2030 (The old woman and her pig) and Type 1180 (carrying water in a sieve), and like all cumulative tales, it was an amusing game in which the children had to try and remember all the items in the sequence they were arranged in the tale. With Allan MacArthur's great emphasis upon accuracy of the memory, I could not but wonder if this tale, which his children so obviously enjoyed, was only one of his methods of exercising their memories while he entertained them at the same time. If this were in fact his aim, then he certainly succeeded, as Frank had never recited it to his own children at bedtime (since his wife had no Gaelic, they adopted English as the language of their home); nor had he heard it since his own youth, when occasionally his father used to ask him to tell it to his younger brothers and sisters as he helped put them to bed.

Apart from the tale, "Murchan and Mearchan", which required memorization more like the process employed in learning a poem or a song, other narratives, all legends, only required an interested audience who wanted to hear of the stories that were handed down from generations gone before. With the absence of this, however, the memory of the stories had faded considerably, and Allan MacArthur no longer felt that he did justice to all the stories that he had once heard and repeated so often at the ceillidhs of his younger days.

Allan MacArthur's reputation for being a very good storyteller was well-known in the Codroy Valley. He was continually

cited as being a reliable source for history and legend. In fact, the year after his death in 1971 when I did additional fieldwork, I asked several people I had not previously met if they knew much about local Codroy Valley history and legend. Usually, they expressed regret that they could no longer direct me to the person whom they had always regarded as being an authority on these topics, Allan MacArthur.

It seems paradoxical then, that if one reads the transcribed texts of his stories, those contained here, or even if one were to listen to the recordings of the same narratives, he might even be of the opinion that Allan MacArthur's reputation seems undeserved. The reader or listener finds that the texts lack fluency; the narrator often back-tracks, is repetitive and hesitant, and consequently much concentration is often required to follow the story. Undoubtedly, this occurred because on these occasions Allan MacArthur was relating his stories in English, a language in which he had never heard these stories told. Not only did he have to think in English about subjects which, for him, belonged to the Gaelic, but he was required to present an account in English as accurately as he could. Constantly aware that much of the original meaning and vitality is lost in translation, Allan MacArthur faced an almost impossible task. He frequently searched for English idioms which might come close to what he would have said in Gaelic. When English failed completely to provide words which were adequate, then he would revert to Gaelic to give the true

picture of the story.

In the narrative texts contained in this study, it is noticeable that the phrases "you know" and "you see" are found frequently throughout. In the Gaelic texts on the other hand, there is not one equivalent to such phrases. In Gaelic, there is no need of them. In English, however, the narrator faces a linguistic barrier, and the insertion of these phrases allows him a brief moment's thought on how to overcome this barrier.

Yet even if the reader of these texts might have little interest in Allan MacArthur's style as a story-teller, this certainly was not the case with those present while he was actually telling his legends, even those in English. Undoubtedly, some of his audience had heard him tell stories in Gaelic on many previous occasions, but even for them his reputation remained unchanged when he narrated in English. Many young people who thought of him as a good story-teller relied upon the judgement of their elders who had told them this in the first place, and while they may not have understood some of the reasons behind his style of narrating in English, they had respect for his great memory, his ability, and his reputation. The reader or listener's ability to perceive Allan MacArthur's style is handicapped in that he completely misses out on watching the performance. This was something which was heavily weighted in his favour as far as remaining a "good story-teller" was concerned. He had the gift of being able to

hold his audience with his facial and vocal expressions which set the mood for his stories and varied according to changes within the stories. He could become quite intense at a part of a story which felt that way to him, and the audience would be drawn into this also. He was not purposely trying to dramatize his story; rather, he became so completely involved that it seemed as if he were transported back into the story-telling situation introduced to him by his mother, when all the elements of the narratives, natural or supernatural, could have been as real as life.

In this collection of Scottish narratives from the Codroy Valley, it is noticeable that no very long legends or folktales are found such as one finds in many of the older Scottish and Irish collections. As Stith Thompson pointed out: "A tale need by no means be complex in order to form a strong tradition,"¹¹ and the tradition certainly seems to have been strong in the days when the language flourished among the Codroy Valley Scots.

There is, of course, no way of knowing just how long the narratives told by the first settlers were, if in fact they brought with them any of the very long tales such as were popular in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Comparing story-telling in Scotland today to the days when Campbell of Islay did his collecting, Kenneth Jackson makes the comment that folktale "was dying out in Campbell's time

¹¹ Stith Thompson, The Folktale. (New York, 1951), p. 188.

nearly a hundred years ago";¹² he also considers that the lengthy tale is next to extinct and only abbreviated versions survive.

Jackson has also suggested that the loss of interest in the old legend and folktale is in part due to the two World Wars. The young men who might otherwise have been continuing the tradition of hearing, and later telling the stories of their forebears were then occupied with the new activities of the wars. Although I obtained no actual statistics, it is certain that many of the young men of the Codroy Valley were in the services during the two wars. Several of them spoke of the time they spent overseas during the Second World War, and they frequently related incidents, mostly referring to civilian encounters. Some were amusing, others described what seemed to them to be strange customs or manner of speech. Doubtless, this might have influenced the kinds of narratives being told in the Codroy Valley, but it seems likely that the greatest single influence on changing the status quo was the increased communication--roads, railway, telephone, radio, and television. This led to the use of English as the language common to all people inside and outside of the area. The most drastic and final change then followed; once the instrument of passing on the traditions, namely the Gaelic, was on a rapid decline, then so also was the frequency of relating the narratives. Finally, in the space of a generation, the custom of

¹² Jackson, "Folktale in Gaelic Scotland", p. 23.

story-telling was altered until it reached the stage at which it was when the recordings were made during the fieldwork for this study in 1970.

The oldest people living in the Codroy Valley today often express a sadness that the way of life there has changed so drastically from what they once knew. Most of these changes have taken place during the last three decades, and while they welcomed certain changes that made life easier, they also recognized that modernization has its drawbacks. The coming of electricity in 1962 opened the door to new ideas on how to make so-called improvements on their way of life; it certainly let in new methods of making the work much easier and quicker, but this open door also allowed many of the old ways to be pushed out altogether.

* It is the loss of many of these traditional ways that is now lamented by the old folk, for they realize that their ideas of social life in the Valley have been replaced by others in which they cannot participate, or which they do not understand. And not the least of their losses has been the disappearance of their once strong tradition of story-telling at the cellidh where their excitement was not programmed by a national television network telecasting today's violence in technicolor. It was rather the delights of the imagination that could transport the listeners back into history, or to the realm of the supernatural or into an incredible adventure--all of this and more, aided only by the warmth of a hearth and good company.

CHAPTER IX

TRADITIONAL FOOD AND DRINK

This and the next chapter will deal with selected aspects of material culture in the traditional way of life in the Codroy Valley. It will begin in the kitchen where most activities were centered, and although crafts such as leatherwork, cobbling, skate-making, tailoring, and wool working were also done there, this chapter will only cover the daily kitchen chores of the preparation of food and drink. I was fortunate that the greater part of the chapter which deals with food had the personal vetting of Mrs. MacArthur who read over what I had written and made corrections only two months before her death.

The domestic life of the Scottish settlers in the Codroy Valley was, for the most part, a carry-over of the way of life in the Scottish Highlands in the mid-1800's, except for several changes made to suit the conditions of the new country. To begin with, the houses were timber framed rather than stone built. The house in which Allan MacArthur spent most of his life was one of the many built at the turn of the century by carpenters from Cape Breton. [Plate X] It was a two-storey house with a large kitchen and a sitting room, or "the room" as it was called [See Chapter VII] taking up

the ground floor. It had stairs leading from the small hallway opposite the front door to the four upstairs bedrooms which had low walls, sloping ceilings, and dormer-type windows. The outside of the house had elaborately carved door and window mouldings, perhaps a mark of the days when tradesmen took time and care to finish their work in the neatest way they could. The chimney, set against the back of the house and between the kitchen and "the room", was built by Allan MacArthur's grandfather who, when he emigrated, was a stonemason to trade, and according to his grandson "could build any kind of a chimney". [C879, 71-48]

This same style of house which was popular at that time can still be seen in the Codroy Valley though it is not as much in evidence there as it is today in Cape Breton. The MacArthur's home, while basically still the same structure, has been altered to a central chimney home by adding on a very large kitchen at the back of the house, and upstairs above this, two bedrooms with a small "box room" in between. At the same time, the roof was removed, the upstairs walls were raised to eliminate the original dormer-windows, and with the walls of the new extension and those of the part that was already in existence all at the same level, the house was roofed. [Plate IV in Chapter III] With seven rooms upstairs, then, one was turned into a bathroom. Mrs. MacArthur made two entries in her notebook of events which related to their newly renovated house: "Started building the

new kitchen June 21st. 1948;" and "Had dinner in it July 1st." This newer style of house, which was the popular style of the 1940's, is prevalent in the Valley today among the two-storey older houses.

The running of the household was solely the work of the woman of the house, although decisions to purchase food and clothing for the family usually required her husband's approval. A family would deal at one of the Valley's general stores, such as A.D. MacIsaac's at Upper Ferry or his brother, Duncan MacIsaac's at Little River, (later St. Andrew's).

In the late autumn of each year, the winter supplies were bought from the store, and these had to last at least until May, when spring came. Although the store remained open all winter, there were several reasons for "buying in for the winter". First of all, the autumn brought an extra earning potential to the people of the Valley for they would have gathered in a harvest of blueberries, partridge berries, marsh berries, and bakeapples which could be sold to the merchant or, more likely, used for credit on purchases made. For this same purpose, the merchant also accepted vegetable crops, and Mrs. MacArthur mentioned that many families, including her own, exchanged butter and eggs along with knitted mitts and socks.

These commodities, like the berries, were shipped out of the area to markets known to the merchant or occasionally resold locally. Secondly, buying in supplies before the onset of winter also eliminated the possibility of a family being

left without food during particularly stormy weather such as Allan MacArthur described, when even a horse could not get through the road for the deep drifts of snow. In weather conditions like that, if someone in the area needed a priest or a doctor, a group of men would work together to shovel the road in order to let a horse and sleigh get through.

Mrs. MacArthur recalled a typical list of provisions she would buy to feed her family for the winter. Among the items bought were: a 50 lb. sack of beans, a box of raisins and a box of prunes with about 10 lbs. of fruit in each, a 5 gallon keg of molasses, a 100 lb. sack of coarse Scotch oatmeal, a 100 lb. sack of table corn meal, seven or eight 100 lb. bags of flour, a 100 lb. bag of sugar, a 100 lb. sack of onions, five or more 10 lb. chests of tea, a 200 lb. barrel each of salt turbot, salt cod, and salt herring, and a 200 lb. barrel of salt beef. The flour was sold in strong cotton bags, and the sugar came in a thin cotton bag which was packed inside a strong paper bag. Mrs. MacArthur added that she didn't like to buy very much tea from the local store because she "didn't like the tea they used to have; it was cheap tea they had, and it smelled like hay boiling on the stove." Instead, she used to wait for an opportunity of buying some from Channel (Port aux Basques). [From a telephone interview, February, 1974, and also from conversation in November, 1974.] My mother, on hearing this description, said that the large quantities of flour and meal and the trading of butter and

eggs at the store reminded her of her own childhood during the 1920's and 1930's.

Since most families required such large quantities of provisions from the store, it was not surprising that many found it difficult to pay and, as a result, found themselves bound to the general merchant by an almost perpetual debt. There was a system of credit which Mrs. MacArthur described: "The shopkeeper used to mark it [the amount owed] down, so you wouldn't have to pay all at once. They'd keep it in the books, and whenever you'd have so much [money or exchangeable goods] you'd always have to give it to them, and you'd never have any to spare." [Written down during a conversation in November, 1974] In spite of this, the people in the Codroy Valley still considered that they were a lot more fortunate than most Newfoundlanders, for they were better able to use their land to produce crops, livestock, and dairy produce than the people living in other parts of the Island.

Mrs. MacArthur added: "we used to have our own meats salted as there was no way of keeping it fresh then. We used to kill a pig that would weigh over 260 lbs. [Plate XIX] and salt it, and also a couple of sheep, and salt that." [Quoted from a letter from Mrs. MacArthur, February 11, 1974]

When slaughtering animals, there were certain traditions which have always been followed and which are still kept by most people to this day. A pig was always slaughtered two or three days after the new moon "because the pork will taste



Plate XIX

Pig killed for the winter.

better and the meat won't shrink when you cook it." [Mrs. MacArthur, November, 1974] This truth was demonstrated to me by one of the MacArthurs who had just killed a pig. His wife was frying some of the pork and showed me that it did not shrink; she pointed out, however, that they had once killed the pig at the wrong time, and it "just went away to nothing in the pan". The Scottish people in the Valley have never saved any of the pig's blood when slaughtering, but the French people did so and used it for blood puddings. When asked why the Scottish did not save it, Mrs. MacArthur said that she did not know, but a woman of French background made the comment that the Scots would not save it because they said that the Devil went through it. The French also ate the pork liver while the Scots discarded it. They seemed to give no reason for this, except for the fact that this is what the old people always did; and so, for this same reason, they continued to eat the liver of the lamb and beef and some of the game animals, discard all kidneys of all animals, discard pig's head while they cooked sheep's and cow's head, but they ate the hearts of all these animals.

Although they made all their own butter in the summer, they could not do so in the winter when the cows went dry. Mrs. MacArthur commented that there was no such thing as margarine in those days, "only the good butter", and in order to keep the family supplied, they had to salt a tub or two of butter containing about twenty-five or thirty pounds. "When

that was gone, there would be no more butter until the cows would freshen in the spring."

Eggs were also very scarce in winter, for the colder the weather became the fewer eggs the hens would lay. In the late autumn, Mrs. MacArthur used to "put away eggs for the Christmas baking"; then when the New Year had been celebrated, they would be almost without eggs until Easter. "When the hens would stop laying, we had no more eggs till they would start in the spring. We would be saving up for Easter Sunday; that was the big day, see how many eggs you would eat. John and George used to eat nine or ten each!" [Quoted from a letter from Mrs. MacArthur, February 11, 1974]

Needless to say, with all these basic supplies purchased for the winter, the woman of the house was kept busy making virtually everything the family ate. To the modern-day housewife, seven or eight barrels of flour seemed an enormous amount, but it was quickly used up in the baking of bread and bannocks, "bonnach" or "buttermilk cakes" as they were sometimes called. Yeast was not among the items bought in the very early days for there was none available in the Valley. Instead, they used to use hops to leaven their bread. Allan MacArthur described to me those days:

Well, we used to use hops, you know, first, when the yeast wasn't plenty round here...We used to grow hops, and then in the fall of the year, we'd pick off the leaves off them, and pack them up, you know, for the winter. Oh yes, we used to grow hops. Well, we could buy them, you know, in pound packages, you know, they were packed up in

pound packages of hops, you know, and that's what they used to make the bread of before there was yeast cake.

[C879, 71-48]

When it came to describing how the hops were actually used in bread making, he stopped abruptly on realizing he was not sure of every detail:

Well, by gosh, I can't tell you; they used to put a little flour in it; Mary knows more about that than I do.

Mrs. MacArthur gave this description:

Well, we used to boil the hops and then thicken it with a...I never made very much of it...we put molasses in it, strained it...he knows how.

[C879, 71-48]

As it turned out, her husband did know about the method, for he added a final note:

They used to put a little flour in it and make it kind of thick, probably fill a gallon jar with that, and when they'd be going to mix bread, they'd probably take a cup or a cup and a half of that and put it in; now, that was as good as yeast.

[C879, 71-48]

With this last comment on the early days of bread making, the topic was closed, and I concluded that they had told me all they knew on the subject. I was surprised, however, over two years after the death of her husband when Mrs. MacArthur asked to hear what I had recorded or written on bread making in the early days. She listened carefully and then proceeded to correct my incomplete account as follows:

We boiled the hops and strained it. Then boil it with a cup of molasses or sugar. Add some cooked mashed potatoes and salt. Boil it on the stove again, then thicken with flour.

[Written down during conversation, November 1974]

She then commented upon her husband's remark that "that was as good as yeast" by saying: "No, it wasn't as good, but it had to do!"

Although I did not ask Mrs. MacArthur why her description was more accurate at this point in time or why she did not contribute the information in the first instance, I feel that there are several reasons for what took place: Mrs. MacArthur was, in 1970, still questioning the fact that I recorded such information at all, and occasionally she quietly drew her husband's attention to the fact that the tape recorder was on. He in turn silenced her doubts by emphasizing that he was telling nothing but truths; and if he did not tell it, then it would be lost. As was the custom with women of her generation in Scotland and in other male-dominated societies, she accepted her place as a woman, conceding to the better knowledge and understanding of her husband and refraining from openly contradicting him even if she knew better. And finally, after her husband's death, since she immediately suffered a stroke which partially paralyzed her face and one side, I would conclude that it was not so much a case of her memory improving but that she saw herself in the role her husband once held, namely that of tradition bearer. In fact,

there have been many additional pieces of information which Mrs. MacArthur made a point of telling me during the two years since her husband's death.

On this same subject of bread making, Mrs. MacArthur added that she used to make bread at least twice a week when all the family were still at home. She would mix the bread at night, then cover it with a cloth and put coats and sweaters on top of it to keep it warm. She would leave it like this overnight; and by morning, it would be "up right high", ready to be put into six or eight loaf pans and baked in the oven.

Besides this, the MacArthurs also described how some people used to keep aside a small bun unbaked from one baking day to use to leaven the bread on the next baking day. This they called "sour dough".

The Scottish women also made "bonnachs", or "bannocks" as they were sometimes called in English. These are not leavened with yeast but with baking powder and are usually made in large, segmented "rounds" of about ten inches across and an inch or more high. More recently, most people have made them in small individual portions cut out with a cup or glass from the flattened out mixture. These "bonnachs" were probably a carry-over from the Scottish Highlands and Islands as they are still common today in many kitchens there. During my own childhood on the Isle of Skye, the large "bonnachs" were a staple food for us, often replacing bread. My grand-

mother baked large quantities of about eight or ten of them in one batch just as the old people, according to Mrs. MacArthur, used to do in the Valley.

To those unfamiliar with the "bonnach", it is like a baking powder bun or buttermilk cake and is often called baking powder biscuit by today's housewife. Mrs. MacArthur and most of the people she knew who made them did not use a written recipe for "bonnachs". She said that she made them by mixing together a four-cup sieve of flour, one teaspoonful of baking soda, a quarter pound of shortening, and some salt along with enough sour milk to make the dough, but not too wet; or, if sweet [fresh] milk was used, she would add two teaspoons of baking powder besides. This amount would make one large "bonnach", enough for one meal. She also saw her mother-in-law baking them on the top of the stove on an iron griddle, a method which is also common in Scotland. She did not, however, use the name "griddle scones", common in Scotland, for this particular variation.

Although I did not ask the MacArthurs what the traditional meals were in the Codroy Valley, I ate with them and with other hospitable informants often enough to assume that over the five summers I spent there, I had sampled a considerable number of them. Mrs. MacArthur enjoyed discussing foods and their preparation and was regarded locally as a good cook, judging by the frequency that I was asked if I knew her various recipes for different foods whose preparation she was known to

excel in. Her daughter, Margaret, described Mrs. MacArthur as being quite an imaginative and interesting cook. She not only made all the traditional foods expected by her family, but she also introduced several new dishes. She got some of her "receipts", as she called them, from newspaper articles, or in the Catholic Digest, and after the family acquired a radio, she frequently wrote down others from the dictation of a radio announcer. Even in her last years, she still maintained this interest in cooking.

To me, a Scot living in Newfoundland, the food in the Codroy Valley shows a distinct Newfoundland influence, with considerable degree of uniformity of cooking habits among the Scots, French, Irish, and English alike. Favourite Newfoundland cooking practices are part of the day to day menus, such as boiling, frying, or roasting with salt fat-back pork added for flavour; boiling vegetables in salt-pickled or corned beef, usually with cabbage; and the popular salt "spare ribs" boiled with vegetables, frequently turnip greens. Since I had come across none of these cooking methods in Scotland, I concluded that this was one area where the Scots, at least, had adapted their traditional ways to fit the availability of certain commodities of the New World. I failed to notice, however, one interesting observation pointed out to me by a Newfoundlander, Sidney Shears of Jeffries who worked in a brush-cutting camp at Morris's Brook where Allan MacArthur was the cook in the early 1950's, that the Scots tend to boil

their cabbage for a much shorter time than the average Newfoundland would. Mr. Shears, who described Allan MacArthur as a "fine gentleman", said that he was "the first person ever I saw cook cabbage for only ten or fifteen minutes--and was it ever delicious! We were always used to having it completely cooked for an hour at home." [Noted during conversation, May, 1974]

Although sheep were plentiful in the Codroy Valley, there is no sign or mention of the dry salted mutton which was the main meat dish in the Scottish Highlands and Islands even when I was growing up in the 1950's and early sixties. When I asked Allan MacArthur about this, he was most interested to know how mutton was salted in Scotland, as he had never heard of it. He did, however, point out that there was no need for such a commodity in the Codroy Valley, for if they killed a sheep in the winter, they could keep it frozen simply by storing it in an out-building during the very cold weather. In fact, he said, there was absolutely no reason other than choice for them to eat as much salted foods as they did, so plentiful was the wild game and fish available to them. He emphasized the fact that no one need ever go hungry in the Codroy Valley in those days, for they could kill plenty of hares, rabbits, caribou, and wild birds, and needed only to go down to the river to catch salmon, trout, or eels. Besides that, most families killed their own sheep, cattle, and pigs. [Field notebook, July 25, 1970] When they

did salt or pickle an animal, they did so in a briny solution, often the pickle left over from a barrel of salt meat that had been already used up.

Dairy produce was in plentiful supply all of the year except when the cows went dry during part of the winter. Milking the cows was the work of the women, just as it used to be in Scotland. Allan MacArthur often described his mother going to milk the cows; and judging from the number of times he repeated his description, I would assume that her approach to work was one aspect of Jessie MacArthur's character which left a deep impression upon her son:

She never milked a cow without singing a song, and the cow would know her, and she had to be very careful when she'd go in the cow-yard because the cows knowed her so well, and she'd be singing a song for every cow she'd milk. And the cows would come to the gate, you see, and the best ones would ...[be milked first]...the rest would have... [to wait]...my mother had to milk that one first, you see.

[C882, 71-48; also references on C872, 71-48; C872, 71-48; and on several other occasions when not taped.]

After the cows were milked, the warm milk was poured from the large milking pails through a sieve covered with muslin and into big bowls. There it was left to cool, and the milk settled to the bottom while the cream stayed on the surface. If the cream was required for butter making, it would be skimmed off the top with a saucer or a big spoon and stored in a crock until butter-making time. In some places in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, the milk was skimmed off with

a large scallop shell, but the MacArthurs had never seen this done.

The butter making was usually done in an earthenware crock which, depending on the size of the family and the frequency of churning, would have been between ten and twenty-four inches high approximately, with capacity varying from one to five gallons, and varied in shape between the straight sided with bevelled edge, to the barrel-shaped vessels called "crannachan" or "muidhe" by the Codroy Valley Scots. The crock for churning butter in had a wooden lid that was usually home made, and there was always a hole about an inch in diameter in the centre of the lid. The actual churning was done with either a flat piece of wood or a cross shape of wood attached at right angles to a long cylindrical wooden shaft of eighteen to thirty-six inches long and with a diameter slightly less than that of the hole on the lid. [Fig. 1]

If the cream stored in the crock had become so thick that it was almost solid, the woman who was churning would add water to it before she churned. She would then put the long shaft down in the thick cream, place the lid on so that the shaft came up through the hole and fitted neatly into the top of crock, then she would work the shaft up and down rhythmically until finally it would thicken and butter would be made. Mrs. MacArthur usually churned once a week in her large butter churn [Plate XX] with three or four gallons of cream yielding up to ten pounds of butter.



Fig. 1 The wooden 'dasher' used in the churn.

Plate XX

George MacArthur churning butter

A woman churning would often sing songs of a suitable rhythm while doing this work, and this was certainly the case of the MacArthur family. Frequently the children, or whoever happened to be in the house, would take over the churning to give the woman of the house a rest, or to allow her to get on with some other household task which required her attention. When the butter was ready, she would return to the churn to complete the task. She would take the lid off and take out the wooden shaft, then wipe off any butter that had gathered on either one of them and drop it into the crock. She then drew her hand all around the sides of the churn and through the buttermilk to gather all the butter into a large mass before removing it from the crock. The new butter then had to be washed thoroughly in cold water, squeezing it at the same time, in order to remove all the buttermilk from it. This had to be done to keep the butter fresh, for any buttermilk left in new butter would quickly taint it. Often a little salt was then added to the butter, the amount depending on individual taste and also on the conditions for keeping it fresh. Finally, it was shaped into blocks with wooden butter-pats and stored until used.

In more recent years, when butter was plentiful in mid-summer, many people used to sell butter to tourists who visited the area. Today, there are still many tourists who call there for butter, but there are only two or three women left who make it, and they cannot hope to fill the demand that

still exists for it. Although I have only seen a wooden pound mold, I was told that the older people used to have fancy butter pats like the ones used in Scotland.

Prior to the coming of electricity, there was of course no refrigeration during the summer. Since this season is also the time when the milk yield is highest, there were large quantities of milk which went sour before it could be used up. Fortunately, there was no loss as they used to make the sour milk into "gruth", or what is called "cottage cheese" in other areas. About two gallons of sour milk, or sometimes one gallon of separated skimmed milk with two or three cupfuls of buttermilk added and left for two or three days to become thick and sour, was put into a large pot and placed on the top of the stove, but not over direct heat. It was left on this warm spot for several hours until it had separated out into curds and whey. The right amount of warmth for this process was very important, for it had to be kept well below boiling point; and if the stove had to be heated up in the meantime in order to cook a meal, then the pot of sour milk would be removed altogether and set down beside the stove with just enough heat to keep it warm. The pot full of curds and whey was then poured through a muslin cloth to strain it, and the greenish liquid, the whey, was given to the pig or poured away, while the white solid, the curds, was squeezed in the muslin cloth. Salt was then added for flavour to complete the making of "gruth"; and as a special delicacy,

it was sometimes mixed with thick cream. The "gruth" or "gruth" and cream was spread on freshly baked "bonnach" or "aran coirce". The latter is often called "oat-cake", and is made by rolling out a mixture of coarse oatmeal, salt, baking soda [bicarbonate of soda], butter, and hot water, baking on top of an iron griddle, then toasting in front of the fire until brittle and browned.

As far as I know, there is no one in the Valley today who makes oat-cakes in the traditional manner, for when I brought some to Allan MacArthur on one occasion, he said that he hadn't seen them since his mother used to make them more than forty years ago. Mrs. MacArthur said that she had never eaten them. Perhaps, the introduction of more refined foods, such as pre-packaged rolled oats which replaced the sacks of oatmeal has contributed to the change in eating habits. Only recently I heard the MacArthur's son-in-law ask why he had not seen or tasted "gruth" for many years, and the reply given by Mrs. MacArthur was that people don't bother to milk so many cows any more, and the milk from the ones that are milked is now kept refrigerated, leaving no great quantities of sour milk with is needed to make the "gruth."

All the vegetables required for the Valley were grown by the farmers in the area. Aside from the extensive fields of fodder crops, settlers had land set aside for the cultivation of vegetables and sometimes fruit. Allan MacArthur said that his family always planted their carrots and other vegetables

in the "black earth" as it produced the finest crops. The "black earth" was the very dark, almost black, alluvial deposits found within two or three hundred yards of the Great Codroy River. I have watched crops planted there for five consecutive years and have seen evidence of the wisdom in choosing this particular soil; every year, they picked from it and stored in the cool cellar beneath the house enough carrots, beets, lettuce, cucumber, and sometimes spinach, marrows, and other vegetables to last (with the exception of lettuce) till the following year's crops were ready. Turnips, however, were not usually planted there, for they were planted in such great quantities, since they were basic to most meals, that they required a field solely for their cultivation.

Early in the growth stages of the turnips, the plants are thinned out, and the greens are eaten as an early vegetable. In a very short duration of time, the turnip fields yield far more greens than can be eaten by one family; consequently, it is not uncommon for people who have no turnip crop to be invited to help themselves to the greens. This also helps the farmer, for the person who is picking the turnip greens for his own use also thins out a portion of the turnip field. Today some of the local farmers sell turnip greens through the local grocery stores or by means of roadside signs, and many families keep aside enough greens to preserve in bottles for the winter when fresh vegetables are

not available.

The practice of preserving foods for the winter is one which has for many years been common to almost all Codroy Valley kitchens, regardless of ethnic background. This food preserving, or bottling, as it is usually called, begins each year in the early summer with the turnip greens. Later, when the bakeapples ripen they are gathered and bottled; and from this early summer beginning, the woman of the house can expect to find herself bottling various products until the onset of winter. One visitor to the Valley, when observing the busy housewives who were coping with their preparations for the winter, commented that it was a remarkable feat of nature that the kitchen was not glutted with produce which required bottling all at the same time; it was rather the case that when the bakeapple crop had all been bottled, then the wild strawberries were ripe enough to be picked and bottled. When this task was completed, there was a rather longer period of time when a great number of children, and some of the adults besides, took almost every available kitchen receptacle to pick wild raspberries. This relatively longer period of time corresponded to the greater quantities of this particular berry. And so, this continued until autumn when the wild gooseberries, black currants, choke cherries, partridge berries, plums, blueberries, and finally the marsh berries (cranberries) had all been preserved. I have collected no traditional jam or fruit preserving recipes

from the Valley, as Mrs. MacArthur said that almost all the jam was made according to the pamphlets given out by the Jubilee Guild who used to hold meetings in the Valley about thirty years ago. I suspect that the Jubilee Guild recipes may have replaced the traditional ones.

There were, however, several traditional recipes for bottling various products which have been passed down from mother to daughter over the years. When all the jam was put away, there were several vegetable crops which had to be preserved. Several families would "put-up" all their small carrots in bottles, but the MacArthurs stored them with the larger carrots under a fine layer of sand in the cellar, which was under their house. Most of the cabbage was also stored there, stalk up, but there was usually a certain quantity of cabbage which was pickled and bottled as "Cabbage Chow". Mrs. MacArthur dictated to me how to make a few bottles of cabbage chow using the recipe that she had invented:

Shred a large head of cabbage. Put it in a bowl and add a quarter of a cup of salt. Cut up six or seven onions and put them in the bowl also. Sprinkle with another quarter of a cup of salt and mix it all up together. Cover the bowl and leave it overnight. In the morning, pour off all the brine that will have collected and rinse the shredded vegetables in cold water to get most of the salt off it. Put it in a pot with eight or nine cored unpeeled apples sliced up. Add a quart of vinegar and a quart of water and boil until it is cooked--about an hour. Get about half a cup of flour and about a teaspoon of turmeric and a teaspoon of dry mustard, and a shake of salt, and a teaspoon of celery salt, and mix all together with water--just as you do when making gravy. Add this to the hot mixture on the

stove, and stir. Boil it for a little while until it thickens, and watch it in case it burns. Pour the chow into hot bottles and put the covers on tightly and store--you don't need to seal the jars, as they will keep just like that"

[Noted in field notebook during conversation with Mrs. MacArthur, November, 1974.]

Most families with vegetable gardens also preserve pickled beets, and depending on the family, the recipe varied. Just as the bottling of garden produce was coming to an end, the housewife was usually faced with the task of bottling moose meat. The moose and caribou hunting seasons generally began in the early autumn, and before the days of refrigeration, the only way they had to keep that meat was to bottle it. While most of the families in the Valley today are able to deep freeze meats, Mrs. MacArthur recalled the days when everyone bottled moose, caribou, rabbits, chicken, ducks, or whatever wild meat they had and needed to preserve. She said that there was one standard method which was used for all the meats, and dictated her own recipe:

Cut up the meat in small pieces and put it into sterile bottles. Add one teaspoon of salt and fill with water to cover the meat. Seal the jar as tight as you can, then put the bottles into a large pot, with cardboard in between the bottles. Cover the bottles with cold water one inch above the tops, and boil them for two and a half to three hours. Take the bottles out and don't turn the sealer ring when it is hot, or you will break the seal, but when it is completely cooled, you can take the ring off the jar and use it again, for by then it will be sealed. Put the jars away in storage.

[Noted in field notebook, November, 1974]

Bottled meat is still popular in the Valley, especially among the old and middle-aged people who also enjoy "head cheese", made from the head of either a sheep or a cow which they slaughtered. Mrs. MacArthur described how she made "head cheese":

Cut the meat off the cow's (sheep's) jaws and put this in a big pot with the tongue. Boil until the meat is tender and leave in the pot overnight. In the morning, skim off all the fat and save the liquid. Put the meat into the meat grinder and also six or seven onions. Add half a teaspoon of cloves and some pepper, and return it to the pot of liquid and boil it all together for an hour. Scald the bottles (or if they're new you have to boil them), and put one teaspoon of salt in a pint bottle or two teaspoons in a quart. Put the meat mixture in the bottles and stir to mix up the salt. Put the lids on as tight as possible and put the bottles in the pot with cardboard in between the bottles. (If the glass touches, the bottles will break.) Cover with cold water until it is one inch above the top of the bottles. Boil this for one and a half hours. Take the bottles out and don't turn the sealer ring or it will break the seal. You do the same thing as with bottled moose. Put away in storage.

[Noted in field notebook, November, 1974]

With so many foods being preserved in bottles, by the end of the autumn, the storage shelves, usually in the cold cellar underneath the house, were stocked full ready for the long winter. During my many visits to the Valley, I saw evidence time and time again of Allan MacArthur's statement that they need never be short of food, for numerous bottles of moose, poultry, head cheese, vegetables, pickles, and fruit preserves were opened for me by welcoming families who insisted that I should stay to eat with them. I have also received gifts of

these bottles from neighbours, and often from Mrs. MacArthur who would joke that certain bottles, especially wild strawberries and bakeapples, should not be opened until December 25, for they were considered special.

Today's visitor to the Valley who stays even a few days will quickly notice some enthusiasm for home-made beverages, mostly among the men. While this is extending the household activities further than they would normally be extended, I am including this here since they are made in the kitchen and often drunk there. With most of the emphasis upon home-made beer in the Valley today, there is a vast difference to the early days that the old people knew in their youth. In those days, some of the beverages made were teas and a kind of coffee. Although they could purchase boxes of tea, as already mentioned, Mr. MacArthur said that they used to make dill tea and mint tea at one time:

Well, we used to grow mint, what we called the mint, you see; and tea was scarce here then, and there was no coffee at all with the old people. Well, they used to get this mint and steep it, you see, like you would...anything; and you'd drink that instead of tea; put milk in it, and drink it like tea. Oh, it was good. Well, if I had time I think I could get you a little bit of the wild mint yet, it's down in that place yet. It's a weed, it grew about that high.

[C879, 71-48]

From his description of mint tea, I would gather that the method of making dill tea was similar, although I did not obtain a separate recipe. He did say, however, that dill tea was used

medicinally, in the treatment of pneumonia and plurisy. [C872, 71-48; January 3, 1970]

While there was no coffee to be bought in the Valley in those days, they were not without their own variety of it. According to Allan MacArthur, this recipe for coffee which was made during his youth came from "the people that came from Scotland":

Well, the loaf bread, especially, that's what we used, and when it would be a couple of days old, well fresh bread would be no good, but when it would be getting a little stale, probably two or three days, you'd cut it about a half inch thick, and then you'd have a good fire on, and you'd roast it, you know, it would be no good on top of the stove, you see, you wouldn't roast it, you might burn it. And you'd put it on the kilders till it would catch a-fire, you see, and on both sides. And when it would be black, you know, about half ways through, an eighth of an inch on both sides, then while it was on fire, you see, you'd have a dish of hot water, and you'd just take that out and you'd dump it in the water, you know, when the bread was all a-fire. And that would give you coffee.

[C879, 71-48]

Non-alcoholic beverages were not, however, the only kind made in the Valley in the early days, as alcohol has always played a part in the social life of the people. Methods of procuring liquor differed in the old days, as Allan MacArthur showed from his lengthy discussion on the topic:

Well they used to...I can remember around seventy years ago, well they used to make beer, you know, with eh...there was no yeast cake then at that time, they used to brew it but it wasn't very strong...There was no malt, just molasses; well, they used to put hops into it, you know, to work. Oh, I remember well when there was no malt to be got around here.

[C879, 71-48]

Allan's son, John, was in the room when his father began talking of the days when they used to make beer in their home, and he was so interested in what his father had to say that there was no need for me to ask any questions, as the conversation between the two men covered any that I might have asked. Unable to recall the exact year when they started brewing malt beer in their home, Allan asked John if he could remember, as he knew it was when his family was at home: "It was around 1940, I think--40 or 45," John replied, and his father continued:

Well, we didn't make much beer here before 1918 after the First World War; then when they came home from it and they had German receipts, you see, and other kinds of receipts for making beer, you see, and they started from that. And then the government, the control board in St. John's they were getting, you see, the liquor was getting dearer, and they were taking control, you see, more. Because we used to get before that, we used to go down to St. Pierre and smuggle rum, smuggle whisky, smuggle brandy, smuggle trois-six (?) and every kind of stuff like that, and it was cheap, 'cos they used to get it from France, you see, beer and wine and whisky, and every kind of stuff like that. Well, it was a lot cheaper than what the beer is today, a lot cheaper.

[C879, 71-48]

Although never in St. Pierre himself, Mr. MacArthur could tell about the days when it was common for people from the Valley to go to St. Pierre in schooners:

A fifty ton schooner, a hundred ton schooner, from that down to twenty-four ton schooner, they used to go down there. They'd go down to Fortune Bay, you know, selling potatoes, and St. Pierre is right in the mouth of Fortune Bay.

You would get a bottle of gin for twenty-five cents and that would be stronger than the eight dollar rum you get today--well, you'd get that for about a dollar fifty a gallon, or something like that.

He recalled the most popular drinks of those days:

Oh, they used to drink a lot of whiskey, and gin and brandy, and a lot of rum too, but not so much of rum as they used to drink...they used to drink a lot of gin that used to come from France, and the brandy too.

When John asked if there was any rum-running nowadays, Mr.

MacArthur replied:

Oh yes, they smuggles it yet, you see, but it's hard for them because they watch theirselves now, they watch theirselves. And then they got started from St. John's, you know, selling rum, they were getting it in, the government took a hold of it, and then they had to turn against St. Pierre, you see. They had to put force on for to be chasing those that used to go from all around the Island, go to St. Pierre for this rum, and the rum that the government was getting wasn't getting the sale, you see. And it cost them millions of dollars to do that.

[C879, 71-48]

Although there are still a few people in the Valley today who make moonshine, Allan MacArthur said that he "didn't make any since thirty years". He gave this reason for stopping:

Oh well, we were getting the rum from St. Pierre; it wasn't worth while, and it was much better, you know, because this alcohol, it was no good for a person--too strong, too much alcohol.

[C879, 71-48]

The MacArthur family did, however, continue to brew beer and make wines and still do so today. Their wine-making was usually done around September when the blueberries were plentiful, or sometimes, as I have noticed in recent years, when

their own garden of blackcurrants produced a good crop of fruit. Mr. MacArthur described briefly how they used to make it:

We used to make blueberry wine. We put a gallon or two of them in a dish, and put water and molasses on that, and leave it brew up, then you had blueberry wine. It would be kind of thick, you know, but not very thick, but a little thicker than water. We put yeast in it for to work--well, we used to use hops, you know, first, when the yeast wasn't plenty around here.

[C879, 71-48]

In recent years, the "dish" in which the wine was made has been a large earthenware urn, holding about five gallons, which was once the family butter churn. When today's wine is prepared, it is usually put away in an upstairs room which is no longer used, with the intention of "saving some for Christmas." During the past few years at least, the intention has rarely been carried out, however, for inevitably between September and December some neighbours will make a social visit to the house, thus creating an "occasion" for the wine to be tasted; and once tasted, it somehow disappears more rapidly than intended. Perhaps the desire to "save some for Christmas" is not as important as it once was in the days when the "Twelve Days of Christmas" was a special highlight of the year which they celebrated accordingly.

The beer made in the Valley today is frequently prepared according to the recipe on a tin of store-bought malt. Sometimes modifications are made, such as adding more sugar in the hops that it will be stronger than normal, and more

yeast so that it will "work off" faster than stated by the recipe. Occasionally, it is drunk straight from the brewing bucket; and frequently, it remains in the bottles only a day or two before the first few are opened. In either case, it looks cloudy and smells strongly of yeast, though the latter peculiarity is sometimes avoided by adding a forty-eight ounce can of apple juice to the original ingredients of the brew. There are other recipes for alcoholic beverages, such as lemon gin and grape juice wine, which have recently been assimilated into the range of existing recipes already in the Valley. These are not included here, however, since they are new acquisitions and not traditional in the area.

As already mentioned, alcohol has always played an important part in the social life of the Codroy Valley people. In recent years, however, it has crept from its long-accepted place in the leisure time and relaxation of the people into a once-forbidden place, namely that set aside for work, to the extent that it interferes severely with the working habits of some of the men, and unfortunately threatens the stability of several families in the area. While this is the subject of much concern in the Valley today, I will not dwell on this aspect any further, but hope that Chapter VI, on the cellidh, has already shown the more acceptable place of alcohol in the social life of the people of the Codroy Valley.

CHAPTER X

THE WOOL INDUSTRY

From the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century, the people of the Codroy Valley have had a thriving wool industry which was essential to their way of life. There were no clothing stores in or near the area and little money to buy clothing elsewhere.

You could work on the farm and make your own living, but you had to do everything. You had to make your own clothes, you had to know how. The women used to make the clothes for the women and for the children and for the men too, from the pants right up to everything they would wear.

[Allan MacArthur; C868, 71-48]

Not only did the women make all the clothes, but almost the entire wool processing was their responsibility:

The women would weave the cloth, they would shear the sheep; the women was doing the most of the work at that time.

[Allan MacArthur; C868, 71-48]

While Mr. and Mrs. Allan MacArthur were again the main informants for this topic, Allan made it quite clear that he was no expert at describing what was the skilled work of the women. Considering this and the fact that the wool carding eventually became the specialized work of a few people in the Valley, he brought me into contact with no less than twenty five other people ranging in ages from late twenties to late

eighties, who, he thought, would complete the picture of the Valley's wool industry. In fact, he underestimated his ability to recall the various processes involved, and most of the other informants confirmed what he had already described; and Mrs. MacArthur, in her own quiet way, added considerable information after I had put together a preliminary draft of the material collected during numerous ceildidhs with the MacArthurs and other families. In spite of the fact that so many people spoke of the wool industry, the information here is from three families, Mr. and Mrs. Allan MacArthur, Mr. and Mrs. Afra Gale, and Mr. and Mrs. George Cormier. The various stages of the industry will be described in individual sections.

The people in the Codroy Valley do not refer to their sheep as being of any particular breed, though some might jokingly say that "they're Newfoundland sheep". [Plate XXI] Although no expert has confirmed my opinion, they resemble Cheviot sheep, or Cheviot crossed with Black Face. Over the years, the local farmers have at times imported sheep from Nova Scotia; and originally when they migrated from Cape Breton to settle in the Valley, some people brought their sheep with them. Allan MacArthur said that when his forebears left Scotland to come to America, they brought with them what they could in preparation for their livelihood in the new land:



Plate XXI

A few 'Newfoundland sheep' in the Codroy Valley.

Some of the people that used to come from Scotland a hundred years ago and more than that, you know, they used to bring sheep from Scotland, a little, but not too many, you see, because the journey was so far and so long, it would take so long.

[C868, 71-48]

During the years when the industry was at its peak, it was not unusual for a family to have as many as seventy or eighty sheep, although many had much fewer than that, depending on what they could manage and what they needed.

Sheep Shearing

In the Codroy Valley, sheep shearing was not a community affair, such as one finds at a "fank" or "fang" in Scotland, where a community-owned group of sheep-pens are used to accommodate all the sheep on days set for shearing, or dipping the sheep. In the Valley, each family decided on their own day for shearing, and as Afra Gale of Milleville said, they sheared their own sheep "just when they are ready". [C870, 71-48] This was usually in June or July, depending on when the warm weather came. Even today, during the warm summer days fleeces or small clippings of wool can still be seen drying in the sun on fences or beside the homes of sheep owners in the Valley.

Describing sheep shearing in his youth, Allan MacArthur noted that this was the work of the women. He commented that "they did most of the work in those days":

They would shear the sheep in the spring--there was no men shearing then. I remember my father

never sheared a sheep; my mother had to shear the sheep.

[C868, 71-48]

The shearing was done with hand shears about fourteen inches long and very similar to those used in the Scottish Highlands even today. [Plate XXII] As they sheared, most of the women used to sing, although there were no songs which they kept for this task only. But as Allan MacArthur said many times, the old people like his mother had a fund of songs which they would sing to lighten any work they did.

With the sheep placed on top of a very low table out of doors and turned over on its back, the shearer would start shearing down the centre of the belly and out towards the side. When one-half of the front and side was completed, they would start again at the centre of the belly and work towards the other side. They would then roll the sheep over on its side, and starting where they left off on one side, they would complete the job by shearing the centre back so that the fleece could be removed in one unit.

Today, however, the sheep shearing is no longer the work of the women as the men in most families shear the few sheep that are left. Since the introduction of electricity in 1962, several people use electric shears, and the noise of the motor has taken over from the songs. People were surprised to learn that I had never seen electric shears before, for there were none used on the Islands on which I had lived up until 1967.



Plate XXII

Sheep shears.

Cleaning the Wool

Before the worker can begin to turn the raw fleeces into woolen yarn, they must first be cleaned thoroughly. All the small twigs and other pieces of vegetation which tend to get caught in the sheep's fleeces must first be removed. This was also done by the women, who, after a day's work outdoors and indoors, would sit in the kitchen picking out these small pieces. Occasionally, they would manage to arrange the daily chores so that they could sit outside during the day to do this task which was referred to as the "picking".

On the first fine day following the picking, the women would then wash the wool in order to remove all the dirt and some of the natural oil. Their method of washing depended on how it was to be carded, by hand at home or by machine in the carding mill. Kate Gale whose husband, Afra, was one of the sons of the first owner of a carding mill in the Codroy Valley, described the washing of the wool in both cases.

If the wool was to be carded by hand at home, the women would sometimes use soap in the hot water. Since soap was not obtainable in the stores at all times, it was necessary for them to make their own. Mrs. Gale describes the making of soap:

I never made very much soap, but my mother and grandmother made all their soap. Now, they used to make their lye. We could get Gillet's lye; well, they never used to have that; it wasn't on the market at that time, fifty years ago. They used to make their lye from ashes from the wood stove, and that's how they made their soap. The

soap didn't look just the same as the soap you buy. They mixed the lye with fat or tallow. They'd render out the fat after killing a cow or a sheep, and they'd put the lye in with it and turn it into soap.

[C896, 71-48]

Asked if the fat or tallow from seal or whale was used in the making of soap, Kate's husband, Afra, replied that people generally did not use the fat of either animal. He illustrated the reason clearly in his description of one family in the Valley who did use whale fat to make their soap:

Every Sunday you went to church you could smell that whale fat, and oh, I couldn't stand it, the stink of whale fat. The minute they'd pull out a handkerchief, it would stink like the Devil.

[C896, 71-48]

When washing the wool to send it to the carding mill, however, she said: "We wouldn't use soap or suds or anything, just the hot water and rinsing water...You'd have it hot, not boiling, but good and hot to take the oil out of it," (to her husband) "Your father didn't want any wool washed with soap or suds. There was no detergent then anyhow."

With or without soap, the wool washing was always done outside, in the old days, using a large wooden tub which was made from part of a barrel, and in more recent years, a galvanized metal tub. While wool washing was without exception the work of the women in the early days, during the last ten years or so the attitudes of the men seem to have changed, for, having realized that carrying fifteen gallons of water

is strenuous work, they show their concern more by helping to carry it, or in a few cases, they even do the entire wool washing. [Plate XXIII and Fig. II]

When the wool is washed, rinsed, and squeezed out by hand, it is then spread on the grass or on a fence to dry in the fresh air and sunshine for about a day. If the owner intended to dye the wool on the same day as washing, however, she would not dry it first, but would go on to prepare her dye for the wet wool.

Dyeing the Wool

While much of the wool in the Codroy Valley was used in its natural off-white colour, or a grey mixture obtained by mixing the wool of the white sheep with that of the black; there was, however, a considerable quantity of wool which was dyed. The dyeing was done just after the washing while the wool was still in its raw state, and the dyes used were obtained from two sources.

In the early days, the people used to make all their own dyes, but even the oldest people in the Valley did not know all the dye recipes that were used. Mrs. Allan (Mary) MacArthur and Mrs. George (Lucy) Cormier both remember going into the woods to pick mosses to make a reddish-brown dye which they called "crotal". This dye, which was one of the most popular and easily obtained, is the only dye recipe that continued to be used right on into the 1970's, when Mrs. Mac-



Fig. II Wooden washtub.



Plate XXIII

George MacArthur washing wool.

Arthur still dyed already spun wool to make a bedspread. This same word, "crotal", is also used in Scotland for a reddish-brown dye made from mosses.

To dye the wool with a natural dye, they used to boil up the mosses (or whatever else the old people would have used) and water in a large metal tub on the stove, or sometimes on a fire made outside the house, and put the damp wool to be dyed into this mixture. The wool was put in damp because it would take the dye much more evenly than if it were dry. The pot was kept hot, but not boiling which would ruin the wool, and the wool was stirred around at intervals with a stick until the desired shade was obtained. The depth of shade obtained at one particular dyeing depended on what mosses were used and also upon how long the wool was left to dye in the mixture. There were apparently no set recipes or, indeed, any that were written down, but the women in the Valley all dyed their wool according to their own experience and liking; then they would let it cool enough to be able to squeeze out the excess moisture, and finally dried it out in the sun.

Store-bought dyes, imported by the merchants, were available in a number of colours such as navy-blue, which was nearly always used for the winter pants and coats, and also in bright red and green. Using the same metal tub, the dyes were used according to the directions on the container and dried out in the sun as usual.

Carding the Wool

The next step in the process is carding, which is the preparation for spinning, as the wool cannot be spun until it is combed out with the fibres running the same way.

Up until the beginning of the century, there was only one method of carding which was by means of a pair of hand cards. The cards, always used in pairs, look like wooden-backed brushes with fine metal teeth running in rows along the "brush side" of the card. (Fig. III) There was no one in the Codroy Valley who made cards, but Allan MacArthur said that "the merchants used to get them from Halifax and those places". [C868, 71-48]

He recalled the many evenings when his mother "had to pick the wool, and then she had to card it with a pair of cards". [C868, 71-48] This second task of "picking the wool" which he spoke of was done immediately before carding. It involved taking a piece of raw wool in both hands and pulling apart the fibres in order to loosen them; and at the same time, if there were still any little pieces of grass or leaves still remaining despite the washing, these were picked out.

Although carding the wool was mainly the work of the women, Allan and Mary MacArthur's nephew, Norman MacIsaac, recalled that as a child, over thirty years ago, his mother taught him to card wool; and he, like some other children of his age, would take a turn of carding to help out at home.

To card the wool, a piece of raw wool is taken from the washed fleece, "picked", and then placed on one of the cards held by the wooden handle in one hand. The second card is held in the other hand, and the two sets of metal teeth are placed face to face. With the wool in between the two cards, the person carding the wool then draws the cards in opposite directions across one another; thus, combing out the wool in between. [Fig. IV] The repetition of this brushing action straightens out the fibres and makes the wool softer and more fluffy. When one small piece is carded enough and the wool lies between the teeth of one card, it is then lifted out from the base of all the teeth, as Lucy Cormier demonstrated, with one deft stroke of the other card. This soft wool is rolled to the edge of the card and then removed in one unit called a "roll", about nine inches long and about one and a half inches thick. As they used to make the "rolls", they would lay them aside ready for spinning into yarn. Carding the wool meant many evenings of work for the already busy housewife, but it was an essential task in the home until just after the turn of the century when mechanical carding was introduced in the Valley.

In 1904, a carding mill was built at Millville in the Codroy Valley by Mr. Alex Gale. From that time on, people had the choice of hand-carding their wool in their homes or sending it to the mill to be carded by machine. Gale's carding mill was built near a brook; and for the first forty years,

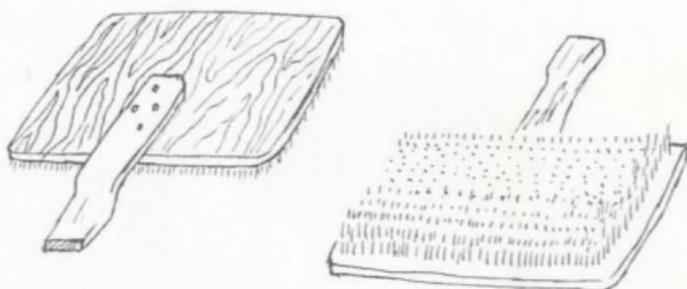


Fig. III A pair of hand cards.

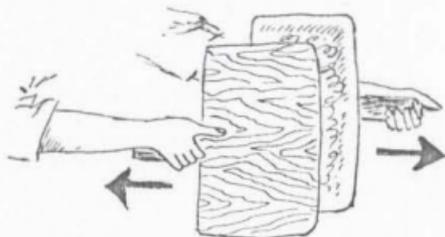


Fig. IV Carding the wool.

it was operated by power generated by a water wheel. Gale built a dam in a place where there was no water, then he cut a sluice from the brook to the dam, diverting the water-flow to drive the big water wheel, which generated three horse power.

In the carding mill, there were two carding machines which could be operated simultaneously to cope with the amount of wool which they were required to card. It would seem that most people chose to send their wool to the mill where they could have it carded for ten cents a pound in order to lessen their own labour load at home. Alex Gale's son, Afra, was nine years old when his father built the mill in 1904, and he described the mill and its operation in relation to the wool industry as he and his family knew it. Afra recalled that there were once six such mills in the Province; and considering the fact that three of them were in the Codroy Valley (there was another one at Millville and one at St. Andrews), some idea of the amount of wool produced there may be gained. Although not one mill operates today, there was once enough wool to provide full-time work for all of them.

Usually the Gales would start carding wool in April each year, and Afra Gale described what the operation of his father's mill was like:

We carded all summer long, and we couldn't finish it...The best amount of wool we ever had would be in the 1930's. As far as I can remember, about 1930

we had more wool than we could card, and we run her night and day. There were four people working in the mill--two on day-shift and two on night-shift. My father run it with night-shift for years and years to keep the wool up to date.

[C896, 71-48]

He added that people would write to him complaining if they thought that their wool was not being carded quickly enough.

The machinery in the carding mill was made in England, but the Gales bought it in Nova Scotia. When Alex Gale died, the mill was taken over by his two sons, Neddy and Henry, who operated the mill as the "Gale Brothers"--the name is still written over the doorway today. About twenty years ago, the brothers changed the carding mill by installing two more carding machines which they bought from Nova Scotia so that they could operate four carding machines instead of two. They ceased to use water as a source of power and changed over to a five horse-power diesel engine. The mill at this time was moved about two hundred yards to a site nearer the main road, and the diesel engine was placed in a separate enclosure outside the mill to prevent sparks from the engine creating a fire hazard. They thought it would be especially dangerous because there was usually a certain amount of oil around the machinery in the lower floor and also so much wool stored there. The mill itself was built with two floors, with the ground floor accommodating the machinery which, by means of power from the engine, drove the wheels which set the carding machines in motion on the floor above. There was

also enough space on the ground floor for storage of uncarded fleeces which were rolled up, tied with a string, labelled with the owner's name and address, and packed in layers one on top of the other. Describing a time when the industry operated at a peak, Afra recalled that "they used to pack wool in the bottom of that [the ground floor of the mill]-- pack wool till you couldn't see over it".

The carding machines themselves look like an arrangement of large, horizontally-placed drums, about four feet in length, and varying in diameter from about one to three feet (see Plate XXIV). These drums are so arranged in the machine that they turn around a central larger drum. Each of these drums, except for two which will be described separately, were covered with very small metal teeth called the "clothing" of the carding machines, and resembling the teeth on hand cards. It actually consisted of strips of leather about three inches wide, with steel teeth piercing through, and wound on to the drum like a bandage, thus, forming a complete network of teeth a little finer than those on the hand cards. The "clothing" the Gales bought for their machines to replace any that were worn sometimes had as its base a very thick canvas instead of the leather, such as Henry Gale still had in reserve should he want to do any replacement. The large central drum was also "clothed" in the same way, forming the second set of teeth, like a second hand card for the small drums to rotate against.



Plate XXIV

Henry Gale operating his carding mill.



Plate XXV

Henry Gale closing the mill.

With the engine switched on and the machine going, the raw wool went in the back of the machine and had to pass through all the rotating drums till it came out at the front, carded in rolls. The first rotating drum that the wool comes into contact with is one of the two different to those just described and is called the "picker". This one differs from the others in that it is not covered with clothing but has metal teeth protruding from its surface, about one and a half inches long and spaced apart about one inch from each other. The washed wool was put into the picker whose function was equivalent to hand picking, namely to tease out the wool in preparation for the finer carding which took place in the other parts of the carding machine. Describing the picking, Afra Gale remarked:

You should see it coming out of the picker...the prongs on it that long [he indicated about an inch and a half], and they're going like the Devil, and it comes out great big fluff of wool.

[C896, 71-48]

After the wool left the picker, it was driven through the series of drums covered with "clothing", and the brushing action between these and the large central one continued the process of making the wool softer and more fluffy. The last drum in this series that did the actual carding was referred to by the Gales as the "fancy". From the "fancy", the wool is fed on to the drum referred to as the "doffer", which is the last one that has the fine metal clothing. The fancy and

the doffer rotated against one another, and the doffer controlled the carded wool allowing it to leave only a small amount at a time so that it could be picked up by the final drum in the process, the "roller". The roller is the other drum which is not covered with the same kind of "clothing" as the wheels previously described but is covered with velvet. This fabric is, after all, a very much finer version of the "clothing" on the other wheels, with the "teeth" being the small upright fibres in this case. The roller did the final process for spinning; it formed the carded wool into "rolls" which were about four feet long and two inches thick. In order for the velvet roller to do this last task well, Afra Gale said:

It's got to be smooth. My father used to water it, you know; he had a sprinkler, and he'd sprinkle that just right. Oh she used to make pretty rolls... He renewed the velvet about twice a year; it used to get ruffled and worn.

Frequently, the Gales were asked to card a mixture of white and black wool in order to make grey rolls. To do this, the raw black wool and white wool had to be put through the carding machine separately and then the carded black and white rolls were put through the entire process together to make grey rolls--a process that actually took twice as long as merely carding white or black wool. Usually one of the four carding machines was reserved for carding black and grey wool as there was always a certain amount of wool which stuck

to the teeth of the machines and which would have spoiled the appearance of all the white wool especially. Although there were four machines, the Gale Brothers generally operated three simultaneously while the fourth one would be cleaned and serviced since the machinery required frequent oiling of moving parts.

The Gales' carding mill not only carded wool from the Codroy Valley but from other places also. The wool was shipped by rail from places on the west and north-west coast of Newfoundland to the railway station at Doyles, Codroy Valley. It was collected there by the Gales; and when carded at the mill at Millville, it was brought back to the railway station to be returned to the places of origin.

Since around 1960, however, things have very much changed for the Gales. The demand for wool carding has decreased to such an extent that the mill has had to cease operation. Describing the change between past times and now, Afra Gale said:

We used to ship it by express, you know, up to the station. I went there with full truck loads of carded wool. We carded wool from Blanc Sablon, right up to the northwest coast, Corner Brook, and everywhere--hundreds and hundreds of pounds...And it faded out and faded and faded, till we used to ship it by mail at last, it got so small; whatever happened I don't know.

[C896, 71-48; see map inside back cover.]

Today almost everyone who owns sheep in the Codroy Valley sends the wool to Prince Edward Island to have it carded or carded and spun. The Gale Brothers' Carding Mill is closed;

LEAVES 251 TO 259 OMITTED IN PAGE NUMBERING.

and although there are many who are still able to card by hand, no one today actually does so. Nevertheless, those who now send their wool to Prince Edward Island say they would prefer to have it carded and spun in the Codroy Valley, as many people say that they dislike the fact that there is no certainty of receiving one's own wool, or even Codroy Valley wool, for that matter, in exchange for the raw wool they send away. Albeit, there is no sign of any attempt to go back to the old ways of carding and spinning in the Valley. In fact, in 1974, since putting together the bulk of this information, I got word from the Valley that Henry Gale had died, and the mill machinery has now been sold outside the Province leaving only an empty storage building and virtually no chance of the industry being revived.

Spinning

After the wool is carded, it is then made into yarn by the age-old process of spinning. Throughout the history of wool-working, this has been done by the basic method of distaff and spindle, or, as technology advanced, by use of one of the many different kinds of spinning wheels. Although there are several books which refer to spinning on Newfoundland's west coast as early as the 1840's,¹ there are no references in print or from oral tradition to the use of distaff and spindle for spinning the wool in the Codroy Valley. This

¹ For example, J.D. Rogers, Historical Geography of Newfoundland (Oxford, 1911), p. 173 mentions this, and also cites five other references.

may be, in the case of the Scots, at least, because of the fact that the spinning wheel had been already in general use in Scotland for some time prior to the migration from Scotland to Cape Breton and then to the Codroy Valley.²

According to Allan MacArthur, a spinning wheel was part of the furnishings of most of the homes in the Codroy Valley at one time. He said that his grandmother brought her spinning wheel with her from Scotland in 1844; and after they had been in Newfoundland for about forty years, his mother obtained a similar wheel from Cape Breton. The spinning wheel he knew was a small Scottish one made of wood, with a spindle, flyer and bobbin, and the person using it sat down to operate the foot pedal which set the wheel in motion. [Fig.V] With some difficulty, because of the fact that he had never described this technical operation in English before, Allan MacArthur tried to describe the spinning wheel:

You'd sit down and there was a pedal on the wheel coming up here to get to the large wheel. There was a crank going through that [the wheel], and this stick that was coming from the pedal up here, it was attached to the wheel, and the way the axle [this refers to the flyer, see figs.V and VI] was made, it was almost like a half moon, and the little wheel [the pulley] used to stick on this, and that used to turn the big wheel. They would work the foot like this, and this pedal used to drive the wheel around. And there was a band on the wheel going down to the shuttle [I suspect that he was referring to the flyer, since the word he used is the one generally used to describe the instrument which carries the weft in the weaving loom] where they were spinning; there were two posts there.

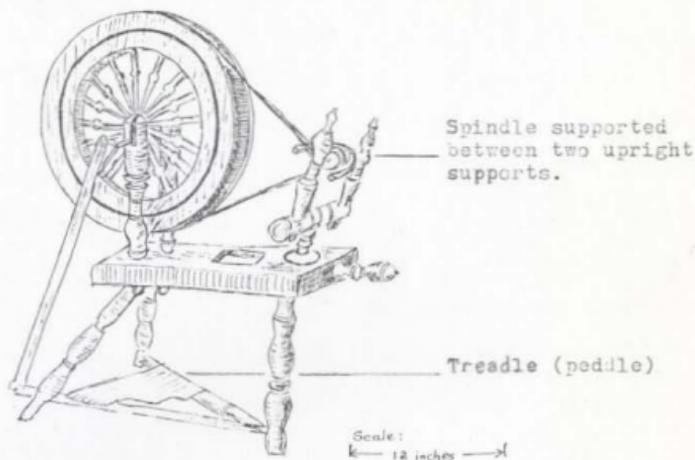
[C868, 71-48]

² I.F. Grant, Highland Folkways (London, 1961), p. 222.

After hearing his description of the spinning wheel, I gave Mr. MacArthur the book, Spinning Wheels, compiled by G.B. Thompson and published by the Ulster Museum, so that he could look at it. He leafed through the pages, and on seeing a diagram of the Scottish spinning wheel, he exclaimed, "Oh yes, that's the real one!" [C868, 71-48]

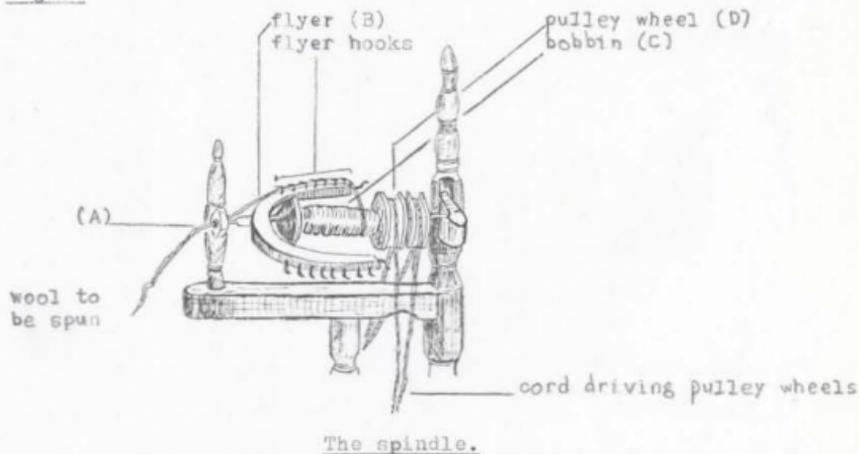
The spinning of the wool is done with the spindle of the spinning wheel (fig. VI) which is supported between two upright supports (fig. V). The carded wool which is to be spun is fed through a hole (A in fig. VI) to the flyer (B) and over the flyer hooks on to the bobbin (C). The flyer is rotated by means of a pulley wheel (D) that is driven round by a cord from this wheel to the large main wheel of the spinning wheel; and the yarn which is spun by the rotation of the flyer is wound round the bobbin which rotates simultaneously. While this is what is supposed to happen in theory, in practice, it starts off as the reverse of this. In order to get this action started, the person spinning always keeps a piece of yarn wound around the bobbin; and in fact, it is this which is brought over the flyer hooks and out through the hole--that is, the reverse of what was just described--so that it will meet the carded roll of wool and lead it back through on to the bobbin. Lucy Cormier demonstrated this process to me and showed how the end of the piece of yarn kept on the bobbin is embedded in one end of the roll; and with one or two turns of the wheel, the yarn will wind back

Fig. V

Scotch Wheel

Spinning wheel of the type commonly used in the Codroy Valley.

Fig. VI



on to the bobbin and begin the process for the entire roll which is held in the hand. The thickness of the wool that is spun depends on how the roll is controlled by the hands of the woman who is spinning, and it requires considerable skill to produce a yarn of uniform thickness.

When the bobbin is full, the wool is taken and wound from the bobbin around a winding device (fig.VII). This winding device, which was held between the hand and fore-arm, not only served as a place on which to wind the wool, but the woman who was spinning knew how many bobbins full she should put on it to make one skein and how many strands of yarn there should be in each skein to weave a certain length of tweed. This was in preparation for weaving the wool.

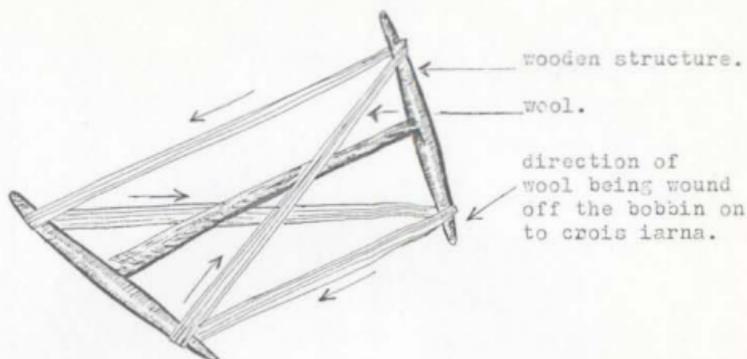
Describing his mother at work, Allan MacArthur said that:

She used to spin the rolls on the spinning wheel, and then she would put it up [wind it]. She had a...I can't say it in English, the machine that she had for winding the skeins--"crois iarna" it is in Gaelic. It was made of stick about that long (c. 18 inches). I think there was six knots [joins between the bobbins] in every skein...She used to wind off the spinning wheel, going back and forth like this, [he demonstrated with movements of left fore-arm as if holding the crois iarna while right hand held the wool from the bobbin]. She'd know when she would count the strands when she had enough to make a yard of cloth, and every skein would turn out a yard of cloth when she would send it to the weaver.

[C868, 71-48]

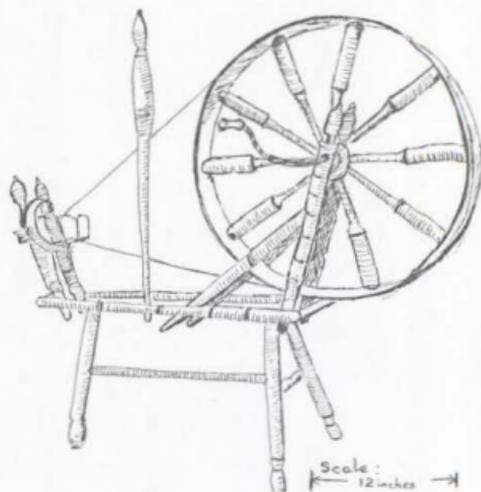
Although the spinning wheel described here was the type always used by the MacArthurs and most other people in the Codroy Valley, Allan MacArthur was aware of the fact that it

Fig. VII



Winding device: A crois iarna.

Fig. VIII



French hand-turned spinning wheel (operated without a treadle.)¹.

¹. Adapted from Spinning Wheels, publ. Ulster Museum, p.28.

was not the only kind of wheel which was in existence there. "Now the French people, their wheel was a lot bigger than ours, and it was altogether different. And they usen't to sit down at all; they used to walk, you see." [C868, 71-48] Here again, Mr. MacArthur looked through the book, Spinning Wheels, and pointed out wheel-driven spindle types of spinning wheels.³

While all the old people interviewed recalled the large French spinning wheel, no one had ever used it not even the French whose forebears had originally brought them to the Valley. Lucy Cormier and her sister Mrs. Minnie McQuarrie, whose parents, the Aucoins, came from Cheticamp at the turn of the century, said that as far back as they could remember their French-speaking family were accustomed to using the small "Scotch wheel" and not the larger one. [Plate XXVI] The Gales, of English origin, also used the same kind of spinning wheel, so it would seem that this type of spinning wheel [Fig. V] was the one which was most popular, adopted for use all over the Codroy Valley probably because it was not so tiring spending the evening sitting spinning as it would have been had they used the large French wheel which required continuous walking back and forth.

Spinning was another task which was always done by the women, usually after the evening meal at the end of a day's work. The woman of the house would sit in the kitchen by

³ G.B. Thompson, (compiler). Spinning Wheels, John Horner Collection. (Ulster Museum, Belfast, 1964) p. 28.

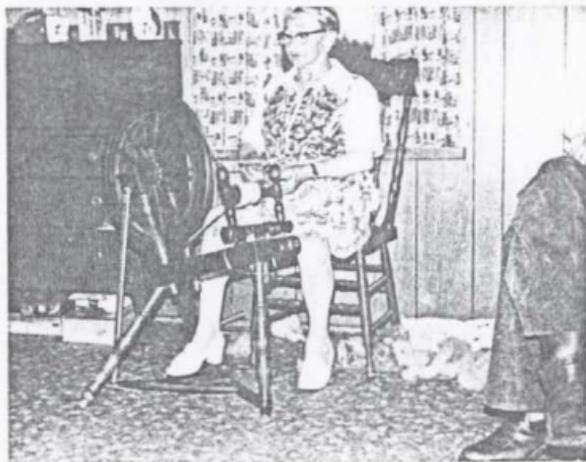


Plate XXVI

Lucy Cormier spinning on a Scotch wheel.



the fire with her spinning wheel and set to work on the rolls of carded wool. Spinning was regarded as a task requiring much skill, as the yarn had to be of uniform thickness throughout in order to produce good weave or knitting. Mrs. Lucy Cormier recalls that her mother would not allow herself or her sisters to spin when they were children for fear that they might spoil the yarn. While she was able to card wool at an early age, she was in her teens before she was allowed to learn to spin and in fact was married before she did any quantity of it.

It was usual for a woman engaged in spinning to sing as she worked for not only did this help pass the time through many hours of the task, but it also helped the work itself since spinning is an activity which requires to be done to a certain rhythm. Allan MacArthur described his mother spinning:

She was all the time singing, spinning...all the time singing. She had nothing but Gaelic; she knew sixty songs of Gaelic songs, and most of them were Scotland's songs that she learnt from her mother.

[C868, 71-48]

The emphasis on the rhythm of the work was important for once a set, flowing rhythm was established, the work would keep on flowing, and the yarn would rhythmically fill the bobbin on the wheel. Although there were no songs which they kept solely for spinning, as Allan MacArther said, his mother would choose her song "so it would suit the time". He distinguished between spinning songs and milking songs, which, although they

had a similar rhythmical flow, "were a little more military, you know, a little slower". [C868, 71-48] Lucy Cormier also recalled her mother, Mrs. Aucoin, singing entirely in French while spinning, and Lucy herself spent many years doing the same although she added many English songs to her own repertoire. I was fortunate to have been able to record a number of songs from both families in the three languages.

Considering the fact that every woman had to make all the clothes for her entire family, and as Allan MacArthur put it, they "never wore anything only woolen clothes inside and outside". [C867, 71-48] There was a tremendous amount of work to be done. While singing lightened the work, it did not shorten the number of hours to be put in. It was for this reason that the women of the Valley would hold several "spinning bees" every summer in order to help out neighbours with their workload. Mrs. MacArthur, who had attended many of them, told me what they were like.

The spinning bee started early in the morning of an appointed day in summer when, "after the work had gone round", several men in the neighbourhood would harness up their horse and cart and lift the family spinning wheel out to the cart. Then he and his wife would set off to the house where the spinning bee was to be held. When several people had gathered, they would arrange all the spinning wheels beside the house on a grassy area, set down chairs beside them, and the men would all leave for the rest of the day. All day

long, there would be a bustle of activity as a dozen or more women set to work on their neighbour's wool. While the very idea of spinning wool from fifty or more sheep would be an unthinkable task for one person to undertake, even over a few consecutive days, the idea of taking part in a spinning bee where there was a really concentrated effort to complete this enormous amount of work in the one day was quite a different matter.

Mrs. MacArthur showed me a photograph in one of her family albums of a spinning bee she attended in the 1930's. The women all sat on chairs outside the house where they posed for the photograph. They were clad in the long skirts which were fashionable then, some wearing aprons, and had a few of their spinning wheels arranged in the foreground. It was not exactly as the set-up would have been when they were working, but Mrs. MacArthur laughed as she recalled the enjoyment which they used to get from going to a neighbour's spinning bee where not only a tremendous amount of work was accomplished, but they also experienced the great pleasure of getting together for a day's conversation, laughter, and singing--a rare luxury in the life of the women in those early days.

Not all the women did the same task, as the wool was never all destined to be used for only the one thickness or texture of clothing since they had to make everything they wore. The woman who held the spinning bee would decide how

she wanted to use her wool; how much of it was to be spun finely, how much of it had to be wound into skeins for weaving, how much of the already spun wool she wanted to be doubled and twisted into a thicker wool to be used for heavy sweaters. The women then organized themselves according to the work that was required, no doubt taking advantage of the skill of the best spinners to do that one task throughout the day.

The woman who held the spinning bee provided food and drink at midday for all her friends who helped. Then, at the end of the day's work, the men would all return to her house around six o'clock. The wool and the wheels would all be put away, and then all the women with their husbands would sit down in the kitchen where the woman of the house served them all a hot, cooked meal of roasted meat and home-grown vegetables, followed by an assortment of pies, bottled berries, and tea, as a token of her gratitude. Tired, at the end of the day's work, everyone usually returned home after the meal, although occasionally they would take advantage of the outing to stay for a ceillidh where they could enjoy some good conversation, stories, songs, and most likely a few drinks.

Knitting

The year's wool which had been dyed various shades then spun and twisted in a variety of thicknesses and plies, according to what the owner intended to do with it, could be used

for several purposes. Some of this was set aside for knitting the items of clothing which the family required every year. Among these necessities were sweaters, winter underwear, caps and bonnets, and a multitude of socks and mitts.

Throughout her entire life, Allan MacArthur's mother, like most of the women of her generation, knitted all these items by hand. The sweaters, socks, and mitts were usually knitted on fairly thick needles with the thicker type of wool, while a great deal more work was put into an item such as men's "long johns" [underwear] which were knitted of the finest spun wool and on thinner needles. During the last ten to fifteen years of her life, however, a type of knitting machine became available in the Valley through a mail-order catalogue; and her son, Allan, with whom she lived obtained one for the MacArthur home. While his mother continued to knit by hand as she had always done, his wife, Mary, took advantage of this new technology.

Mrs. MacArthur showed me her knitting machine which she had once used for most of the woolen garments she made while her family was at home. The machine, which bore the name of "Creelman Brothers, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada", consisted of a series of rigid vertical hook needles arranged in a circular frame with a second series of moving hooks at right angles to them. To operate the machine which was clamped to a table, the desired number of rigid hooks (corresponding with the number of stitches needed) were set in position in

the frame. To begin the garment, the wool was tied to one hook to secure it, then the stitches were cast on by winding the wool once round each hook continuously and in the same direction until every hook had a loop lying at its base; and the yarn, having completed the circle of hooks, had returned to its starting place with the "casting on" completed. The actual knitting was done by taking the yarn from there and laying it horizontally under all these same hooks, again back to the starting place. Then, by winding the handle which mechanically manipulated the movable hooks, the horizontal yarn was drawn through each of the first set of hooks making a series of stitches. This simple, repeating action of winding the yarn around all the hooks and then mechanically pulling them through created knitted fabric in stocking stitch which is basic to most knitted articles.

The knitting machine was a great time saver, and although it was not capable of coping with the finer technicalities of knitting, such as grafting the toe of a sock or knitting a neat collar for a sweater, it could be adapted to take care of the bulk of the work involved. A pair of socks, for example, took a mere ten minutes to knit by machine, whereas it would normally have taken a couple of evenings by hand. This did not include the finishing, for when the sock was ready except for the toe, the stitches were removed from the hooks, then ordinary knitting needles were inserted into the loops so that final shaping and grafting could be completed

by hand. In view of the fact that knitted socks were one of the commodities which were exchanged at the general store for basic grocery supplies, the help of the knitting machine was most welcome.

Mrs. MacArthur demonstrated some of the versatility of the knitting machine which, though no longer seen in the Valley, was once a well-used piece of equipment in many houses. What follows here is her description of how the machine worked and the basic unwritten patterns which they used.

Although the frame into which the rigid hooks were inserted was a circular shape, it did not limit the work to circular knitting only, such as socks and sleeves. As already mentioned, these hooks could be removed or inserted into the slots as desired; and in order to knit a flat strip of knitting, the operator would remove one, two, or more hooks between the starting and finishing points. Then when placing the yarn in position and winding the handle to form the stitches, she would do one turn clockwise followed by one turn over the wool laid on in the opposite direction counter-clockwise so that the action would be back and forth over the same loops. For example, loop one to loop eighty followed by loop eighty to loop one, instead of the continuous circular action of knitting which would take place when continuously winding on the wool and turning the handle in one direction repeatedly. When it was long enough, although made in a circular frame, this knitting could be removed from the

hooks and laid out flat.

To make a sweater for a small child, the back and front were knitted in two flat pieces, sewn together; then sleeves knitted by the circular method were sewn in, and the collar knitted by hand to finish the garment. In order to knit a sweater for a large adult, however, the knitter had to make two or more strips of knitting for each side and sew them all together. The sleeves were again knitted by the circular method; and if it was thought necessary to vary the width of the sleeve from the cuff to the top, then it was done by starting at the top with enough stitches to accommodate the upper arm. As the knitting progressed towards the cuff, it would be made narrower every few rows by removing one or two of the rigid hooks and putting the loop on the hook beside it. Thus, in the next row making only one stitch from two loops when it was almost long enough for a sleeve, the knitting was removed from the machine. The loops were taken up by ordinary knitting needles and finished by hand in a knit one, purl one rib. The neck was also knitted by hand, thus completing the entire sweater with the style of collar chosen.

Longjohns were probably the most complicated piece of knitting tackled by machine or hand knitters. They were knitted with the finest spun sheep's wool, and for the hand knitter took up many hours of labour. There were no printed patterns for any of the garments knitted in the Valley, but the women were quick to adapt their skill whenever it was

needed. Mrs. MacArthur described how she would make long-johns using the knitting machine. She would start off at the top of the leg with a maximum number of stitches and knit on this number until the work was almost long enough to reach the knee. She would then begin to narrow the knitting by removing a needle or two every few rows; and when the leg was about two inches shorter than the desired length, the knitting would be removed and finished by hand in a knit one, purl one rib. Having made the two tubular legs in this fashion, she would then make the top by knitting two flat rectangular strips to be joined together and attached to each leg. With the two halves made in this way, the back seam was sewn together and the front left open. The gusset was sewn in, and the longjohns were completed by binding the front opening with a strip of strong cotton from a bleached flour bag and attaching a broad waistband of the same material. Finally, they would be ready to wear after buttons and buttonholes had been sewn down the front and at the edge of the waistband.

Knitting was not one of the tasks which felt the pressures of time limits such as farm work or shearing and washing the wool but was carried on throughout the year. Hand knitting, especially, was the type of work which could be picked up in a moment, such as when the housewife was waiting for something in the oven to bake or when a visitor came and she would not feel inclined to continue other household tasks. But knitting only took care of part of the clothing for a

family, while other items such as coats and trousers had to be tailored from locally woven tweed.

Weaving

Not every home in the Codroy Valley had a weaving loom, but those which did had more than enough work to keep it going through the autumn and winter, as the weavers had to make enough cloth for every family in the Valley. In the early days, the MacArthur family had a loom on which Allan's mother wove different textures and weights of cloth to supply the needs of her family. Describing one type of thick woolen cloth from which their winter pants were made, he said:

We used to keep black sheep and white sheep. You'd make grey cloth out of the black wool and white wool, mix it together a lot and card it...My mother used to weave as much as thirty yards of cloth, you see, you know for pants--not for girls petticoats or dresses or anything like that; that was different weaving, you see, well with the yarn.

[C867, 71-48]

There were two different weights of cloth woven in the Valley. The heaviest cloth, just described, was called "clomor" [heavy cloth] by the Scottish people, who of course spoke Gaelic all the time, and the light-weight cloth they called "drogaid":

And they used to weave, you know, when you'd be weaving for shirts, you see. Well, it had to be thin, a little different. Well, that wouldn't be milled. You see, [this process will be described later] you wouldn't with that [the drogaid] at all, but only the pants stuff. And even the women, they used to wear what they used to call the petticoats that was all made out of

our wool too--"drogaid" we used to call it; what they used to weave for the men's shirts and for the women. It was a different kind of weaving for that, you see, it was made lighter.

[C607, 69-37]

The majority of people, including Mrs. Mary MacArthur, used to send their wool to be woven by one of the local weavers:

We had weavers here that could weave six and seven yards in a day. Well, all that they were getting for that, ten cents a yard for every yard of cloth.

[Allan MacArthur; C867, 71-48]

Since Allan MacArthur considered himself to be no expert in this field, he recommended seeing someone who was, namely Lucy Cormier.

Lucy and her sisters were taught to weave about the age of fourteen by their mother, the late Mrs. Aucoin of South Branch, who was an expert weaver. Lucy [Mrs. George Cormier], who has lived all her married life at Upper Ferry, is regarded by everyone as the Valley's finest weaver. Indeed, she has in the past won many awards for her skillful weaving, including Lady Walwyn's silver trophy at the "All Newfoundland Exhibition" held in St. John's in 1939.

Lucy's loom, which is over a hundred years old, was brought to the Valley from Cape Breton by her grandfather. For many years, her father-in-law, William Cormier, did any repairs to the looms in the area, as he was a skilled craftsman who "could turn his hand to anything" including the gears of a loom. Although no longer in use, she keeps it in

the hope that someday someone might show an interest in weaving in the Valley again. She recalled clearly her work as a weaver in the days when they made everything they wore.

Weaving cloth usually began in the autumn when the weavers took orders from people in the community and wove the cloth for ten cents a yard. In later years, weavers were paid twenty cents a yard which supplemented their family income from the farm. Mrs. Cormier would usually weave from two to four yards of cloth a day which had to be done besides all the household chores and outside tasks as well. Weaving was not, however, solely a task for the women; for once the loom was set up, the men and children used to help out with this work which was very tiring on both arms and legs.

As Allan MacArthur already said, the cloth they wove was of two kinds, a heavy and a light weight. Being French, Lucy did not use the same names as Allan did for the cloth, but the two different weights served the same purpose for French and Scots alike, as Lucy used to make summer trousers for the men and most of the clothing for the women and children from the lightweight cloth, while she used the heavy, thicker cloth mostly for winter trousers and coats. She emphasized, just as Allan did, that the heavier cloth had to be milled before it was made into garments.

The type of loom common in the Valley was capable of weaving a cloth up to thirty-six inches wide, and the rolls of tweed were made up to thirty yards long. Since not all

the tweed made was of the same texture, this meant that the setting up of the loom, or warping, varied according to what was to be woven. For the "clo mor" or heavy cloth their homespun wool was usually used in both warp and "filling", as Luch called the weft. For the "drogaid" or finer tweed, the weaver usually set up the loom with store-bought cotton in the warp. The cotton yarn then ran the length of the cloth, while the spun woolen yarn used in the shuttle for the weft, ran the breadth of the cloth. These were not hard and fast rules, however, as it was quite possible to make a fine tweed of all wool which they would be able to use for their best dress-up clothes.

The weaver would set the gears of the loom according to the weight of cloth required. Setting the gears determined the type of weave, and the procedure was the same whether an all-wool cloth or a wool-cotton blend was to be made. When Lucy made a heavy cloth, she set the gears so that two strands would go up and two strands down alternately as the shuttle carried the filling back and forth through the warp. If she was making a lightweight cloth, then she set the gears to control the warp threads so that they would weave one thread up and one thread down alternately. Allan MacArthur also recalled that some of the old weavers used to weave patterns into their cloth:

If you were making a chequered cloth out of it, well, it would probably be diamonds, like, this

way, well that was hard to make.

[C868, 71-48]

Tweed was not the only textile to be woven in the Codroy Valley. Lucy Cormier described a carpet which she once wove over thirty years ago when the women in the Valley decided to make a cardinal red carpet as an Easter gift to the church. They organized the entire dyeing, spinning, and weaving of the wool for this carpet, and among them they did the work. They spun the wool thickly, and Lucy Cormier, having set up her loom for a heavy texture weave, wove the entire carpet which was twenty-six inches wide and twenty-three yards long. This carpet remained in the church for over twenty-five years, and if the present large congregation is any indication of the number of feet that trod on it, then one might conclude that it must have been extremely hard-wearing.

Lucy also wove carpets for her own home, and some of these "hall-runners", as she called them, are still being used by some of her family today. For these, she used yet another technique, namely that of cutting old clothes into narrow strips to be used for a heavy "filling" on a strong cotton warp.

The people of the Codroy Valley also had blankets woven from their own wool. Describing the making of blankets, Lucy said that they would take the finely spun white wool and weave an all-wool cloth thirty-six inches wide and long enough to be more than twice the length of a bed. They would then cut

it in two and sew the two pieces together in a special feather stitch which would not make a rigid seam that might be uncomfortable, and this formed a large blanket. After it was completed, people would often dye the borders of a blanket, and like many others, Lucy generally used mosses which she had collected to make her dye. Unlike spinning, weaving was always a solitary job, for if the weaver were not alone in the room, she was nevertheless cut off from others by the sound of the loom. When asked if she sang as she was weaving, Lucy replied that she could sing just what she liked and as loud as she liked, but no one could hear her anyway for the noise of the loom! She added that she always sang anyhow whether she was spinning, weaving, sweeping her floor, or whatever work she did.

Mrs. Cormier would still like to weave; and as she says, she could set up her loom with no trouble, just as before. The loom is at present in a storehouse because of lack of space in her own home, but is kept there somewhat reluctantly. Since there is only a very slim chance of her having an opportunity to weave on it, Mrs. Cormier would like to see the loom set up in a place where people might at least see what it was like and how it was used. She says: "If there was a museum somewhere that I could put it, I'd put it there; I'd give it to them to put there, you know."

According to the Newfoundland Census Reports, there were seventy looms in the Codroy Valley between the years of 1901

and 1921, weaving on average cloth that was valued at \$3,476 in one year.⁴ It gives no hint, however, of the yardage involved in this amount of wool; but judging from the reports of the Gales who carded such enormous amounts of wool and from the weavers who were paid only ten cents a yard for weaving the wool, there must have been a very large quantity of it. Unfortunately, I have been unable to use the statistics of these Reports to indicate further detail of the woolen industry, such as more specific numbers of the people involved in the industry or the numbers of sheep kept by an average size family, because they do not include enough detail to draw any conclusions. The Newfoundland Census Reports after 1921 unfortunately give no statistics whatsoever on either the number of looms in the Valley or on the value of the cloth produced there. Suffice it to say that what was once a flourishing industry there has declined to such an extent that today there is no cloth woven there whatsoever.

Milling

Both Lucy Cormier and Allan MacArthur referred at various times to the fact that they had to mill the heavy tweed, "clomor", or "pants stuff", as they called the cloth from which not only pants but also coats and any thick winter clothing were made. The milling is the best remembered aspect of the woolen industry in the Codroy Valley and is still spoken of by many people ranging in ages from late twenties to eighties

4

Census of Newfoundland and Labrador. 1901, 1911, and 1921.

and nineties. This is the final stage in making this kind of tweed; and while the name used in the Codroy Valley and also in Cape Breton is "milling", the practice is basically the same as what is called "waulking", "fulling", or "working" the cloth in different parts of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The tweed is milled in order to make it a thicker, tighter texture, so that the clothes made from such cloth would be warmer and more windproof. Although it is now more than twenty years since the last milling or "milling frolic", as it was sometimes called, was held in the Valley, many people can still describe what they were like.

There is no doubt that the milling frolic was generally the most enjoyable part of the entire wool processing. People used to look forward to them every year, and as Mrs. Minnie McQuarrie put it: "That was the fun! Many's the good time we had milling cloth!" [C888, 71-48]

While all the other stages in the wool industry, except spinning bees, were carried out by individuals or within the family, the milling frolic was very much a community affair. In the very early days, the different ethnic groups held their own individual milling frolics where every part of the evening was in their own language. It did not take very long, however, for them to dispel their suspicions about their neighbours who spoke a different language for, as Lucy Cormier said, they soon realized that "the one was as bad as the other!"

During most of this century, then, the millings brought Scots, French, and English together to work at the cloth they had woven. The milling frolics were held during the autumn and winter when anyone in the community had a roll of tweed to be milled. They would choose an evening; and several days in advance of it, they would "put the word around" inviting friends and relatives to their milling frolic. All those who could possibly do so would attend, for although they knew there was work to be done, "and hard work at that", the emphasis lay not so much on this as on the social aspects of the evening. They knew they could anticipate an evening packed full of dozens of marvellous songs, gales of laughter, plenty of wit and humour, and hours of enjoyment in good company.

Preparation for the milling was made by setting up a long table, usually made out of four or five planks of wood, six or eight inches wide and about fifteen feet long. These were laid side by side and supported on top of a solid structure, such as two or three wood trestles. The material used to set up the milling table depended entirely upon what was available to the householder, as was demonstrated at two "staged" millings I attended where an old door was used for one and two fourteen inch wide planks for the other, and both were equally acceptable to the old people there.

The milling was usually done in the kitchen, as most of the Codroy Valley kitchens were large enough to accommodate

such long planks and so many people. Benches or chairs were set on either side of the table to seat the men and women engaged in the milling, with one seat being placed at each end for the two people, usually men, who would make sure that the cloth was kept going around the table.

The two ends of the thirty yard roll of cloth were sewn together, and it was submerged in a tub of soapy water which was placed at one end of the table. It was then lifted out, the excess water squeezed out of it, and placed on the table like a large loop stretching from end to end ready for milling. Before sitting at the milling table, people often put on an apron to prevent their clothes from becoming wet as they worked. Having decided who was going to occupy the end seats, everyone would then sit down around the table and take hold of the cloth, ready to begin. As soon as someone led off the singing, the wet cloth was rhythmically beaten, first on one side of the table and then on the other. Usually, the first song acted as one to "warm up" and get everyone in the mood for the evening's work; and with the rhythm established, they carried on beating the cloth in the same manner. The entire milling was done to the rhythm of milling songs which were sung in Gaelic, French, and English as the three language groups were generally represented, each with a strong lead singer to start off all the verses of the songs. Allan MacArthur described a milling from start to finish:

We had long planks about six or eight inches wide and benches under that, long enough. Well, you double the cloth, perhaps you put two doubles of cloth; if you had thirty yards, you need fifteen yards of space; that would be forty-five feet--well, that would take quite a space, but not quite forty-five feet because you used to double [take] the cloth up a little bit so you have enough in your hands, and the one at the end was taking up probably about three yards of it because he had to keep it up on the end at the time from both sides. You'd strike on that side, and then when you'd put on the cloth we'd come down and strike on this side. It used to be thin first and then when you'd be milling like that it would thicken. You had to strike pretty hard on the table with it, and it had to be wet, you see, and soap on it. We used to put it in a tub and put it on those boards. Perhaps before you'd be through milling it you had to wet it a second time; it would mill better, because the dry cloth would never mill. Then you could tell when you would measure it...the cloth that came out of the loom dry was thirty-six inches wide; well, you'd fix that up and mill it down to thirty-three inches. Whatever the women would say--they knewed when it was right. Well, they would measure the cloth and by the feeling of it, it was getting thick after milling so long, probably an hour and a half or two hours. And you had to work hard, and you had to be good to sing too.

The sweat would be falling off you before you'd be through. And then they would take it--the women knowed when it was milled enough for pants and coats and vests and things like that.

[C868, 71-48]

Although the men as well as the women milled the cloth, the women were always regarded as the experts on how thick in texture and how wide the cloth had to be after it was milled. Lucy Cormier pointed out that they had to be careful not to mill it too much or to a width less than thirty-two inches, otherwise it would be too narrow to make trousers for the men. She added that "sometimes it was hard to take the cloth from

them", for they enjoyed the singing so much.

The milling ended by taking the cloth and smoothing it out on the table and then rolling it onto a board:

And then they would put it up in that roll, and then they had to sing a couple of songs after it was rolled, beating it down on this board [he indicated a six inch wide board], and then you'd put it out in the sun to dry, you see, the next day, and then it was fit for the old people to cut out clothes, whether it was a coat or a vest or pants.

[C868, 71-48]

In the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the waulking of the tweed was solely the work of the women and, as Charles W. Dunn points out in his Highland Settler, this was also the case in Cape Breton up until the turn of the century. Instead of dipping the tweed in a tub of soapy water, as described in the Codroy Valley, in Scotland it was dipped in a tub of urine; and according to John Lorne Campbell's account of waulking the tweed on the Isle of Barra, the Roman Catholics said a blessing, shaking water on the cloth in the name of the Trinity. None of these things are reported in the Codroy Valley, even although the method of shrinking the cloth to the rhythm of their singing is the same. In fact, the entire notion of dipping the tweed in urine seemed incredible to most of those who were asked if they heard of it, and they would only show signs of believing it after they were told that the urine is excellent for setting the dye and for removing the excess oil from the tweed.

The series of songs sung at milling frolics in the Codroy Valley have most probably been adapted to fit the new way of life for all the ethnic groups who, for the first time, had to live beside one another and work together. Some aspects of the frolic did not seem clear to me until after I had managed, with the eager co-operation of several of the old people, to organize a milling frolic on three separate occasions in the hope of reconstructing not only the work pattern, but also the atmosphere of the evening.

The Scottish, French, and English all gathered at the house for the milling; and though they were all speaking English, their mannerisms and accents still pointed clearly to their ethnic background even in the 1970's. Everyone took a seat around the milling table with a "Scotchman" at one end and a Frenchman at the other.

The milling started off with a well-known Gaelic song, which, after a couple of songless beats on the table, was followed by one of the well-known French songs. Though their singing was enjoyable, there was nothing very exuberant about either of the songs, and the actions on the boards, though strong, were hardly resounding. I soon realized, however, that this tame start was not indicative of what was to come, but was merely "getting everyone in the mood". Before long, the milling was in full swing, with the singing much louder and livelier, the hands beating much harder on the boards; and since I was participating, I could even feel the vibration

of all these sounds through my feet.

I got the impression during all the singing that there was a playful competition, especially between the Scottish and the French. One lead singer would start up a song, the success of which depended largely upon the participation and response elicited from the rest of the singers. They did not try to out-sing one another or take each other's turn, but were obviously thinking in advance to prepare themselves to start the next song as soon as the one being sung had come to an end. At the end of each song, the lead singer would give an extra loud thump with the cloth, someone would give a shout or make a hooting noise of the kind they used to make at the square dances when they were enjoying the music, and if they thought there was too big a pause between the songs, they would shout witty remarks to the singers or indeed try and make them laugh so much that they would have difficulty in getting their song started.

With all the wise-cracking and laughter between, and even during, the songs, it became very clear to me where the word "frolic" fitted in. I also realized exactly what Lucy Cormier had been talking about when she said that she loved the "Scotch songs", as she called the Gaelic songs; and having heard them so often from her youth, she had become so familiar with them that she was able to sing along with their choruses. She said that she didn't know what she was singing about, or if her Gaelic was accurate, but she sang anyhow.

As it turned out, the French not only did this with the Gaelic songs, but the Scottish in turn sang along with the French choruses. During the individual verses in Gaelic or French, those who understood the language would laugh across the table at one another whenever they sang an amusing line, though there was no impression that they were "getting one over" on the others, as everything moved along too quickly for that, and the entire atmosphere was one of levity.

Although the blankets we had sewn together for our re-enactment of a milling had already been milled over thirty years before, no one seemed bothered by the fact that we did not wet them again lest they should shrink too much. We did discover, however, that it was a dusty business beating dry cloth on the boards, and everyone experienced again the truth of Allan MacArthur's words that "the sweat would be falling off you before you'd be through".

To return to Allan MacArthur's comments on the old-time millings, he emphasized that his mother, who taught him most of his songs, was in her day a very fine singer. According to what he said, she must have been a lively participant at a milling, for she would hardly allow enough time for the hands to beat twice on the boards at the end of a song when she started another one. This was, of course, the whole idea of the milling, to keep the cloth continuously in motion around the table.

Many of the Gaelic songs were ones which had come over

with the immigrants from Scotland, although a few were composed in Cape Breton and still others in the Valley. There have been some alterations and modifications in some of the songs brought from Scotland, although they are quite recognizable as being versions of the same songs. For example, "Fear a' Bhata", popular in Scotland, Cape Breton, and the Codroy Valley alike, not only varies from text to text, but in the New World it has taken on a much quicker tempo. In Scotland, in fact, it is not known as a milling song at all but is a gentle love song which might be adapted to rock a baby to sleep or perhaps be sung while milking the cows; but it would be impossible to mill to it at the speed generally heard in Scotland. It would appear then, that this particular love song, one Scottish version of which is printed in A' Choisir-Chiuil⁵ as "Fear a' Bhata" with the directions to the singer to sing it "slowly, with feeling" has been altered in tempo to suit the work of the milling as indicated in Songs of the Newfoundland Outports where another version is titled "Phir a' Bhata" with musical directions reading "moderately fast".⁶

One cannot afford, however, to fall into the error of supposing that all the Gaelic songs found in the area are treated in this way, such as Kenneth Peacock does in Volume III of his Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, where he states that

⁵ A' Choisir-Chiuil: The St. Columba Collection of Gaelic (Glasgow, n.d.), p. 2.

⁶ Kenneth Peacock, Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, (Ottawa, 1965), Vol. III, p. 786.

"all the examples of Gaelic music included in this collection are milling songs." [p. 790] Not so--for Allan MacArthur himself, from whom Peacock's four Gaelic songs were collected, made the point that "Bruthaichean Ghlinn Braoin" [spelled incorrectly by Peacock as "Brughaichean Ghlinn'-Braon" in his Songs of the Newfoundland Outports, p. 773] was not suitable for a milling, but would have been sung at a ceilidh. [C872, 71-48] Allan's family said later that Peacock apparently copied some texts from a book that Allan had [Sar-Obair nam Bard Gaelach] which might indicate that he probably used the printed text rather than the tape transcriptions in the published versions of the songs. In fact, I later had access to Allan's book, and the same spelling error of the song title occurs there [p. 320] and comparison of the versions in the two books showed them to be identical. There were, however, several textual differences between the versions of another song, "Oran Na Caillich", which Peacock published and the version which I collected from Allan. This would supply further evidence that Peacock probably copied, rather than transcribed his material in Gaelic.

A typical example of a milling song which was very popular in the Codroy Valley was "Mhairi Dhubh a Hu o Ho" which Allan and his sons used to sing together, Allan led off all the verses, while his sons heartily joined in the chorus:

Mhairi Dhubh na Hu o Ho

Chorus: A Mhairi dhubh na hu o ho
 A Mhairi dhubh na hu o ho
 A Mhairi dhubh na hu o ho
 Tha m'inntinn trom bho'n dhealaich sinn
 A Mhairi dhubh na hu o ho.

1. Latha dhomh 's mi falbh air sraid
 Co thachair orm ach mo ghradh
 O gu dearbh cha tug thu lamh
 Cha bhi mi slan mur faigh mi thu.
2. Gur ort fhein a dh'fhas a' ghruag
 Fidheachanan sios mud' chluais
 Ribinnean 'ga chumail suas
 Is bindeal cinn 'ga theannachadh.
3. Fhad's a chi mo shuil a ghrian
 Tighinn bho'n ear 's a dol an iar
 Air te eile cha bhi mo mhiann
 'S na ciabhagan a' tanachadh.
4. Mhairi lurach anns a' ghleann
 Aig a' bheil a mhala chaol
 'S ann a mach airidh nan cul
 A thug mi'n gaol nach aithreach leam.
5. 'S truagh nach robh mis' is tu fhein
 Anns a' ghleann far'm bheil na feidh
 'S grinn thu na ni ur air feill
 'S am beus gu leir 'ga theannachadh.
6. 'S truagh nach mis bha fo'n fhoird
 Ann an ciste chaol an torr
 Mun tug mi an gaol cho mor.

[Transcribed and translated by Margaret Bennett
 (Mrs. George Bennett)]

BLACK HAURED MARY

Chorus: My black (haired) Mary na hu o ho (3 times)
 My mind is heavy since we parted
 My black (haired) Mary na hu o ho.

1. One day when I was walking,
Who should I meet but my love.
O surely you have not given your hand.
I shall not thrive if I can't have you.
2. It is on you the hair grew.
You have a mop of curly hair,
Platts down up round your ears,
Ribbons tying it up and a head band tightening it.
3. As long as my eye can see the sun,
Coming from the East and setting in the West,
Another one I will not want,
And my locks getting thinner.
4. Lovely Mary in the glen,
Who has the narrow brow,
It was out on the shieling far back,
I gave the love I haven't regretted.
5. I wish that you and I were in the glen,
Where the deer are.
You are finer than anything new at the fair,
And your whole character tightens (confirms) this.
6. I wish I were under the sod,
In a narrow coffin in a mound,
Before I gave the love so great.
.....

Although the themes of the songs themselves were about diverse topics, such as praising the charm of a love, the tale of an adventure aboard a sailing ship, or the shame of accepting bribes from a recruiting officer, the pattern of the songs was generally the same--a chorus, followed by a short verse which brought everyone back to the chorus and so on.

The "rolling songs", sung after the cloth was milled, also had this chorus-verse-chorus pattern only with a quicker tempo:

That's a song that we generally use when we'd be through milling the cloth, we'd roll it up, and we would be slapping the cloth. It's rolled up, you know, and stretched out and rolled up, and we used the song to slap it right down.

[C607, 69-37]

The rolling songs [called "clapping songs" in Barra, and according to Dunn, "putting up" songs in Cape Breton] were usually accompanied by laughter and lightheartedness reflecting not only the theme of the songs but the pleasure of finishing the work and the anticipation of the night of merry-making that would follow.

Peacock collected one of these rolling songs which he called "Milling Song" [Peacock, Songs of Newfoundland Outports, p. 790] and refers to as a "rather rare example of a song used to accompany the rolling or folding of the cloth after the actual milling process is finished." He adds, however, that he was unfortunately "unable to get the text for this song." It seems extremely unlikely that his informant, Allan MacArthur, could have sung only the melody for the recording, for not only were words and tune inseparable, but the actions also were a very integral part of the performance. Any time I recorded milling songs in the Valley out of the context of the actual milling frolic, the singers usually held a sweater or tablecloth continuously "milled" with their hands while they sang. [Plate XXVIII] During the singing of this particular song which Peacock refers to, Allan MacArthur made continuous slapping motions with both his hands on his



Plate XXVII

Allan MacArthur leading a milling song, using a small table cloth.

(Left to right: Archie MacIsaac, Allan MacArthur, Sandy MacIsaac, and Mrs. Sandy MacIsaac.)

knees throughout the song to stimulate the slapping of the cloth. And, in fact, this same song was called by Allan MacArthur "Oran an Tombaca" [Song of the Tobacco]. Since it was jointly composed by Allan and his grandfather, it was never written down. Consequently, there were no printed or published texts which Peacock could use to assist him. In fact, this song had no less than seven verses in the version which Allan MacArthur sang on tape C872, 71-48, transcribed and translated by Mrs. George Bennett.

As English became the main language of the Codroy Valley, the entire Gaelic repertoire of songs of the Scottish people began to include some macaronic songs in Gaelic and English such as "Will You Marry Me My Bonnie Fair Lassie" which has all its verses in Gaelic and a chorus in English which could be better understood by those who did not speak Gaelic. This same feature of language decline was also paralleled in the French tradition, a subject which I have discussed at greater length in "Scottish, Gaelic, English, and French: Some Aspects of the Macaronic Tradition of the Codroy Valley, Newfoundland" in Regional Language Studies...Newfoundland, No. 4, May 1972.

Referring to Gaelic waulking (milling) songs in Scotland, John Lorne Campbell¹⁰ said:

The words of many of the waulking songs were composed in the seventeenth century; no one knows how old the tunes are. These songs were kept up in conjunction with the waulking or fulling of the hand-made tweed, and therefore tend to disappear when the making of tweed ceases in any locality.

¹⁰ John Lorne Campbell, et. al. Gaelic Folksongs from the Isle of Barra, The Linguaphone Institute of the Folklore Institute of Scotland. n.d. Page 10.

This has certainly been the case in the Codroy Valley where the weaving has died out completely, and many of the songs that were sung at the millings have been lost in a matter of thirty years, with the ones that remain known only to the middle-aged and the old people. While it was encouraging to find enough people in the Valley to "stage" a milling in 1974 and 1975, the fate of the songs is inevitable; for once the people who know them today are gone, the milling songs will have disappeared entirely with only some of the tunes surviving as accordion or fiddle tunes.

Having completed the description of the various stages of the wool industry, I will now conclude as the milling frolic itself concluded by describing the festivities that followed the work session.

After the actual work of the milling was over, the boards and tweed were all cleared away. Those who wished to do so washed, took their aprons off, and tidied themselves up, all set for the "time" which followed. The hostess, having prepared a meal consisting of roasted pork or chicken with home grown potatoes, carrots and turnips, along with pickles, preserved fruits, home-baked bread, "bonnachs", and cakes, set the table so everyone could help himself to the feast. The host, in the meantime, offered refreshments to everyone from his supplies of whiskey, rum, or home-made beer, wine or moonshine.

With the work completed, the rest of the evening and often

well into the night was spent eating, drinking, singing, and dancing. The music for dancing just as at any ceillidh was supplied by bagpipes, accordion, and fiddle; and the musicians took turns in playing or usually played together.

Allan MacArthur, who attended countless millings at which he sang, danced, and played his bagpipes and accordion, described what this part of the evening's milling frolic was like:

And when the cloth was milled, they'd put everything away and start dancing. There would be no waltzes [that is, the slower dances that are done at the dances held by the young people today] or jazz, or anything--all step-dancing. We'd have an eight-handed reel, you see, or a set, or something like that; but only eight--that was the highest [number of people] that would go on the floor at one time. But for step-dancing, there was only four people on the floor--two men and two women. And they'd beat you down!

That's forgotten here now. It's different kinds of dances altogether now, you see. There'd be as high as fifty or sixty get up for a dance now. That's quite different to when they'd be only four on the floor, and everybody trying to see who could dance the best, who could dance the most steps.

[C607, 69-37]

At last, well after midnight, at a time which usually coincided with the last of the bottles being emptied, the milling frolic would come to an end.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

The land-hungry Highland Scots who came to the Codroy Valley from Cape Breton in the mid-nineteenth century saw many changes during the first and second generations when they laboured, as Howley said, "with persevering toil" to tame the land they had settled. Looking ahead to the future of the Valley, he added the accurate prediction in 1883 that they would succeed in "turning the wild lands to account, if not for themselves, at least for their posterity." [Howley, Survey, 1883] Allan MacArthur's generation, which followed this early pioneer period, could not only look back to the beginnings of settlement in the Valley through the eyes of parents and grandparents who told of the experiences of their people, but could continue to observe the evolution of their land and their culture throughout another three generations.

The changes they have seen taking place in the land itself have generally met their approval, as they watched the land-clearing process continue over the years, fulfilling the original purpose of the settlers whose aim in life was to own productive farmland. The gradual modification of their culture which has resulted from integration with the predominantly English-speaking world in which they live, however, has

been met with considerable regret, especially as they have watched an apparently steady decline in interest in their language and traditions among the young people.

The hardships of emigrating to the New World in the early days produced generations of people with varying degrees of interest in their mother country. As far as the Scots are concerned, the hundreds who visit the "old country" every year from all over the world in the hopes of finding traces of what was once theirs, and the many more, with no opportunity to visit, still talk passionately of their beloved land. The Codroy Valley Scots are no exception, and through at least four generations, there have been many who were interested in preserving their history. Allan MacArthur was, in his generation, recognized by the entire community as having the deep interest and the remarkable memory characteristic of such a person. He was not the only one of his generation, however, as there had been several others with whom he had once been able to share his great interest before they reached the end of their lives. His wife, Mary, in her own way, had qualities which complemented her husband's; and although Allan was the great source of information while he was alive, Mary added much detail after his death. After her own death in January, 1975, I was surprised by her family who handed me a notebook in which she had kept notes of importance to her, generally relevant to the history of their community. Some of the entries she had written down from the notes of one of

Allan's friends, Angus MacLennan, who, many years older than Allan, had long since died. The short entries in the notebook give some hint of the diversities of the interest of those who wrote them and talked about them. To illustrate with only a few examples:

First Priest ever on west coast Newfoundland
[was] Rev. Father O'Hearn.

First person of Scotch descent born in Codroy
Valley, 1848, (James MacNeil).

First motor car came to Codroy Valley to Tom
Blanchard in 1919.

✓ The old people themselves emphasized the fact that what kept their traditions alive over the years was the custom of getting together at a ceildh where they could use their own language with family and friends while relating their past, singing their songs, playing their music, and even demonstrating their crafts. Although this pattern had virtually disappeared when I first visited the Codroy Valley, any success that I achieved as a folklorist there can only be attributed to the recognition by the MacArthurs that I was familiar with this way of life and was willing to be a participant in their home, and receptive to the features of their culture which the younger generation were at this time ignoring.

Although there have been several people in the Valley who have remarked that it was fortunate that I arrived "just in time" to record their remarkable Scottish historian, singer, musician, and craftsman, Allan MacArthur, there have been

more times when I have looked back and wondered if it was not more likely that I had, on the contrary, arrived "just too late" to hear all his songs and stories. I have little doubt that for every song, tune, or story I managed to record on tape, Allan MacArthur had several more, which, for one reason or another, he did not present, or possibly which had slipped away from his active repertoire. He aptly summed up the situation in his own words when he told me: "I wish I was ten years younger, I would keep you all day and all night singing songs and telling you things about them" And though he did not say it in as many words, this implied to me that it was unfortunate that I had not been there ten years earlier to listen to all his songs and stories.

Looking back on Allan MacArthur's talent as a storyteller and historian, it would seem that the material which he himself would have classified as history, such as the accounts described in Chapter IV, remained at the end of his life more intact than the other legends which he grew up hearing from his mother and grandmother. The latter type, represented in Chapter VIII, he felt, seemed to have lost its credibility and reached the end of its life-span around the time when the Valley was linked to the rest of Newfoundland and Canada by road and rail. The final blow was dealt after the area was connected to a source of electric power in 1962, which gave the residents access to the many aspects of other cultures via radio and television, and especially when they

had the opportunity to look more closely at the American way of life as represented by the media. People then became conscious of a feeling that it was not acceptable in more sophisticated societies, such as they could observe on radio and television, to believe in the supernatural world of ghosts, witches, and fairies. Even the exciting world of piracy took on a newer image, namely that of being more acceptable when viewed on television as an adventure to whet the appetite from one week to the next, as opposed to a narrative relevant to one's own people and coastline, which was simply told by the fireside from one generation to the next.

For many years prior to my visits, Allan MacArthur had come to regard the supernatural legends which he had heard in his youth as a closed area, no longer to be discussed. It was only when he found that I, too, came from a rural background and had been brought up on similar stories that he considered telling of their existence in the Valley. Over the years, he had learned to keep silent about them, the judgement of the younger generation which had relegated these supernatural legends to a dubious place in the minds of the very old who know no better than to believe in such things.

Consequently, the narrative contained in Chapter VIII represents only a portion of what his repertoire once was, for like any other aspect of oral tradition, they needed to be performed and repeated in order to survive. In addition to this, they suffered the disadvantage of assuming a question-

able character which forced the raconteur to make a conscious effort to delete them from his repertoire lest by some people he be thought feeble-minded.

The traditional preparation of food and drink has been the one aspect of the culture least resistant to change. The fertile Valley has continued over the years to produce abundant crops of vegetables and fruit which require bottling, and many farms still produce their own beef, mutton, and pork which they usually freeze instead of the traditional bottling or salting. There has been one drastic change outside of the control of the residents of the Valley, which has for several years caused great concern; namely that the two rivers, once famous for their fishing have become depleted in stock through over-fishing, and the woods and mountains, once abundant with wildlife, support only very few moose and caribou which can no longer be relied upon as a certain source of meat for the winter. Appeals to the Newfoundland Government to close the hunting season during the early spring have been ignored, and dozens of hunters from many parts of the world continue to be allowed to hunt the moose and caribou when in calf, thus jeopardizing the possibility of these animals being able to reproduce sufficiently to replace those which are hunted.

Other aspects of material culture have generally declined because people felt that the need for them no longer existed. For example, the wool industry could be carried out satisfactorily by shipping the wool out of the Province. The ab-

sence of all the work connected with the wool industry freed the housewife from many hours that, in the old days, would have had to be set aside to complete all the tasks related to the industry. It seems ironical, however, to consider the situation of many of the old people today. They grew up knowing the race against time in the hive of activity in which they lived, in the days when they would have longed to have had a moment to rest, but scarcely had time to think about it, far less take it. Yet today, they have so much free time that they frequently seek tasks to fill their hours, such as hand knitting, which, as Mrs. MacArthur used to say, she did "to pass the time." A far cry from the days when she had to sit up late making clothes on her knitting machine in order to clothe her children!

Leatherwork is also a thing of the past in the Valley. The older men who remember how they used to make moccasins still talk of it, while the younger people remember only the days when they wore them; and since bought footwear became more easily obtainable, they did not even consider learning the craft.

Methods of alleviating some of the hard work of producing everything they needed in the Valley were undoubtedly welcomed, even though there is always a nostalgia attached to some of the crafts that have disappeared. While Allan MacArthur had no regrets that he no longer needed to stay up late at night with a lamp on the kitchen table sewing moccasins, he did have

the greatest regrets that most of the oral traditions of his Scottish forebears had almost disappeared from the Valley. He summed up his attitude about what he considered responsible for the loss by quoting a proverb: "Bho'n chaill mi Ghaidhlig na b'fharr cha d'fhair mi." [C872, 71-48; Since I've lost the Gaelic, nothing better have I found.] He realized only too well that the Gaelic had been the vehicle for carrying their Scottish traditions from one generation to the next, and as he watched it disappear, he knew the consequences would be a serious loss to their identity as Highland Scots.

Unfortunately, in my concern to collect material relevant to the tradition, I neglected to ask Allan MacArthur about the process involved and the responsibility of becoming a tradition bearer, if in fact he or his mother were conscious of such a process. He made the point himself that what he learned he acquired from his mother and grandmother: "Anything my mother learned me I never forgot," [C882, 71-48] but did not say at what stage in his life, if there was such a time that he could pinpoint, he knew he was well-versed enough to pass it on to another generation, or if he noticed a time in his life when other people began to recognize him as the source of information that he was. It would have been interesting to know if these three generations of great tradition-bearers were aware of a definite process involved in passing on their traditions, and if they considered it to be something accomplished during middle or old age. But whatever the exact process was, it

was consistently successful during the first three generations of Scots in the Valley, then ceased to continue with the generation of Allan MacArthur's children. They themselves recognize the fact that they mark the turning point from the old way of life where the Gaelic was the language of their home, to a modern way of life in keeping with the uniformity of the single language community that has evolved from the four language mosaic in which people once kept their separate identities.

One thing is certain, that with the loss of the Gaelic language, many aspects of the Scottish traditions will also vanish. As it is now in 1975, the generation to which Allan and Mary MacArthur's children belong all had the Gaelic as their mother tongue, but no longer use it; their children (with the exception of the oldest children from Lewis's marriage, and one other child from Loretta's marriage who was brought up by Allan and Mary after her mother's death in 1947) have never learned the language. As a result of the loss of the language, then, the traditions of the Codroy Valley Scots now seems destined to be carried in a different manner, and the content of what is handed down must also inevitably change.

Allan MacArthur was very much aware of the process involved in diluting the oral traditions of the Gaelic speakers, and he discussed at some length what he saw happening to them. To illustrate his point more clearly, he chose the genre of folk-song as an example, and he compared his generation to his mother's, which, he felt, represented more closely the Gaelic

traditions as they were brought to the New World with the migration. He said that his mother knew about sixty songs which she learned from her people when they brought them directly from her birthplace, Scotland, and that his own repertoire could not be compared to hers. It was not that Allan did not know the same number of songs, for his own entire song repertoire would have covered at least sixty if not more. It was rather that he considered his mother's repertoire to have been superior because many of her songs were long historical ballads which she retained till her death in 1931: "She had a lot of songs with no chorus in them, like war songs, you see, like that." Although Allan did learn some of her ballads, when he reached his old age he could not sing all those he had learned but only a number of songs which had remained more popular in the Valley than others during the last few years that the Gaelic was in use. He felt that during his old age he did not have the same interested audience that his mother had had during hers, and this he considered was largely responsible for the fact that he regrettably lost many of the long Gaelic ballads, along with several stories. He was quite aware of the fact that a memory which retains a large repertoire of songs and stories is only kept alive and accurate by the frequent singing of songs and the telling of stories; and indeed without the audience, a performer will be forced, as Allan MacArthur himself was, to allow certain sections of his repertoire to

become passive. Allan felt strongly that this situation had diluted the oral aspects of his culture, and his son, Frank, while of the same opinion as his father, saw the process gathering even more speed in his own generation. A Gaelic-speaker from childhood, he assessed the three generations as follows:

My grandmother, she could sit down, and Gaelic songs! She had songs twenty-four and twenty-five verses, and thirty verses--and that wasn't the four lined verses, now, and that would be what we'd call an eight-line verse.

Father too, he had a wonderful memory; [but] the only bits of Gaelic that I know, just the chorus here and there, and even a lot of the choruses I don't have the right words, you know.

[C878, 71-48]

While Frank was being modest as far as his assessment of his own ability was concerned, for after his father's death, I have heard him singing complete Gaelic songs and talking the language on a few occasions, he did have the three generations in perspective. He did not say, however, that the next generation, his own children, knew no words to the songs but only the melodies of some and occasionally the titles.

In Frank MacArthur's generation and in the newest generation of young adults, the melodies are played on all the musical instruments traditional to the area, and a new pattern seems to have been established. Unlike Allan MacArthur, whose repertoire of songs, pipe tunes, and accordion tunes was almost entirely Scottish, his children and grandchildren assimilated into the repertoire which they took from Allan a

large number of French, Irish, and Newfoundland tunes, along with popular songs from the two World Wars. They have even adopted a few music-hall songs which they heard on commercial radio stations in the Valley, so that they too might suit the fiddle, accordion, mandolin, or bagpipes. (Where in Scotland could you hear "Bicycle Built for Two" played on the bagpipes?)

During Allan MacArthur's day, there was, to the onlooker, no question that he was of Scottish background, as his music was all from his mother country. The same was true of the French people living alongside him. In spite of the extended repertoires of his children and grandchildren, the predominance of Scottish music still points clearly to their ethnic background, especially as they have retained such distinctive music forms as the march and strathspey, which are virtually unknown to Newfoundlanders of Irish, English, and French background. It seems, then, that Highland blood takes a lot of diluting, and while Allan and Frank both chose to illustrate the point with aspects of their music, from my own observation, the manner of speaking of the descendants from the Scottish settlers gives away their ethnic background, as their English accent and usage of this newly adopted language have a strong Highland flavour, with an occasional Gaelic word used for terms that have not been translated.

Over the past five years of collecting material for this study, I have seen many changes taking place in the Valley. While I have welcomed the paved roads and regretted the in-

creased reliance upon government assistance, I have been most of all impressed by the new surge of interest in the Scottish traditions, and indeed in all traditions of the Valley by the younger generations who once ignored their heritage. Several members of the MacArthur family have asked for words of songs, or other material which their parents gave me during the many days spent in their home--a pleasant change around from the time when Allan had to defend my use of the tape recorder as the only chance of preserving at least some of his family traditions for posterity. Since Allan himself died, the rest of the family have gradually moved from an initial feeling that everything was lost to a recognition of their individual responsibility of taking part in preserving the remnants of their culture. This particular change started when Mrs. MacArthur, who had until her husband's death looked upon him as the authority, took on the responsibility of ensuring that the Scottish traditions were preserved as accurately as possible by carefully adding her own contribution to the material already collected. In time, the rest of the family began to take a greater pride in their Scottish culture; and while a little hesitant at first, with some encouragement they have performed their Scottish music and dancing more often and more publicly. Frank, who joined in with his father's choruses, has now taken over with entire songs at millings set up to relive the old milling frolics; Sears, who formerly could never be persuaded to take his pipes out of their case if he

thought someone was listening, will now play at weddings, dances, and other gatherings; the family's musicians and dancers who, up until very recently have never played outside of the Valley, were persuaded to enter an annual competition for Newfoundland folk performers, where Frank MacArthur won the all-Newfoundland step-dancing competition, his nephew, Leonard, was the top fiddler, his brother, Sears, was runner-up to the Newfoundland accordion champion, and a group of eight square dancers from the Valley, accompanied by Sears, won the square dancing. It was a proud day for Mrs. MacArthur when they returned to the Valley not only with the honours of winning but with a revitalized pride in their Scottish heritage. "If only Allan could have seen them," she commented, "wouldn't he be some proud!"

Perhaps this also marked a turning point where the rest of the family recognized that my interest in their culture was not a shallow one, but that I also shared in the pride that Allan and Mary had. Almost immediately after their great success at the festival, I was deeply moved by the fact that they organized a ceildh in my honour, inviting all the people who had been involved with my collecting in the Valley, where they presented me with a framed picture of their beloved Codroy Valley in appreciation for encouraging their participation in the festival and renewing their pride in their Scottish culture.

While my original intention may have been to collect and write about the songs, this study has dealt mainly with other aspects of the oral culture and certain aspects of the folk-life. I now realize that a comprehensive analysis of the songs would inevitably require a discussion on the way of life into which they fitted, and such an analysis only makes my future task of dealing with the songs, music, and folk medicine easier.

Regrettably, Allan and Mary MacArthur did not live long enough to see this work completed, but they gave me ample assurance in the past that they were relieved and happy to see some of their traditions recorded for future generations who might develop an interest in their forebears. As Mary said, Allan would indeed have been proud of his family's success as performers, not only at the festival mentioned, but since then on C.B.C. Television, at several concerts in other parts of Newfoundland and in Cape Breton, and at the Mariposa Folk Festival in Toronto where Frank was a great success, step-dancing. More than this, however, would have been Allan's joy in knowing that they had developed a new and vital interest in the music and culture which had been his own greatest source of pride throughout his life:

Scotland thy mountain,
Thy valley and fountain,
The home of the poet,
The birthplace of song.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF MOTIFS IN FOLK NARRATIVE (CHAPTER VIII)

- A63.5. Lucifer causes fall of man.
- B15.7.1. Cerebrus.
- B451.5. Helpful raven.
- B455.3. Helpful eagle.
- D1905.2. Apple divided and eaten as a love charm.
- F211.3. Fairies live under the earth.
- F235. Visibility of fairies.
- F235.3. Fairies visible to one person alone.
- F236.1.6. Fairy in green clothes.
- F239.4.3. Fairy is tiny.
- F258. Fairies gregarious.
- F260. Behaviour of fairies.
- F301. Fairy lover.
- F301.1. Summoning fairy lover.
- F301.7. Girl goes to see fairy lover on certain nights.
- F320. Fairies carry people away to fairyland.
- F321.1. Changeling (Fairy steals child from cradle and leaves substitute.)
- F391.2. Fairies borrow food from mortals.
- F393. Fairy visits among mortals.
- F402.6.4.1. Spirits live in caves.
- F757. Extraordinary cave.

F969.3. Marvellous light.

G265.4.2. Witch causes illness of animal.

G265.7. Witch controls actions of animals.

G265.8.3.1.1. Gun bewitched so that it will not hit target.

G269.4. Curse by disappointed witch.

H1023.2. Task: carrying water in a sieve.

J152. Wisdom (knowledge) from sage (teacher).

K551.3.5. Death respite while playing bagpipes.

K1888. Illusory light.

N773. Adventure from following animal to cave.

Q91. Reward for cleverness.

Q111. Riches as reward.

R12. Abduction by pirates.

R82. Captive sends secret message outside (in
orange or on handkerchief).

R211.4. Escape from pirates.

V236.1. Fallen angels become fairies.

V410. Charity rewarded.

Z40. Chain with interdependent members.

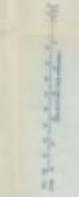
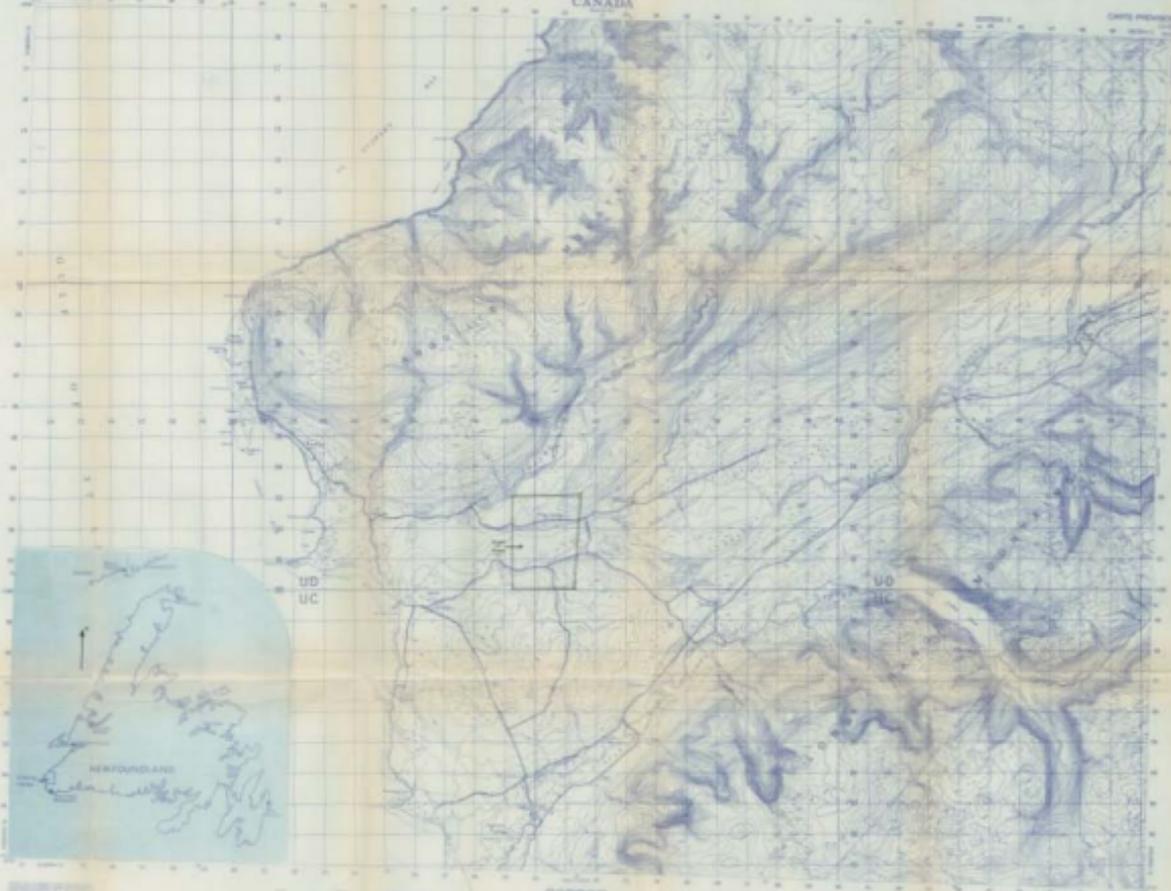
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