

ASPECTS OF THE TRADITIONAL  
LIFE OF FRENCH  
NEWFOUNDLANDERS OF BLACK  
DUCK BROOK (L'ANSE AUX  
CANARDS, PORT-AU-PORT,  
NEWFOUNDLAND) WITH  
SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE  
ROLE OF WOMEN

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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ASPECTS OF THE TRADITIONAL LIFE OF FRENCH NEWFOUNDLANDERS  
OF BLACK DUCK BROOK (L'ANSE AUX CANARDS, PORT-AU-PORT,  
NEWFOUNDLAND) WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN

by

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of traditional life in Black Duck Brook, a community comprised largely of francophones on the Port-Au-Port Peninsula. It concentrates on the role of women as it was from the early part of this century until the present. Neither the folklore nor the language of Black Duck Brook have been previously studied.

Three field trips were taken to this community, when a total of five women were tape-recorded and interviewed for several hours. At first the interviewing was direct, with the aid of questionnaires previously composed by the author. Later, interviews became more informal and the method of questioning was indirect. Much information was also gathered through observation methods, since I stayed with a French family during my field trips.

The subject matter of this thesis is divided into chapters corresponding to the major areas of traditional women's work: foodways, cleaning methods, textiles, pregnancy and childbirth and outdoor work. Also included is an outline of traditional customs; those of the calendar and those of the rites of passage.

In all of the areas studied, the information gathered shows changes that have occurred over the course of the years. When Black Duck Brook was first reached by road, and when electricity became available, traditional ways began to disappear.

At present, there is very little left in the culture

which is different from the cultures of the French, the Acadians of the Maritimes or the English-speaking Newfoundlanders. Only two aspects of the life of the French-speaking Newfoundlanders of Black Duck Brook are unique: their language, which shows some differences from that of other regions, and the traditions, beliefs, stories and history which they remember from days past.

However, the population of Newfoundlanders who speak French is rapidly decreasing and their language and culture will be preserved only if a drastic change is made.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Among the many people who helped me in the preparation of this thesis, I would like to thank Miss Ruth King, my friend and colleague, who shared the rewarding experience of Black Duck Brook with me and who gave me helpful advice on linguistic matters; Mr. E. Roger Clark, Head of the Department of French at Memorial University and Dr. F. A. Aldrich, Dean of Graduate Studies at Memorial University, who concerned themselves in my work and provided financial aid for my principal field trip; and Mr. Gerald Pocius, my supervisor, who generously gave his time to guide my efforts.

I would also like to thank the Reverend Father Francis Buckle of Lourdes Parish and the Reverend Father Joseph Kelly of Port-Au-Port Parish, who took time to speak with me and permitted me to browse through the parish records.

The people of Black Duck Brook have my deepest affection, especially Mr. Michael Felix and his family with whom I spent a month, and Mr. Gerry Benoit and his family who also shared their genial home with me.

Above all, I would like to warmly thank my five principle informants: Mrs. Mary Felix, Mrs. Emily Young, Mrs. Mathilde Bozec, Mrs. Mary Duffenais and Mrs. Regina Lecoure, who kindly spent many of their busy hours talking to me and who provided the basis of this thesis. May their peaceful way of life endure.



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## INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in French Newfoundlanders during my undergraduate degree taken at Memorial University of Newfoundland. At that time I undertook a study of the anglicisms in the idiolect of a French Newfoundland woman.

For my graduate work I decided to concentrate on a little-studied community called Black Duck Brook, or L'Anse Aux Canards, as it is known in the dialect. This community is found on the northern end of the Port-Au-Port Peninsula, at the beginning of a point of land known as Long Point. It was further decided that I would study the traditional life of women in particular, since all the major work already done in French Newfoundland had been undertaken by a male. Treatises on field work often point out the difficulties of a member of one sex obtaining information from the other, and my work would thus provide a different viewpoint on the traditional life of women in the region.

For a study of traditional life of women in rural Newfoundland, I chose several major areas of women's work, which seemed to me those tasks which occupied the largest part of a woman's life. These tasks correspond for the most part to the chapters of this thesis.

This work begins with a geographical and historical perspective of the area under study, in an attempt to situate Black Duck Brook in time and space. We see that the history of this rocky, isolated area is little known because the French were forbidden to settle there until

1904.

I then discuss the research methods I employed before and during my field work and the books and works relevant to the subject matter which I found interesting or informative. In the same chapter I provide a biographical sketch of principle informants which shows how the events of their lives and their personalities may determine their value as informants and how they are typical of the area.

We study next the area of foodways: what the people of Black Duck Brook ate in days past, how many of their food habits remain unchanged, and how the women prepare food. Cleaning is the next important aspect and takes into consideration the methods of cleaning objects long since laid aside as well as the cleaning performed today. Much of the cleaning was of clothes, which leads us to the study of textiles. The latter chapter discusses the manufacture of wool, cloth, the making of garments and household items and the dress of the people.

One of the most important functions of women, the bearing of children, is considered in the fifth chapter. We discuss the physical aspects of pregnancy and childbirth as well as certain beliefs which surround this facet of life. Other beliefs and customs are found in the following chapter, customs pertaining to the traditional calendar and to the important stages of life.

The last chapter in the main body moves out of the house to describe the work that women did outdoors. It

was often their task to cultivate land, to take care of animals, to carry water and to help with the fishery.

Following the main body, I have included two appendices. The first is a lexicon of words used in the dialect of the French-speaking people of Black Duck Brook that are relevant to the subjects mentioned above. It contains an English and Standard French equivalent for each dialect word, although some words are English or Standard French.

The second appendix is a transcription of a folktale called "Le Montagne Nouère" told to me by Mr. Emile Benoit. This captures a little of the tradition of the "veillée", the gatherings that entertained people before television and radio, and may be of interest to the folktale collector.

Most of the material in this thesis is oriented to the past and describes life in Black Duck Brook as it was after the turn of the century. An attempt has been made to note the changes that have taken place in traditional life and to emphasize processes and beliefs that continue.



## GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

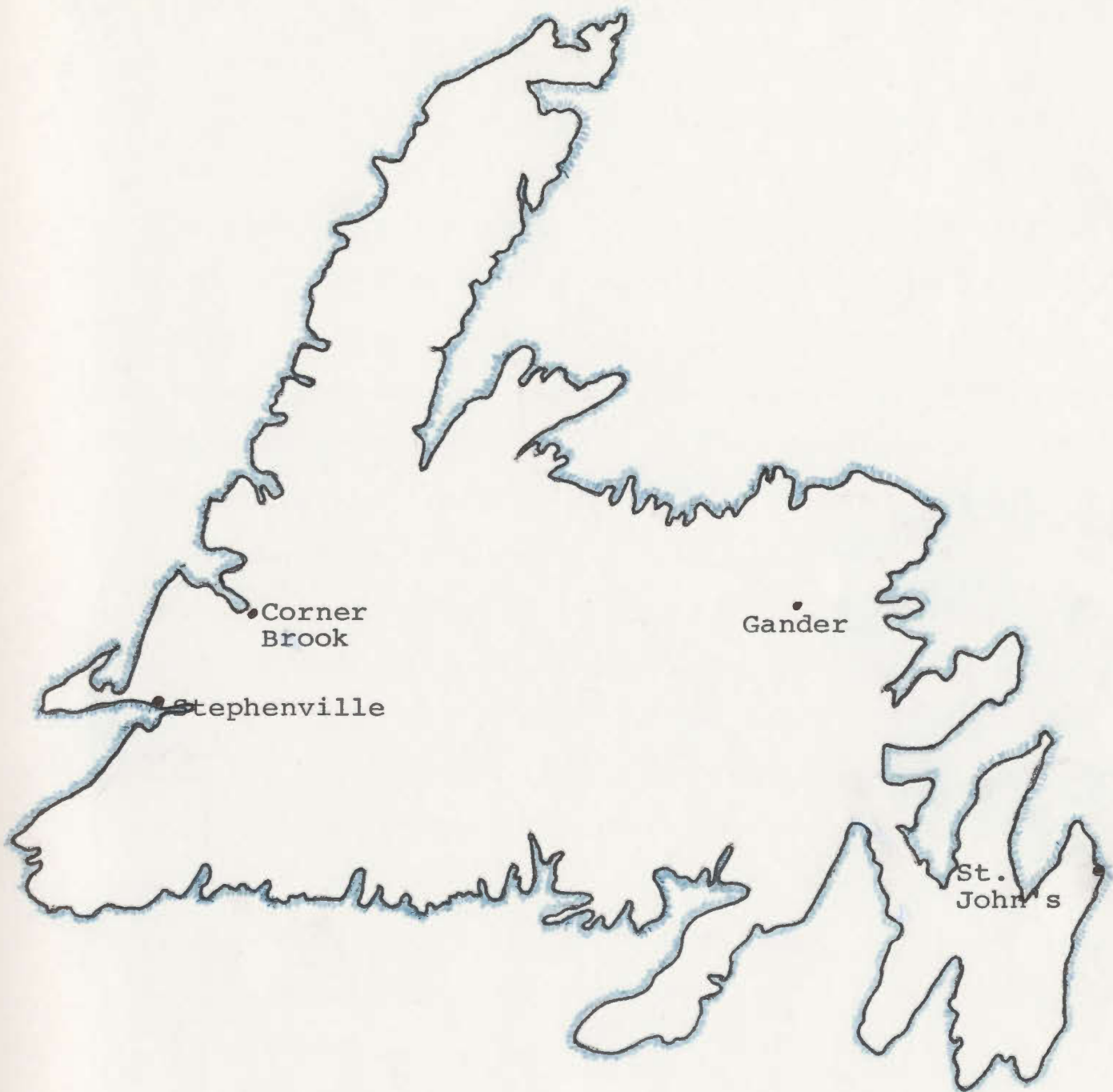
The island of Newfoundland is located off the east coast of the Canadian mainland. On the west coast of this island is a body of land called the Port-Au-Port Peninsula, where the community of Black Duck Brook and three other French communities are located.

Stephenville, located on the Newfoundland mainland, is the last large town that one passes on the way to the Port-Au-Port Peninsula. Leaving this town, one follows a road bordered by high cliffs, thick forests and small communities and passes several crossroads, which indicate the direction to various places on the peninsula. Following the road which travels through communities such as Felix Cove, Campbell's Creek and Picadilly, one will eventually



Photograph 1 The road which travels to Black Duck Brook, taken between Felix Cove and Campbell's Creek. Photograph taken in May 1977.

Wrong road.  
this road is on your  
way to Cape St. George



Map 1 The Island of Newfoundland

Scale: 1" = 50 miles

Key:      = seacoast

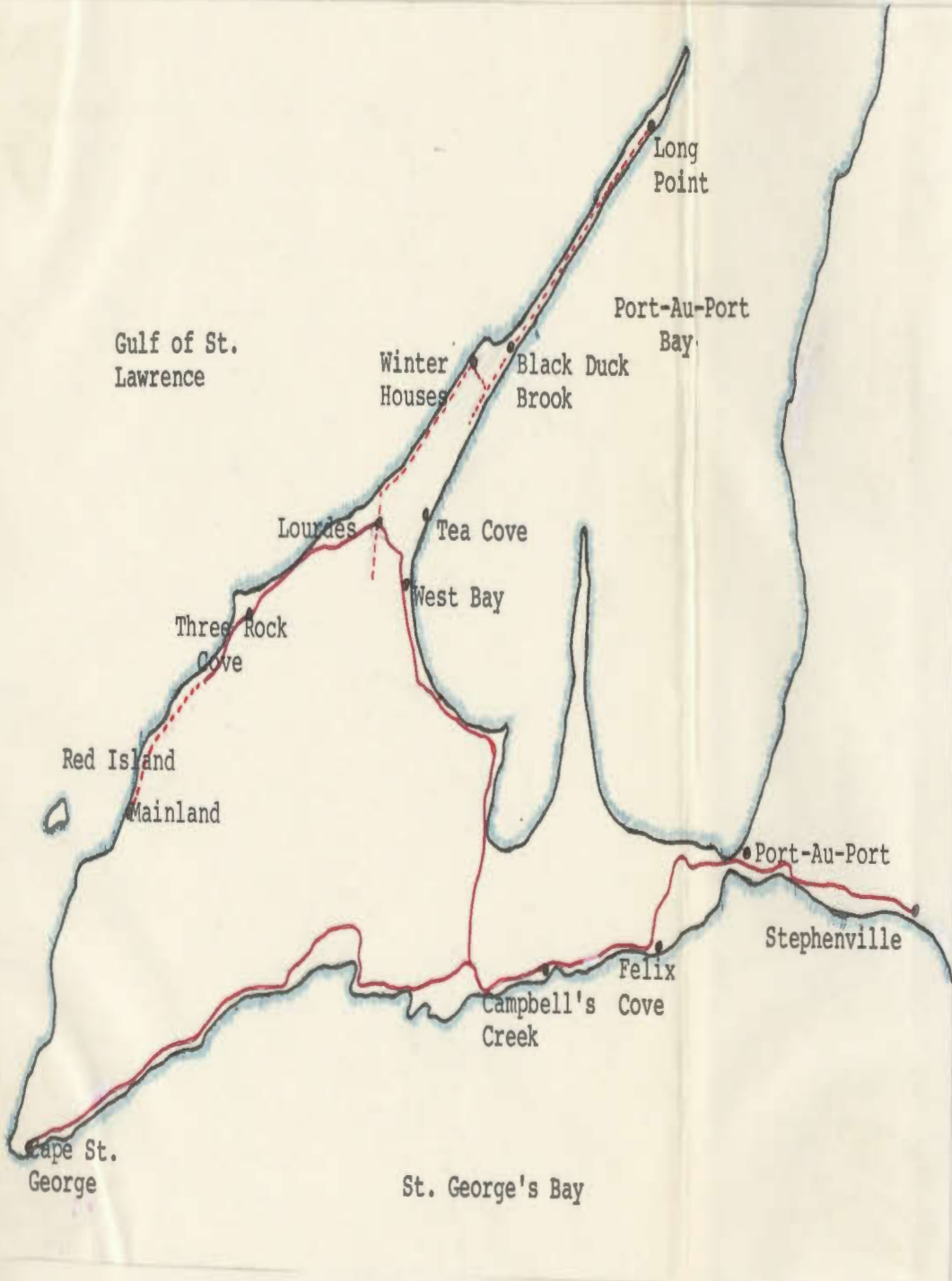
arrive at the community of Lourdes, founded in 1937 and until then known as Clam Bank Cove.

At Lourdes, one may take a road which rises to the left and leads to the community of Winter Houses and then to Black Duck Brook. It is a dirt road which travels along the coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or what is known in the area as "the outside". Bordering this road are scattered houses and marshy fields. The road from Winter Houses to Black Duck Brook takes an abrupt left and rises up to a hill where one may continue going to the end of Black Duck Brook, to the right. From this road there used to be a path reaching Tea Cove, or "L'Anse à Thé", where the French fishermen, according to local history, used to come ashore to boil their kettle. From the crossroads, the road which turns to the left leads to Black Duck Brook proper and continues for about ten miles down a point of land known as Long Point, which gradually narrows. On the left of this point of land is "the outside" and on the right, "the inside", which is Port-Au-Port Bay.

In the words of a geographer:




"Conspicuous limestone ridges also exist in the west, forming Cape Cormorant, and in the northwest where the linear Round Head Ridge reaches 800 feet elevation near Lourdes. The narrow northeastward trending Long Point cuesta continues the same line, gradually decreasing its elevation from 400 feet in the southwest to below sea level. An extensive rolling lowland exists between the two high areas, consisting mainly of a graben area, which also forms West Bay."<sup>1</sup>

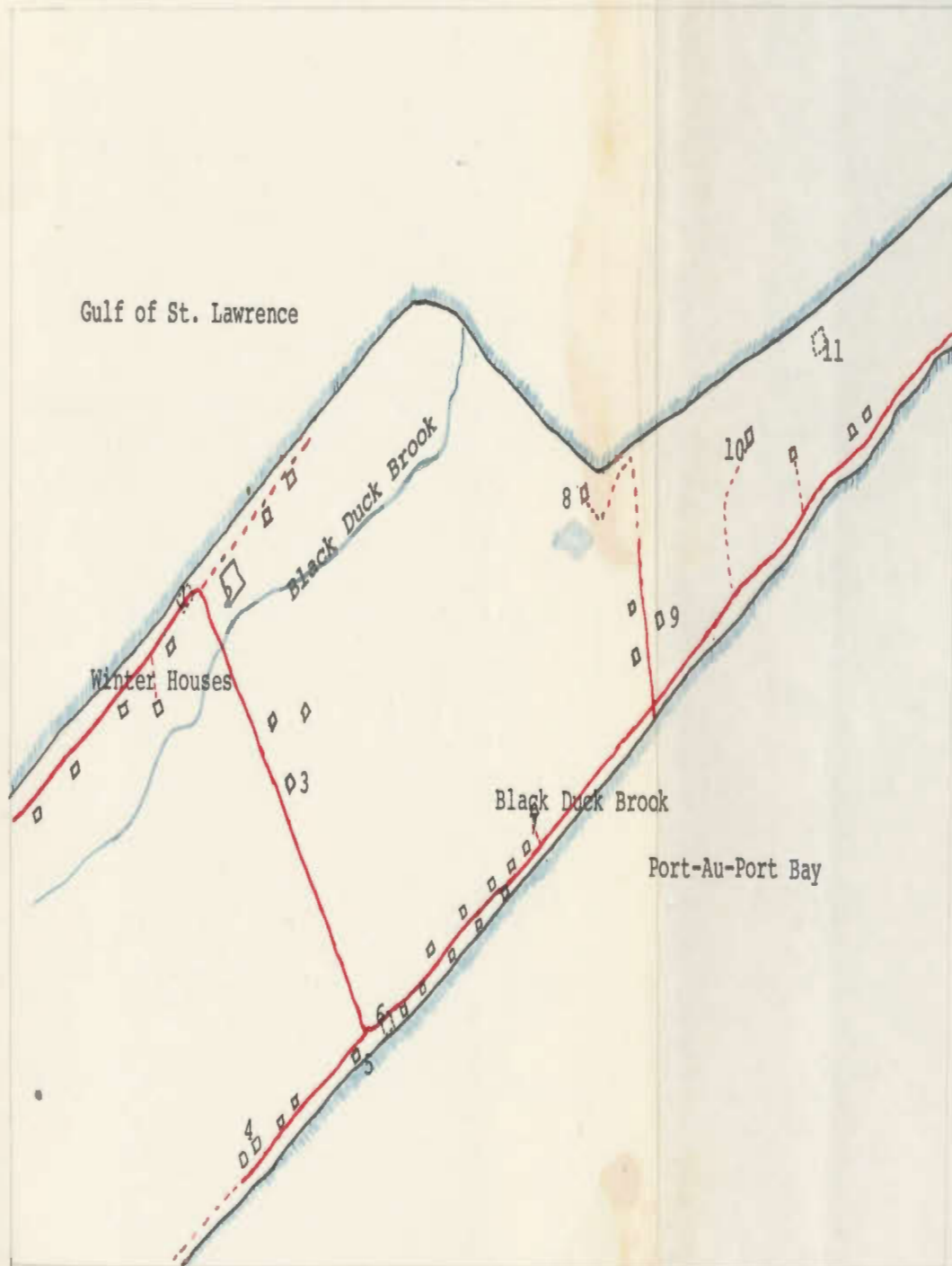
<sup>1</sup> William C. Wonders, "Settlement in Western Newfoundland", (Ottawa: Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, Geographical Branch) 1951, p. 138



Map 2 The Port-Au-Port Peninsula

Scale: 1" = @4 miles

- Key
-  = seacoast
  -  = paved roads
  -  = dirt roads



Map 3 Black Duck Brook

Scale: 1" = 0½ mile

Key: — = seacoast

— = dirt road

..... = private road

Number Code:

- 1 former Abbott and Haliburton general store
- 2 cemetery and former school house
- 3 Lainey's store
- 4 Mrs. Mary Duffenais
- 5 Mrs. Mary Felix
- 6 site of former church
- 7 Mrs. Emily Young
- 8 Mrs. Mathilde Bozec
- 9 Mrs. Regina Lecoure
- 10 Mr. Emile Benoit
- 11 former lobster canning factory

In places the land is low, wet and suitable for farming. In other areas, there are high cliffs which fall abruptly to the shore, providing little shelter for fishermen. The climate is harsh, but not as fierce as some parts of Newfoundland: this area "has perhaps the most favourable climate of the whole island. The summers are warmer and have less fog than the rest of the island. It also has a moderate rainfall. The winters are a little colder than in most regions but clear sunshiny days are more common."<sup>2</sup>

The French began to fish off the shores of Newfoundland in the early sixteenth century and various sources put the date at 1504. Blandford Briffet<sup>3</sup> quotes Tempier, in Commentaires sur l'Ordonnance de la Marine de 1681 and Valin in Les Bretons En Amérique avant Christophe Colombe as saying that the French were fishing off these shores before the so-called discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus.

G. Musset in Les Rochelais à Terre-Neuve says: "Dès 1504, la présence de Bretons y (Terre-Neuve) est signalée. Il est même vraisemblable que ses hardis marins n'en étaient

<sup>2</sup> Sister Elizabeth Quinlan, "Port-Au-Port", (Student paper presented to Mr. Hillier) 1972, Chap. II, p.1

<sup>3</sup> F. Blandford Briffet, "A History of the French in Newfoundland previous to 1714", (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland) 1927, p.1

pas à leur premier voyage."<sup>4</sup> F.F. Thompson says that it seems certain that the French were fishing in this area before 1504.<sup>5</sup>

Briffet says that in 1577, 150 ships were fit out for fishing in Newfoundland waters and in 1611, 600 ships.<sup>6</sup> For two centuries - the sixteenth and the seventeenth - the French fished off the shores of Newfoundland in the summers and returned to France in the winter with their catch. It appears that none of them remained behind during this time, except a few who stayed to protect their beaches.

The wars between France and Britain during these years played a vital role in the settlement of the west coast of Newfoundland. In particular, three treaties drawn up by these countries which determined ownership of the island left their mark on its history for many years.

In 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht gave the island of Newfoundland to Britain and stipulated:

"Moreover, it shall not be lawful for the subjects of France to fortify any place in the said island of Newfoundland, or to erect any buildings there besides stages made of boards, and huts necessary and usual for drying of fish, or to resort to the said island beyond the time necessary for fishing

<sup>4</sup> G. Musset, Les Rochelais à Terre-Neuve, (Paris: Ernest LeRoux, Extrait du Bulletin de Géographie) 1892, p. 6

<sup>5</sup> F.F. Thompson, The French Shore in Newfoundland, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press) 1961, p. 3

<sup>6</sup> Briffet, pp. 13-14

and drying of fish."<sup>7</sup>

This treaty goes on to specify the part of Newfoundland in which the French were permitted to catch and dry their fish, from Cape Bonivista around the north of the island to Point Riche. This area was, and still is, known as "the French Shore".

However, as Thompson says,

"After the peace, old habits prevailed as French fishermen continued to visit the south coast... More serious trespass was committed upon the west coast south of Point Riche, where the French, despite the naval and gubernatorial information to the contrary, fish for cod and salmon, trapped for fur, occasionally stayed the winter, and sometimes "lost" themselves in the woods to escape the reach of the law."<sup>8</sup>

Thus it seems that there may have been Frenchmen in this area early in the eighteenth century.

In 1763 the Treaty of Paris confirmed this agreement but in 1783 the Treaty of Versailles gave the French more rights by changing the limits of "the French Shore" to Cape St. John around the coast to Cape Ray, an area which includes the Port-Au-Port Peninsula. This latter treaty also promised the French a monopoly on the coast:

"His Britannic Majesty will take the most positive measures for preventing his subjects from interfering in any manner by their competition, with the fishery of the French...and he will for this purpose cause fixed settlements which shall be

<sup>7</sup> Major-General R.L. Dashwood, The French in Newfoundland, (London: J.J. Keliher and Co.) 1899, p. 1

<sup>8</sup> Thompson, p. 8



formed there to be removed. His Britannic Majesty will give orders that the French fishermen be not incommoded in cutting the wood necessary for the repairs of their scaffolds, huts and fishing vessels."<sup>9</sup>

Thus, from 1713 the French were not permitted to settle in Newfoundland, but were forced to return to France each autumn, a type of fishery that they had already been carrying out for some time. It is probable, however, that some of them decided to stay despite the law and these settlers were known as "deserters", or, in French, "déserteurs". Since they were not allowed to be there, they used, no doubt, all sorts of methods to avoid detection and punishment. "It was in the interests of the settler to choose the most remote and isolated spot in order to avoid detection. In addition, and for the same reason, he would keep his settlement as small as possible."<sup>10</sup> The French communities, including Black Duck Brook, scattered along the coast of the Port-Au-Port Peninsula, may well have been started in this way.

Between 1699 and 1713, there were four hundred to six hundred French ships carrying sixteen thousand to thirty thousand men working off the coast of Newfoundland.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> D.W. Prowse, A History of Newfoundland, (3rd ed., St. John's: Dicks & Co. Ltd.) 1971, p. 353

<sup>10</sup> M. Stavely, "The French Shore in the Settlement of Newfoundland", (Calgary: Paper read to the Annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers) 1968

<sup>11</sup> Thompson, p. 7

It is not improbable that at least some of them stayed. We know for certain that the Acadian French were settling along the peninsula in the middle of the nineteenth century:

"In 1844 the first Acadian French arrived with their families in fishing boats from Margaree in Cape Breton Island, and located at what is now Stephenville on the north shore of St. George's Bay. More followed and the settlement grew. Subsequently some moved westward to Port au Port, and some moved to Sandy Point and St. Georges. In 1848 there were 750 inhabitants around Bay St. George."<sup>12</sup>

Many of the French in Newfoundland today are descendents of these Acadians as one can tell by an examination of their family names and their dialect. The fishermen who came from France could have easily fitted in with these Acadians.

After 1832 Newfoundland's representative government "held to a policy which reduced French rights to a minimum"<sup>13</sup> thus enforcing as many restrictions as possible and in 1888 the "Bait Act" was introduced which forbade French fishermen to buy or sell bait on non-treaty shores, which cut their fishery in half.<sup>14</sup>

In 1904 the Anglo-Gallic Entente ended the more than two hundred years of the exclusive right of the British to

<sup>12</sup> Wonders, p. 139

<sup>13</sup> Thompson, p. 26

<sup>14</sup> Dashwood, p. 22

settle in Newfoundland. At last, the French were permitted to stay in Newfoundland, something they had probably been doing anyway for many years. However, it is only from this date that we have a more accurate picture of their presence on the island.

Those who settled were Frenchmen from Acadia (who had been there since 1844), from the traditional French fishing islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and from France. They intermarried, married British citizens and some married Indian women to produce what are now the franco-phones of Newfoundland.

From 1884 we have census returns which give no small indication of the size of Black Duck Brook, as well as the origins, occupations and education of the settlers.

In 1884 there was a total of 86 people in Black Duck Brook,<sup>15</sup> of which only one claimed to be "a foreigner", that is, born outside of the British Empire, who was most likely French. In 1891 there were 107 people, four of whom were foreigners. In 1901 the population had grown to 178 people but still only four of that number claimed to be foreign. It seems most likely that the community held far more than this number of French citizens who simply did not admit to their origins for fear of punishment.

<sup>15</sup> Catherine Hanlon, "Census of Black Duck Brook", (Student paper presented to Mr. Thomas, Memorial University of Newfoundland) 1975. Figures from the years 1884 to 1911 are taken from this paper.

In 1911, the next census taken after the French were permitted to stay, the number of foreigners doubled to eight, which is still not a high percentage of the population. Could it be that the French were still hesitant to admit their nationality, especially if they had been in Newfoundland before 1904, or are the figures accurate?

In 1921 the population of Black Duck Brook dropped sharply to 54, from 133 in 1911.<sup>16</sup> The census figures for the community of Winter Houses, which neighbours on Black Duck Brook, was 133. These two communities, because of their proximity, have often been considered as one and there is some evidence that the distinction as to where one ends and the other begins has fluctuated over the years.

In 1935 there were 78 people in Black Duck Brook and 104 in Winter Houses. In 1945 there were 73 in the former and 96 in the latter, but origins were apparently not recorded.

In 1977 there were, according to my own count, 96 people in Black Duck Brook and 65 in Winter Houses. We can see from these figures, even if they be slightly inaccurate, that these two communities were always small.

<sup>16</sup> Ronald Labelle, "Maisons D'Hiver et L'Anse-Aux-Canards -- Etude de recensements 1921 - 1949", (Student paper presented to Mr. Thomas, Memorial University of Newfoundland) 1975. Figures from the years 1921 to 1949 are taken from this paper.

Many of the children of large families have moved to various places in Canada and the United States and thus the population remained fairly constant.

According to Major-General Dashwood, families in French Canada were always large:

The word "family" is rather an indefinite term. "Family" may mean a man and his wife and children, or all his relations. To judge from our previous knowledge of the French, who are very clever in these matters, and are very ready, if you give them an inch, to take an ell, they would no doubt have put the more liberal interpretation on the word "family". I believe at the present moment the population of France is nearly stationary, but the climate of North America has, apparently, a peculiar effect on the French people who live in that part of the world, as it renders them extremely prolific -- a baker's dozen is a common number in a French family in Quebec. I do not know that there is any reason to suppose but what the climate of Newfoundland would have a similar effect."<sup>17</sup>

These words, written in 1899, may seem amusing to us now but they do give us some indication as to the general opinion of the French in North America that the English held at the turn of the century.

A booklet, published by Our Lady of Lourdes Parish on the occasion of the opening of the new elementary school in that town in 1961, gives a brief account of the history of that parish. The parish was started in 1912 when the

<sup>17</sup> Dashwood, p. 17

<sup>18</sup> Anonymous, "Our Lady of Lourdes Elementary School", (Booklet printed for the opening of above school) June 9, 1971

Reverend Father Pinault came from Prince Edward Island to begin the parish which included the communities of Lourdes (formerly Clam Bank Cove), Mainland (known as La Grand' Terre), Three Rock Cove (known as Trois Cailloux), Black Duck Brook (L'Anse Aux Canards), West Bay and Picadilly, although the latter five were referred to at that time as missions. It is also said that in the year 1894 "the main church in this area at that time was the Church of St. Francis Xavier at Black Duck Brook", and goes on to state that there was a school in operation at Black Duck Brook before 1899.

The community of Lourdes "is a recent settlement, dating only from 1937. Before that time there were local inhabitants however, fishermen-farmers, mainly of French descent, living in the isolated corner of the Peninsula."<sup>19</sup> In 1937 the Newfoundland Commission of Government moved twenty-seven families to Lourdes from Sagona Island and other Fortune Bay fishing settlements.

The people of Black Duck Brook, and indeed, all the small communities along the Port-Au-Port Peninsula, have always been fishermen-farmers. In 1891, according to the government census, there were eighteen men between the ages of twenty and fifty, and yet there were twenty-four people whose occupations are referred to as farmers and fishermen.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Wonders, p. 170

<sup>20</sup> Hanlon, pp. 8-9

In 1921, twenty-three boats were engaged in the fishery and a total of nine men between the ages of twenty and fifty.<sup>21</sup>

The number of animals in the community also gives us some indication of the importance of farming. In 1921 there were eight horses, fifty-eight cows, bulls and calves and one hundred twenty-seven sheep. In 1945, there were eight horses, seventy-six cows, bulls and calves and two hundred fifteen sheep.<sup>22</sup>

As regards education, there was, as we have seen, a school in Black Duck Brook before 1899. Except at the beginning, these schools were taught by English teachers and many of the French children did not attend, or could not understand. In 1891 there were six literate adults in the community, out of a total population of one hundred and seven. It is suspected that these literate adults had been taught other than in Black Duck Brook because during the same year there was a total of fifty-five children under the age of fifteen, and a total of fifty-five children under the age of fifteen not attending school.<sup>23</sup> We may assume that the school was started between 1891 and 1899.

<sup>21</sup> Labelle, p. 5 and p. 17

<sup>22</sup> Labelle, p. 16

<sup>23</sup> Hanlon, p. 9

In 1921 there were four children between the ages of five and fifteen in school and five children of the same ages not attending school. In the same year there were twenty literate people over the age of ten, out of a total population of fifty-four.<sup>24</sup>

One can see from these figures that education improved over the years despite the language difference. Many adults with whom I have spoken have said how they were forbidden to speak French in school, were sent home if they were not capable of understanding English and were teased by the English children in school. These factors, among others, convinced the French that they were inferior and many of them applied themselves to learning English, and to teaching their children English. In Black Duck Brook there were, in 1977, a total of twenty-three women, of whom eleven were bilingual, a total of thirty men, of whom twenty-three were bilingual and forty-three children out of whom only four could speak French.

The trend away from the French language has been increasing quickly because of the hardships placed upon the francophones of the area, as well as the factors of inter-marriage with English women and increased communication. In Black Duck Brook today, there is not one person who cannot speak English.

From the time that the community of Black Duck Brook

<sup>24</sup> Hanlon, p. 19



was established until twenty-five years ago, there were very few changes. The people fished and farmed in the same way for generations and passed their knowledge of the land and the sea on to each other. A few of the people living there have some of their own history preserved in their memory.

They tell, for example, that the first house in Black Duck Brook (or what is now Winter Houses) was built in 1871 by parents of people who still live on the same spot, although the original house was burned down several years ago. They tell of the old church in Black Duck Brook that was removed many years ago. It is said that a piece of wood from the cross that was near this church will prevent fire if it is securely placed in a wall or under the floor of a home.

They tell the story of a French man, Jean LeTaccanoux, who jumped ship out in the Atlantic Ocean when his shipmates threatened to kill him and throw him overboard. The story tells that he stayed on the shore for thirty-three days watching the boat and when it left, made his way to Tea Cove where he built himself a small shack. Later he moved to Black Duck Brook. The date of this exploit is unknown.

In 1950, the year after Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation, the community of Black Duck Brook was reached by road for the first time.<sup>25</sup> This road

<sup>25</sup> Wonders, p. 170

provided access to the town of Stephenville and from there, the world. People started to travel more and make frequent visits to Stephenville, especially when cars became more common.

1964 brought an even more dramatic change with the coming of electricity. Almost overnight the people had radio and television, electric lights and electric appliances which changed their way of life. This brought them into contact with the rest of Newfoundland and Canada and gave them many benefits such as improved medical care and education, but it also helped to deteriorate a culture and language which had been intact for more than one hundred years.

In 1968 several families living at Long Point were brought up to Black Duck Brook by another government resettlement program. The government did not wish to spend the money to take the power lines all the way down the Point and wanted the children of the families at Long Point to be able to attend the school in Lourdes, which other children in Black Duck Brook had been doing regularly for some time.

A brief to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism prepared by the faculty of Memorial University of Newfoundland states the following:

"The fishermen who came in large numbers to Newfoundland each summer and departed, according to the terms of the several treaties, in the early autumn, who were confined to the strand and forbidden to erect permanent structures, left behind them in Newfoundland nothing more than a variety of place names, a few

family names along the Great Northern Peninsula, indicative that deserters from the fleet had settled on the Coast and had been assimilated into the local population, and one small French-speaking community in the St. Georges Bay area."<sup>26</sup>

Contrary to what this brief states, there is more than one French speaking community in Port-Au-Port. There are three: Cape St. George, Mainland and Black Duck Brook; four if one considers Black Duck Brook and Winter Houses as individual communities. This thesis hopes to show, not only that there are French people in Black Duck Brook, but that they have left behind, and still retain, a unique language and culture.

<sup>26</sup> Faculty of Memorial University of Newfoundland, "Brief to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism", 1964

## RESEARCH METHODS AND INFORMANTS

The information in this thesis is a result of three field trips taken to the community of Black Duck Brook. The first was an introductory field trip taken from March 8th, 1977 to March 11th, 1977. At that time the subject matter of this thesis had been tentatively decided and I interviewed one woman for an hour and a half about traditional cooking and cleaning methods and one man for an hour and a half about gardening techniques.

During this first trip I stayed with Mr. Michael Felix, his wife Mary, his son Gerard and his wife Geneva, the latter's one-year old daughter Amanda and two of Mr. Felix's other sons, Robert aged twenty-three and Bernard aged fourteen. This short trip provided an introduction to some of the people of the community and an insight into their culture.

There was, at that time, a total of seven students in the community interviewing the residents. Due to our large number in proportion to the number of residents, the community was disturbed by our presence and, in retrospect, did not portray customary norms. We were treated with politeness and a lack of familiarity because we were strangers. Later, when I became a less obvious intruder, the familiarity increased and the cordiality was equal to that shown toward "ordinary people".

The second field trip to the community lasted one month, from May 2nd, 1977 to May 30, 1977. During that

time I again accepted the hospitality of the Felix home, paying a nominal fee as room and board.

I went to Black Duck Brook with a co-student who researched the dialect of the community. Her Master's thesis, tentatively titled "Le Dialect Acadien de L'Anse Aux Canards", is soon to be submitted.

Our first task upon arriving was to visit every home in the communities of Black Duck Brook and Winter Houses in order to take a population census. These two communities are adjacent and residents of both disagree with the limits set up by the provincial government road signs. In reality, these two communities can easily be considered as one for there is much contact between them and members of the same family, living in different communities, are in easy walking distance of each other.

As a census, we gathered information on the names and ages of all inhabitants as well as the languages they spoke and their place of birth.

The collection of this information took about two days, longer than we had anticipated, because people in every house were curious to know what we were doing and many of them asked us to come into their homes, an offer which we did not like to decline. The questions we asked the residents were clear but sometimes the answers were puzzling. When we asked one woman if her eighteen year-old daughter spoke French she replied: "She speak it but she don't talk it." After some discussion we took this to mean that

the girl was capable of speaking French but rarely did so.

The results of our census showed that in the community of Black Duck Brook, as defined by the limits set up by the government of Newfoundland, there is a total of ninety-six people. The women number twenty-three, eleven of whom speak both French and English. There are thirty men, twenty-three of whom are bilingual and forty-three children, only four of whom are bilingual.

In the neighbouring community of Winter Houses, the total population numbers sixty-five. There are nine women, twenty men and thirty-six children. The numbers of bilingual people are, respectively, three, sixteen and one. In Black Duck Brook, the percentage of the population who are bilingual is roughly fifty percent including the children although seventy-six percent of the men are bilingual and forty-eight percent of the women.

Twelve of the inhabitants of Black Duck Brook were born outside the immediate vicinity of Black Duck Brook, Winter Houses and Long Point. A few of them are from the near-by areas of Lourdes, Stephenville and Cape St. George and the others are primarily from other areas of Newfoundland.

Two people still live at Long Point, a distance of some ten miles from Black Duck Brook. These are Alice and Joseph Lorwell (né LeRoi), the latter being the last living person of the area born in France who is now in his

eighties.



Photograph 2 . Joseph Lorwell (in white)  
Taken in Bretagne, France, about 1895

Once our census was completed, our interest was centered on the French-speaking women of the area and we found ten women of varying ages who spoke French and were either born in the community or, in the case of one woman, had lived there for thirty years and was originally from Cape St. George. In this figure we did not include women under the age of thirty, since their knowledge of traditional life would be less than that of their elders.

My colleague and I each chose five informants with an effort to make the division as equal as possible considering the age and eloquence of the women. This division was originally planned as we were both working on the same subject area. Later, she chose to concentrate on the dialect and I on the folklore. Because of this subsequent difference, we later combined much of the information in order to obtain as wide a survey as possible.

During the month I visited informants and recorded a total of eight and one half hours of conversation, as well as unrecorded discussions on which I took notes. My recording equipment consisted of a Sony Cassette recorder and Sony C-60 tapes.

The tape recordings consist of three hours with Mary Felix, two hours with Emily Young, one hour each with Regina Lecoure and Mathilde Bozec, one half-hour each recording Mary Duffenais, a folk-tale told by Emile Benoit and history and generalities with the Lorwells. To these hours I added the recordings made in March for a total of eleven and one half hours. These tapes have been deposited in Memorial University's Folklore and Language Archive (Centre d'Etudes Franco-Terreneuviennes) under the accession number 77-252. Each tape is individually numbered and this number is given after each quote in this thesis taken from that tape.

The conversations over a one month period were many. The atmosphere was more relaxed without the distraction



of machinery and the information obtained then was most valuable. Relaxed situations such as meals, television watching and evening gatherings provided an insight into the residents' reactions toward one another and their general attitudes toward life. At these times I carried a note book with me and wrote down the pertinent information. When it was possible, I preferred to leave the room to do this; to go to my room upstairs or even to the bathroom for a few minutes because I did not want the people to think that they had to watch every word they said.

The biggest problem concerning interviewing was finding time in which the women were unoccupied and willing to talk. It is in the mornings that most women do their household chores and prepare for lunch. The noon meal is completed by one o'clock and at three o'clock all the women watch the "soap operas" on television until dinner-time. After dinner, the television is on continuously and the children are home. These conditions make interviewing difficult, especially since most houses are small and provide no secluded areas.

It is thus difficult to find an hour when women are willing to take the time to talk. I always telephoned before going to visit and I found that some women invariably made excuses as to why it would be difficult to conduct an interview. This happened with some women so frequently that I began to doubt their desire to talk,

believing that they were shy of strangers and recording equipment. I found that when I dropped by unannounced, as most of the residents do, I was made welcome although I left voluntarily in the event of my informants having company or being otherwise occupied.

Most women were willing to talk but answered questions shortly. This could be because they thought the subject matter was common knowledge and because none of them are educated to any degree of eloquence. Many of their descriptions were short, unclear and general. I soon discovered that an explanation of some process or description of some object was futile unless I was previously familiar with it.

At some homes interruptions were frequent. One woman had two pre-school grand-children who played indoors, riding their tricycles through the kitchen where we were. Others had telephone calls or were baking at the same time. In three homes other members of the family home at the time would gather curiously around and on occasion, add to the conversation. At times their speech was inaudible on the tape and knowing this during recording posed a problem. I did not like to ask them to leave and thus offend everyone, nor did I want to ask them to move closer, for fear that they would dominate the conversation and perhaps wander off the subject. In these instances, I resolved to listen politely to them but rarely address questions to them.

My third visit to Black Duck Brook took place from November 8th, 1977 to November 15th, 1977. This visit was largely to clarify information and to ask about information that appeared lacking when the original material had been organized.

On this visit I stayed with neighbours of the Felix's. The man of the family is Mrs. Felix's nephew. He is married to an English woman from near-by Three Rock Cove and they have three young children, aged twelve, nine and seven.

This visit, although short, was successful in that after an absence of six months my informants seemed genuinely glad to see me and were more eager to talk. Women who I had previously had difficulty persuading to talk became more open and eloquent. One woman who had been very abrupt during May became an endless source of information and had been sorely misjudged by me.

It is possible that this openness was partially due to the fact that I had no recording equipment with me during these interviews, and partially due to the time of year, since November is much less busy than May.

Interviews that were not recorded were informal conversations, often over a cup of tea. Informants were more willing to talk of personal topics, to make jokes and to talk at length. During these conversations I took brief notes on pertinent subjects and wrote them out at length as soon as possible, when everything that

had been said was still clear in my mind.

At first, I elicited information on the basis of questionnaires that I and Miss King had previously composed. I familiarized myself with the questionnaires before commencing interviews so that my reference to them would be minimal. After several interviews I became so familiar with them that reference to them was unnecessary.

There were six original questionnaires concerning foodways, traditional cleaning methods, pregnancy and childbirth, outdoor work, spinning and knitting and traditional dress and sewing. These subject areas were later revised according to the material obtained. For example, there was little to be said about dress and sewing so it was added to knitting and weaving under the subject textiles, and I collected so much about celebrations and the rites of passage that I decided to create a new section called custom.

Before going out in the field I wanted to learn about what had already been done in the area I was studying. I read what was available to me about the history and language of French Newfoundland, as well as Acadia and other French Canadian areas, I read about folklore in general, fieldwork methods, and specific folklore texts dealing with France and French Canada, and certain genres.

The historical accounts I read dealt with the

settlement of Newfoundland by the French<sup>27</sup> as well as the history of the settlement of Nova Scotia by those Frenchmen who later became known as Acadians.<sup>28</sup> The history of both these places shows some similarities.

Wanting to familiarize myself with the dialect, I had done an analysis of a type recording of a speaker from Cape St. George, noting the dialectal differences from Standard French. I believed that many dialectal characteristics of Cape St. George and Black Duck Brook would be similar. I also read books pertaining to the Acadian dialect of Nova Scotia<sup>29</sup> and the dialect spoken in Quebec.<sup>30</sup> A work which had previously been valuable

27 F.F. Thompson, The French Shore in Newfoundland, (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press) 1889

William C. Wonders, "Settlement in Western Newfoundland", (Ottawa: Dept. of Mines & Technical Surveys, Geographical Branch) 1951

28 Antoine Bernard, Histoire de la Survivance Acadienne, 1755-1935, (Montreal: Les Clercs de Saint-Viateur) 1935

Robert Rumilly, Histoire des Acadiens, (Montreal: no editor) Copyright 1955

29 Vincent Lucci, Phonologie de l'Acadien, (Montreal: Didier) 1972

Genivève Massignon, Les Parlers Français de l'Acadie, (Paris: Klincksieck) 1962, 2 vols.

30 Jean-Denis Gendron, Tendances Phonétiques du français parlé au Canada, (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval) 1966

Pierre R. Leon, Recherches sur la structure phonique du français canadien, (Montréal, Brussels, Paris: Studia Phonetica, Didier) no date

to me was a study of anglicisms in Quebec<sup>31</sup> and I expected to find many of these since the people of Black Duck Brook are surrounded by English speakers. This preliminary study of dialect was enough to permit me to understand the dialect of Black Duck Brook, but specific differences came to me only after I had spent some time with the people.

Next I carefully read two books on field work methods and found that Kenneth Goldstein's<sup>32</sup> was practical, especially his Chapter VI on "Observation Collecting Methods". Since I was planning to live for some time with the people, I knew that much of my material would come from observing their daily life. Sean O'Sullivan's A Handbook of Irish Folklore<sup>33</sup> was a great help and reminded me of many questions that I would have overlooked.

I looked through several works of a general nature pertaining to folklore studies<sup>34</sup> to familiarize myself

<sup>31</sup> Gilles Colpron, Les Anglicismes au Québec, (Montréal: Beauchemin) 1971

<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Goldstein, A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore, (Hatboro: Folklore Associates) 1964

<sup>33</sup> Sean O'Sullivan, A Handbook of Irish Folklore, (Hatboro: Folklore Associates) 1963

<sup>34</sup> Jan Harold Brunvand, The Study of American Folklore, (New York: W.W. Norton) 1968

Tristram Potter Coffin, editor, Our Living Traditions, (New York: Basic Books) 1968

Richard M. Dorson, editor, Folklore and Folklife, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press) 1972

with the genres and types of studies that are done in this field. There are two detailed works pertaining to the folklore of France <sup>35</sup> which I consulted in case I found similarities between the folklore of France and that of the French people of Black Duck Brook. I found Arnold Van Gennep's work the more interesting, especially his sections "Du Berceau à la Tombe" and "Folklore Doméstique".

Pertaining to specific folklore items, I read pertinent chapters of many works. For foodways, I particularly enjoyed the theoretical discussions of Margaret Cussler and Mary DeGive<sup>36</sup> in their Chapter II and their Chapter VIII on "The Catering Pattern" which discusses food as a social process.

In referring to textiles, I read an introductory book<sup>37</sup> which tells the beginner how to perform certain processes since it would have been pointless to ask about knitting, shearing or weaving, for example, and not know about the processes myself, although much of this I knew

<sup>35</sup> Paul Sébillot, Le Folklore de France, (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose) 1968, 4 volumes.

Arnold Van Gennep, Manuel de Folklore Français Contemporain, (Paris: A. Picard) 1937-1958, 3 volumes

<sup>36</sup> Margaret Cussler and Mary DeGive, 'Twixt the Cup and the Lip, (New York: Twane Publishers) 1952

<sup>37</sup> Mary E. Black, Weaving for Beginners, (Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada) 1975

since I have been knitting and sewing since adolescence. One pertinent work has been done concerning the textile industry in Eastern Newfoundland<sup>38</sup> and I subsequently found similarities on the west coast of Newfoundland.

There are many works which contain sections on pregnancy, birth and death and one that I found particularly interesting was Croyances et Pratiques Populaires Au Canada Français<sup>39</sup>, part three, entitled "de la naissance à la mort".

A work that I read with great eagerness was Hilda Murray's "The Traditional Role of Women in a Newfoundland Fishing Community"<sup>40</sup>. This work concentrates on the life and work of women in a small Newfoundland community, and Mrs. Murray's findings are, in many cases, similar to my own. Especially relevant to me were her chapters entitled "Pregnancy, Birth and Babyhood", "Feeding the Family and Health Practices", "The Woman's Traditional Role at Different Seasons of the Year" and "Social Activities, Death and Funeral Customs and Practices".

Aside from these works of a general nature, there is

<sup>38</sup> Gerald Pocius, Textile Traditions of Eastern Newfoundland, (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies) 1978

<sup>39</sup> Pierre Des Ruisseaux, Croyances et Pratiques Populaires Au Canada Français, (Montréal: Editions du Jour) 1973

<sup>40</sup> Hilda Murray, "The Traditional Role of Women in a Newfoundland Fishing Community", (Memorial University of Newfoundland Master's Thesis) 1972



not much written on the community of Black Duck Brook, except for two censuses done by students of Memorial University<sup>41</sup>. These works, as well as works pertaining to the areas of Cape St. George and Mainland are, for the most part, contained in Le Centre d'Etudes Franco-Terreneuviennes at Memorial University. A bibliography<sup>42</sup> of the works and student papers contained in this section of Memorial University's Folklore and Language Archive has been prepared.

41 Catherine Hanlon, "Census of Black Duck Brook" (Memorial University of Newfoundland student paper) 1975

Ronald Labelle, "Maisons D'Hiver et L'Anse-Aux-Canards - Etude de recensements 1921-1949" (Memorial University of Newfoundland student paper) 1975

42 Geraldine Barter, "A critically annotated bibliography of the works published and unpublished relating to the culture of French Newfoundlanders", (Memorial University of Newfoundland Honour's dissertation) 1977

## Informants

All of the material discussed in this thesis is based on the information provided by the women of Black Duck Brook and Winter Houses. A large part of this was offered by five principle informants, each of who were interviewed for several hours. One of my informants was the woman with whom I stayed on my first two trips, Mrs. Mary Felix, and countless hours of conversation with her clarified many points and confirmed information given me by other women.

A much smaller amount of material, most of it in the form of direct quotations found in this thesis, comes from informants who I did not personally interview. The information was offered me by Miss Ruth King who also used some of my tapes in her linguistic analysis. The personal history of these women does not differ significantly from that of my principle informants.

It is perhaps necessary at this point to discuss the lives of the women on whom this thesis is written. From a biographical sketch of them, we can ascertain how typical they are of the area and how various influences in their lives determine their value as informants.

### Mrs. Mary Duffenais

Mary Benoit was born in Black Duck Brook on the 18th of May, 1919 of parents who were themselves both from this community. Her mother's maiden name was Gaudet although she is unable to say where her grandparents were born and

lived and when her ancestors first came to Newfoundland.

Mrs. Duffenais' parents, who were both illiterate, had three children but her father died at a young age and her mother re-married and had three more children.

As a child, Mrs. Duffenais had a total of about one year of schooling which was spread over several years as she was obliged to stay at home and work. She never learned to read or write. All members of her family spoke French, and as school was conducted in English she did not understand much of what was taking place there.

At nineteen years of age she married Freeman (pronounced by her Fierman) Duffenais, born in the community of Winter Houses. He was also illiterate and worked all his life at the fishing industry in summer and the logging industry in winter.

The Duffenais had nine children, six of whom are still alive. Mr. Duffenais died in 1965 and Mrs. Duffenais has never re-married.

Several of her children have moved away from Black Duck Brook. One lives in Prince Edward Island, one in Toronto and two in the United States. She has made two visits in recent years to visit all of these children. Her combined trips total about three months.

As a married woman Mrs. Duffenais spent most of her life alone raising her children and doing all the tasks necessary for the maintenance of the home and farm. Her husband would be gone to the logging industry for three

and four months every winter and in summer all his daylight hours were spent fishing. She thus looked after the animals and the gardens, washed, sewed and made all the family's clothes, did all the cooking, sheared, carded, spun and knitted their wool and kept her house clean by herself.

At fifty-eight years of age Mrs. Duffenais lives with her daughter, son-in-law and two small grandchildren in a house built several years ago when their former house was destroyed by fire. This is a two-story house but the upper story is never used and, according to Mrs. Duffenais, will shortly be removed by a government welfare program. The main room of the house is the kitchen which contains a wood burning stove, a day-bed, chairs and a table, a 'fridge and a rocking chair. The floors are covered with linoleum and several worn braided rugs. The other rooms of the house are smaller, colder and little used. The exterior of the house is painted pink and in the garden there is a barn, an outhouse, a wood pile, a well and several sheep. The house is approximately thirty yards from the road, where there is a fence.

Mrs. Duffenais is a woman of average stature and dark complexion who speaks mostly French. Her English is poor since she only started to learn it gradually when her children went to school. She is a shy and hesitant informant. The answers she provides are often incomplete or monosyllabic and her memory is not always good. For

example, I asked her how long the community has had electricity and she replied twenty-five years when it is, in fact, fourteen years. Her daughter who listened in on most of our conversations interrupted often to correct her mother.

Mrs. Duffenais' days are spent for the large part watching television and playing with her two grandchildren. Of all the chores she once performed she now does only shearing and knitting as well as sharing the household tasks with her daughter.

Mrs. Emily Young

Emily Young's father was Frank Formanger who had been born in France and came to Black Duck Brook at eighteen years of age. There he met and married Anny Duffenais who had been born and raised in Black Duck Brook. Frank Formanger worked all his life as a fisherman but according to Mrs. Young, taught himself to read and write, although his wife was illiterate.

The Fromangers moved to Long Point, the tip of the peninsula, where they had fifteen children of which Emily was somewhere in the middle. Mr. Formanger did not pass his education along to any of his children and Emily never went to school. At eighteen she married Walter Young, a fisherman, and lived in Long Point raising fifteen children until 1968 when the provincial government resettlement program moved her family up to Black

Duck Brook.

Since this move nine years ago Mrs. Young has been most unhappy. She insists that the land surrounding her previous home was better for farming, the fishing was more productive and the fields were perfect for sheep raising. Because of the poor land given to them when they resettled they can no longer raise sheep and this lack disturbs Mrs. Young very much since she is always busy with her hands but can no longer knit her own wool.

All of her children have moved away from home to various places in Canada and the United States except one, her son Joe, aged forty-eight. A daughter who lives near by is currently building a home in Black Duck Brook. Mrs. Young finds it distressing that she cannot write to her children nor read their letters. She has travelled little in Newfoundland and has visited Halifax on two occasions for one and two weeks.

In her family, Mrs. Young speaks French and her English is awkward and contains gallicisms. She is a stout woman of average height with grey hair, a deeply lined face and bright, sparkling blue eyes that immediately catch attention.

Her home is set away from the road with a road leading to it which is muddy and narrow. The outside was painted pink several years ago and the garden contains most of the usual objects. The inside of her home is warm and quite well kept. The main room of the house



Photograph 3 Mrs. Emily Young  
Taken in her home, November, 1977



Photograph 4 Home of Mrs. Emily Young  
Taken November, 1977

is the kitchen which contains the stove, the main source of heat. The family also use their living room more often than many families because the television and telephone are located there.

Mrs. Young often recalls the poverty of her earlier days at Long Point which, from her stories, sounds extreme. She is a warm, gay and open person, always willing to talk, always busy sewing or knitting something and always ready for a good time. Other people of the community have told me that she never misses a bingo game and acts years younger than her age.

Mrs. Mary Felix

Mary Felix's paternal grandfather was born in France and came to Black Duck Brook and her maternal great-grandfather, whose name was Duffenais, came from France.

Her father had been taught to read and write by his father, and could read French fluently. This he taught to his children, including Mary, and all of them were sent to school. Mary was born in 1923 and went to school until the eighth grade, later taking night classes to raise her level of education. She reads and writes in both English and French. Mary's parents were very religious and raised their children strictly and as best they could.

Before her marriage Mrs. Felix worked in the local store for two years and then married Michael Felix who had been born in Winter Houses. Mr. Felix was raised



by foster parents and because of their ill treatment of him he left the area at the age of fifteen, never having been permitted to attend school. He worked in St. John's during the Second World War and returned to his home after the war for what he thought would be a short visit. There he met again and married Mary Benoit in June of 1946 when she was twenty-three years old.

Mr. Felix worked as a logger for many winters and as a fisherman in the summers up to the present. He is also an accomplished carpenter and has built many homes as well as some public buildings in Stephenville.

Mrs. Felix taught school in collaboration with another teacher in Mainland for several years after her marriage.



Photograph 5 Mrs. Mary Felix, her husband Michaël, her brother and nephew. Taken in March, 1977.

The Felix's had seven children, the first of whom died as an infant. Of the six living, four are still in Black Duck Brook, one daughter lives in Stephenville and one son in Toronto. Her youngest is fourteen, her oldest twenty-eight.

Mrs. Felix's home is a fairly well-kept two story house built by her husband shortly after their marriage.



Photograph 6 Home of Mrs. Mary Felix  
Taken in March, 1977

It is painted white and set close to the road on the intersection of two roads at right angles. She is a small but rotund woman with a lovely complexion and placid expression. She speaks fairly good English with a heavy French accent. Her English has improved since her son's marriage to an English girl who does not understand French.

The family prefer to speak English to make her feel more comfortable since she, her husband and two small children live with Mrs. Felix, as well as the latter's youngest son. Mrs. Felix has never travelled further than the west coast of Newfoundland and says that she would never live anywhere but Black Duck Brook, in the house her husband built for her.

Mrs. Felix is a hard working woman and does most of the household chores for the seven people who live in the house. She is a gentle and religious woman who accepts the work she has to do and the sorrows she has to bear as God's will. She has an excellent memory and a quick sense of humour which make her an intelligent and valuable informant.

Mrs. Regina Lecoure

Regina Lecoure was born and raised in Cape St. George, a French community on the opposite side of the Port-Au-Port Peninsula. Her paternal grandfather, Pierre Louvelle, was born in France and went to Cape St. George. Of her mother's family she does not know who first came to Newfoundland, only that her maternal grandfather, Laurence Chiasson, was born in Cape St. George.

Her parents had five children and Regina was born in March of 1923. According to Mrs. Lecoure, her father was crippled and they were quite poor. She had to leave school after Grade V to go to private homes to do housework as a

maid. Her mother, as I discovered on my last trip, had been a midwife, prepared the dead and was looked to for cures of all kinds which, unfortunately, Mrs. Lecoure does not remember.

In 1948, at the age of twenty-five, she married Ronald Lecoure, who was then thirty. She moved to Black Duck Brook where she lived since 1948 with the exception of three years which she spent in Halifax shortly after her marriage.

Ronald Lecoure has Grade V education and is by trade a fisherman. He enlisted in the Second World War and spent three years in Europe. He also worked on the power lines in the 1960's when electricity was brought to the area.

The Lecoures had three children, all of whom are grown and moved away, although two children who live in Stephenville are frequent visitors. Her daughter lives in Labrador where she has visited once in recent years. Mrs. Lecoure has worked hard most of her life. She did most of the work on the farm when her children were young and her husband was away from home working. Today she keeps an immaculate two story home equipped with many modern conveniences. It is painted two shades of green and is situated close to the road which leads to the shore.

Mrs. Lecoure is of average size with graying hair and is very proud of her French heritage. She is con-



Photograph 7 Home of Mrs. Regina Lecoure  
Taken November, 1977

cerned about the disappearance of French in the area and encourages most people to speak it.

She still busies herself around the house as much as possible. She mentioned on my last visit that she was planning to take up carding and spinning again to fill up her idle hours. She is one of the few women who says she watches little television. She spends much time with her husband's sister who lives next door after having lived in the United States most of her life.

At first Mrs. Lecoure was an abrupt and reticent informant although what little she said was interesting. On my last visit to her she was friendly and went out of her way to show me her old spinning wheel and milk separator. She talked a great deal and provided a large

amount of material that I did not know she possessed.

Mrs. Mathilde Bozec

Mathilde Bozec was born in Winter Houses in 1909, about two miles from her present home in Black Duck Brook. Her paternal great-grandfather Lainey was born in Mainland and moved to Winter Houses where his succeeding generations stayed. Her maternal grandfather Duffenais was born in Winter Houses and nothing is known of either family before this.

Mrs. Bozec lived in Winter Houses and received education until the level of Grade II. Later she worked as a chambermaid and as a maid in Corner Brook for about eight years before her marriage to Joseph Bozec.

Mr. Bozec's father came from France and was a fisherman as was his son. Mr. Bozec is the best educated person in the community of the older generation, having gone to school and later night school, finally receiving his Grade XI from a correspondance course in St. John's, of which he is very proud.

The Bozec's ran a fairly large and well organized farm and raised seven children. They now keep much fewer animals and grow fewer vegetables for they live alone with one unmarried son. Their house is set apart from the others, surrounded by fields and almost inaccessible unless one finds the twisting road which leads to the house from the shore. My first visit involved



Photograph 8 View of the Bozec home taken  
the main road in Black Duck Brook. Taken  
November 1977

crossing swampy fields and climbing shaky fences, much to their amusement, until I learned about their road.

The outside of their house is painted a fire-engine red and can be seen from miles on a clear day. The interior of the house is clean and filled with objects of her own making: rugs, cushions, pillows, pot hangers, doilies, stuffed dolls and place mats. Mrs. Bozec, although bothered greatly by arthritis, is still active and energetic. She spins her own wool and knits prodigious amounts of clothing for her own family and to sell.

Aside from this her other principle activity is her flower garden which she cultivates as soon as the snow disappears in spring. Every fine summer day finds

her in the garden where literally dozens of different types of flowers grow. People in the community visit her garden every summer and it is much admired. In winter she brings many of the plants indoors to a room used for that purpose.

Mrs. Bozec is a kindly and patient woman although very shy with strangers. However, once she became accustomed to me she was more eager to talk and delighted in showing me her handiwork and telling me about her earlier life. She was the only person I interviewed who did not wish to be tape recorded but was finally persuaded. She refused to be photographed and was most indignant about previous visitors who had taken her picture and published it without her consent.

In subsequent chapters we will discuss the various tasks that these women, like others in their community, performed over the years. One of their most frequent duties was the thrice daily preparation of their family's meals, which brings us to the discussion of foodways.



## FOODWAYS

This chapter concerns the broad area of traditional life called foodways. Here there are three basic sections of the broader area. The first is the attitude of the people of Black Duck Brook toward food and the transmission of this attitude from generation to generation, the second is their methods of procuring food, the third and largest section, since it deals most directly with the women, is the preparation of food.

Two additional areas of foodways are contained in other chapters where they appear more relevant: preservation of foodstuffs is contained in outdoor work since in the past food was always kept outdoors. This is still true of the families who grow a large amount of vegetables or slaughter their own animals. Special foods for feast days are included under custom although it will be seen that preparation is basically the same.

### Attitude

Attitude toward food in Black Duck Brook can most accurately be described as relaxed. There is little or no pressure upon people concerning what they should or should not eat or when they should eat.

This attitude is formed from infancy. When children were breast-fed they were fed less often than at present but they were weaned at an age which many might consider late. One woman weaned her children at eight

months, another at twelve and another at thirteen months. In another area of Newfoundland, babies were first given solid food as early as two months.<sup>43</sup> Bottle-fed babies of the last two decades are given condensed milk with water and sugar at any hour of the day or night. These babies have no regular feeding times but are provided with milk, or sometimes water, so that they always have something to drink.

As soon as the baby is weaned it is fed the same food as the other members of the family. This includes fried foods, pizza, candy and food with minimal nutritional value. Some of this food will be mashed until the child grows teeth. Children eat often between meals: bread, cookies, potato chips and fruit are common. The parents will say nothing if they see the child eating, for they still equate health with large food intake.

Adults, too, eat between meals. Each family has a pot of tea on the stove at all times which they drink at about ten o'clock in the morning and three o'clock in the afternoon as well as during meals. Sometimes they also eat with their tea, usually a slice of bread. Before bed most of the family members eat a snack which some people classify as a meal.

<sup>43</sup> Hilda Murray, "The Traditional Role of Women in a Newfoundland Fishing Community", (Memorial University of Newfoundland Master's Thesis) 1972, p.92

Food is an important aspect of the social process. Every visit, whether that of close relatives or strangers, includes the tradition of having something to eat and drink. Upon entering a home, one will be offered either a cup of tea or a beer, depending on the inclination of the hosts and the time of day. Usually a piece of home-made bread and jam will be offered with the beverage or, for special visitors, bought biscuits. People who are visiting will usually be asked to share a meal.

"but there was always people coming and if they came there was a cup of tea right away because that was the thing to do, you know, it was the custom, nobody visited you and didn't eat, they ate before leaving."

("mais y avait tout le temps du monde qui rentrait et s'il rentient, eh, c'tait une tasse à thé tout de suite parce c'tait la mode, vous savez, c'tait la mode, y avait parsonne qui venait chez vous sans manger, i' mangiont avant de quitter.") C2857

As the community receives more and more visitors, this custom is slowly dying out yet it is still considered the polite thing to do.

Despite the relaxed attitudes toward eating anything at any time, most people are conscious of their weight. Over-weight people may make a humourously self-deprecating remark about their weight if they feel so inclined but I heard of no one who was trying to lose weight by dieting. People are thus conscious of their physical appearance but not enough to try to improve it.

Most people enjoy what they eat and are not difficult to please. This is probably due to the years within their

and their parents' memories when food was not so easily obtained and thus more highly valued.

In fact, most of the elder generation prefer the food eaten when they were young to the food that is now available to them. They scoff at canned and frozen produce and say that food does not taste so appealing now:

J.B. "I mean, dere was no, no foolishness like dere is now."

M.B. "No foolishness like dere is now, eh?"

J.B. "Dere was no canned goods 'n' all dat no good fer not'ing at all."

M.B. "Yeah."

J.B. "What we had was something good."

M.B. "Yeah. See, when you had a meal it was a good meal, not de can stuff, now I don't like dat kind a' stuff." C2851

This tendency is passed down to the younger generation who also prefer the same type of food, the food they ate as children. Although much greater variety is now available, people still prefer fish and seafood to meat, salt meat to fresh meat, fresh staple vegetables to frozen or canned vegetables and home-made bread to bought bread.

Just as the food consumed has not changed substantially over the years, neither have the methods of preparation. Electric stoves have replaced wood stoves in some homes and refridgerators are universally used but the preparation and ingredients remain the same.

The attitude of relaxation toward food is shown by the habit of eating at all hours of the day. One can also see this in the presentation of food at meal times. Every food to be consumed at a particular meal is placed

on the table at once. For example, a platter of fish, vegetables, a pot of tea, a plate of bread, a container of butter and one of pickles is placed in the center of the table from which each person chooses his portion. When asked about this method informants said quite certainly that this method indicates to the family that there is a generous amount available and that each person may eat his fill. I was told, on the other hand, that if the food is served directly to the people on their plates, there is not a large amount and one can eat only what is on one's plate. In this case, one would not ask for more, since it is an unspoken signal that there is no more.

Attitudes, as well as methods of procurement and preparation have not changed considerably over the years. Young girls learned to prepare food at a very early age, and all women say that they cook in the same way as their mother, and to their knowledge, their grandmother. Methods of preparation and recipes are not complex or difficult to remember and most women keep their entire repertoire of meals in their memory. Only one of my informants possesses a cookbook which she consults infrequently; others, among whom several cannot read, do not own one:

"Yes, well, people who can read it's all right, well, they have books, eh? Books to cook well, people cook more, more things, see?...Ya needs a lot to put in, eh?...The way we cook doesn't take time."

("Ah oui, ben du monde qui peut lire, das all

right, ben, il avont des liv'res, eh? Des liv'es pour tchuire plus, plus d'affaires, vois-tu?... Ya needs a lot to put in, eh?...La façon que j' tchuisons ben, ça prend pas temps.") C2845

Women have always been the cooks of the family.

They prepare extra meals at any time for hungry members of the family, special meals if one of the family does not like what is planned and snacks for the children when they come home from school, even if meal time is only an hour later. With such a large number of children, including daughters, it was rare that any man would have to cook, and rarer still that he would deign to do it. However, with increasing unemployment and smaller families men cook more often, although their efforts are restricted to simple preparation such as frying baloney or brewing tea.

The hours at which meals are eaten have changed in some measure. During the years when men went fishing in the summer, the meals were not always eaten at the same hour of the day but depended on the day's catch. The men would eat a light breakfast about two or three o'clock in the morning before they set out to the water. Sometimes they would return about seven or eight o'clock for a heartier meal. Depending on the catch and the weather, they would return for lunch anywhere between ten o'clock and noon. Their evening meal would be eaten when the catch had been brought ashore and cleaned, about three or five o'clock. Of course, the rest of the family ate

with the men, so all meals revolved around their work. Sometimes the women would take a cooked meal to the shore at noon and when the men came ashore they would eat there.

In the winter, when the men were not fishing, breakfast would be eaten at seven or eight o'clock in the morning, the noon meal at eleven or twelve o'clock and the evening meal at four or five o'clock in the afternoon. Most women follow the latter schedule now, except those whose husbands still fish. They prefer to have the evening meal finished by the time their favourite "soap opera" starts at four thirty. Since they eat so early, most of the family members are hungry again at ten o'clock in the evening, when they eat another meal, which they call a lunch.

In all homes meals are eaten in the kitchen. Three of my five principle informants have dining rooms in their house but these are only used for very special occasions. It can also be used for visitors, as during my first trip to Black Duck Brook Mrs. Felix served me in her dining room while the rest of the family ate in the kitchen. When I arrived the second time I told her that I would much prefer to eat in the kitchen with the rest of the family and although she insisted that she enjoyed serving me, I convinced her of my sincerity.

### Procuration

At present, methods of procuring food are partly

primary and partly secondary. The food that is directly obtained by the people is that which they raise themselves and that which they hunt. Food that is indirectly obtained by them is bought at the local Co-op store in Lourdes or at the smaller variety store in Black Duck Brook.

Most of a family's vegetables - potatoes, turnips, carrots and cabbages - are grown by them and last them for a full year. Some families buy vegetables if they have not produced enough themselves. Each family keeps several sheep which they kill for meat and a few families keep chickens for eggs and meat. Only one family keeps a cow which is used for milk in the spring and summer.

Primary produce eaten in the past consisted of seafood, fish, small game and berries. However, few people still go hunting for game or seabirds although in the past they provided considerable supplement. Large game hunting was never an important aspect of food procurement because there are few large animals on the Port-Au-Port Peninsula. The most commonly hunted wild animal is now rabbit. Fish that was consumed was usually part of the man's daily catch. Each fisherman caught an amount far larger than the family's needs, sold it to the local dealer but kept one or two fish for the family's dinner. Those men who still fish do the same.

Until fifteen or twenty years ago, the ratio of food bought to that procured by the family was much different. Many more animals were kept and many more vegetables were



grown. The men went hunting for small game and sea birds more often, cows provided all dairy products such as milk, butter and cream in certain seasons and berries were more relied upon. In those days, there was no store for food-stuffs in the immediate vicinity and residents were obliged to travel to Port-Au-Port twice a year to collect supplies. They went once in the fall for the winter's supply and again in the spring for the summer's supply. They had little money to spend and most of the produce was obtained by trading with the local dealer. Such goods as eggs, berries, butter, fish and game would be traded for the necessary staples such as flour, tea, molasses, yeast, sugar, salt and sometimes a barrel of lard.

J.B. "In de summer time dere no store--"

M.B. "In de summer, in de winter dere use'n'ta be no store."

J.B. "You had to go to Port-Au-Port."

M.B. "Yeah. Wait till de spring, go to de store den."

E.S. "You'd have ta get everthing before the winter?"

M.B. "Yeah, an' den, yeah, but den dere was no use ta have de store, nobody had money to go to the store."

E.S. "Did you ever, like, trade things? Like, give them something an' they give you something, without any money?"

J.B. "Oh no, no, not here. Well, much de same 'cause we used ta trade in fish 'n' butter an' den you'll get whatever you wanted, see? An' den fish was de same, well den you get your flour, your tea 'n' molasses. All dat fer de winter, see? An' ya had ta be about seven or eight months ahead, t'ough, time, in de winter time." C2851

All of the food that has produced changes in the people's eating habits is food bought at the store. Products such as cereal, peanut butter, mayonnaise, catsup, cheese and, in fact, all processed foods are

common and all are purchased.

### Preparation

The preparation of all food is based on simplicity in both ingredients and cooking. Nothing but essential ingredients are used in most cases and women say that they did not have any spices or herbs, except for common ones such as pepper. As one woman explained, it was useless for her to go to the store to buy spices because she could not read the labels and, in any case, did not know what spices were used with certain foods.

Preparation in general is limited to boiling, frying and baking, but there seems to be a preference for frying everything. At the end of this chapter this simplicity will be more apparent because contained here is virtually every kind of food and every method of preparation.

In the area of foodways, there seems to be no traditions or methods that are typically French, either in terms of France or French Canada. Neither are these methods different in any way from the methods that many other Newfoundlanders employ. Similarities can be seen with Hilda Murray's account of food and cooking of the English women in her thesis.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 216-223

## Fish

The most common food consumed by the people of Black Duck Brook is various kinds of fish and seafood. There is indication that this is also their favourite food, and many people prefer fish to meat, especially to fresh meat. The Catholic tradition of eating fish on Wednesdays and Fridays is still followed in many families. On an average, fish is eaten four times a week in most homes.

E.S. "Did you eat fish often?"

M.D. "Yes."

E.S. "Every day?"

M.D. "Well, not every day but almost."

(E.S. "Est-ce que vous avez mangé le poisson souvent?"

M.D. "Oui."

E.S. "Chaque jour?"

M.D. "Ben, pas tous les jours, mais quasiment.") C2845

Despite the fact that fish is such a common food, there remains limited ways of preparing it. This monotony is somewhat alleviated by the variety of species of fish consumed. Cod is still the most common but herring, halibut and mackerel are also eaten when they are caught.

There are also the fish and seafoods which are available at certain seasons: salmon in the early summer and crab, scallops, mussels and lobster in the summer.

Seafood is almost always boiled. Lobster, clams, scallops, mussels and other shell fish are put in a pot, covered with water to which a little salt is added and boiled until cooked. It is then taken out of the shell and eaten. The seafood that is not eaten during the summer but preserved will be boiled and stored in airtight

bottles.

There are two basic ways of eating all of the other types of fish: fresh or salted. Fresh fish is eaten soon after it is caught or stored in a cold place whereas salted fish keeps for a much longer period of time.

To salt fish, it is either dried outdoors first and sprinkled with coarse salt or placed in a container such as a barrel with a salt water solution. Fresh fish was often canned or bottled in the past and still is in some families. Many people owned their own canning machines and bought the jars and covers at the local store. Apparently, the fish was placed in jars after having been boiled, then covered with water and sealed.

As for cooking, salt fish is usually boiled. Some people soak their fish overnight in fresh water to remove some of the salt. They may change this water several times before and during cooking according to how salted the fish is and to individual preference. If fish is only lightly salted some people prefer to boil it without soaking, although this is most often done with fish salted in water and not dried salted fish.

In boiling fish, most women put it in a pan, bring the water close to the boiling point, empty the water, refill the pan with cold water and then bring it to a boil. This method removes even more of the salt. Some people put potatoes in the same pot as the fish and boil them together while others cook potatoes separately. Salt fish

is invariably eaten with potatoes, sometimes as the only vegetable.

"Oh, well, now, in de win--is only in da winter time ya gotta salt fish, eh? Well, you, you soaks it overnight an' den you puts yer petatoes in de pot an' den de next day, you puts yer potatoes in de pot an' den you puts yer fish into it. So when yer potatoes is cook, yer fish is cook, an' is just right ta eat, not salt er not'ing, eh? Das de way I does it, eh?" C2849

Apart from boiling, salt fish can be made into fish-cakes. They are made with fish and potatoes boiled together to which chopped onions are added and then fried in lard.

"Well, you boil your potato with cod then after it's cooked you mash your potatoes and your cod all together and your onions, your pepper, you can put in a little flour. Then you make little cakes with a little flour. Then you fry them in lard or shortening."

("Ah, ben, vous bouillez vot' patate 'vec la morue pis après c'est tchuit vous crasez vos patates pis vot' morue tout ensemble et pis vos oignons, vot' poiv', vous ara' pu mett' un peu d'farine. Pis vous faisez vos p'tits cakes 'vec un 'tit peu d' farine. Pis vous les fricasser dans la graisse de lard ou les shartning.") C2849

The heads and tongues of the codfish are also salted and eaten or eaten fresh. When salted, these are usually boiled as is the body of the fish.

Fresh fish is usually prepared in one of four ways: fried, boiled, baked or stewed. To fry fish, it is usually rolled in flour and fried in some kind of lard or shortening, usually pork fat obtained from frying down the fat of the animal. The cook may add onions, salt, pepper or sliced potatoes to be fried at the same time. Fresh tongues and heads are usually fried in the same way, but not often

boiled, baked or stewed.

Boiled fish is placed in a pot of fresh water and heated over the stove. Some people believe that fish should be heated but not brought to a boil which they say makes the fish tough. Others boil the fish together with vegetables until both are cooked.

Baked fish is heated in the oven in a pan with a cover. When baked it is often stuffed with a dressing made primarily of bread and onions. This method is less common since it takes a longer time and uses more fuel.

Fresh fish, especially the heads of a fish such as cod, can be made into a stew or soup which is considered one and the same. To make this one boils potatoes and fries fish, then mixes them together to boil.

"To make fish soup, you cook your potatoes in pieces...And you fry your cod in fat with pepper, salt and onions on the stove until it's well cooked on both sides. Put the potatoes in the pot, cut in pieces...then you dump your cod and your onions and everything in your pot with your potatoes, without breaking them...Then you leave it to cook, to boil with your potatoes and then you make little dumplings, little balls to put over."

("Moi, j', pour faire d'la soupe au poisson, tu tchuis tu cookes tes patates par morceaux, eh?...Et tu fricasses ta morue avec du lard et du poiv' et du sel et des oignons dans la poêle pis tu les, tu mis ça qu'ça vient bien fricassé chaque bord, eh? Mis des patates dans l'pot, coupés par morceaux...ben tu la chavires ta morue et tes oignons tout ça dans ton pot avec tes patates, sans les briser...Pis là tu quittes tchuir, bouillir avec tes patates et pis faire des p'tites des, des, des doballes, p'tites boules de pot pour mett' par-d'ssus.") C2854

The same methods of cooking salt and fresh fish can be used. That is, each type can be either fried, boiled or

stewed. The above explanations indicate preferences only since, for example, one will not usually fry salt fish or make fishcakes from fresh fish.

## Meat

In Black Duck Brook meat has always been eaten less often than fish, and many people prefer fish to meat. It is usually eaten on Sundays but at no other time of the week on a regular basis. As meat is less well liked than fish, so is salt meat preferred to fresh meat. Salt meat invariably means beef although it is referred to as salt meat or "la viande salée".

There are four major kinds of fresh meat eaten, according to the animals that people keep and have kept over the years. Fresh lamb is eaten during the fall and early winter as the sheep are slaughtered one at a time so that fresh meat will be available over a longer period.

Chicken is common because years ago people kept as many as two dozen chickens at a time, which would be killed at all times of the year for fresh meat, especially during holidays or important occasions. Of all the meats that are bought today, chicken is probably the most common.

Pork was more common during the time when most people kept a pig and slaughtered it in the fall. This would provide a large quantity of meat over the winter in various forms such as ham and bacon.

Beef was common salted but not fresh. Since a cow

was a valuable animal because it provided dairy products, it was not slaughtered as often as sheep were. If a cow had a calf during the year that would be killed and usually salted. When salted it would provide the basis of the winter's meat supply and some people bought extra barrels if their supply was not adequate.

The most common game were rabbits and sea birds of various kinds, including duck from which the community got its name. There would be eaten fresh shortly after caught since they might be the only fresh meat that the family would have.

Salt meat is cooked in only one way in this area and that is boiled. As with fish, it is usually soaked overnight to remove some of the salt. It is then put in a large pot, often with vegetables such as potatoes, cabbage, turnip and carrots.

After it has been boiled, what is left over from the meal will be cooked again. Meat and vegetables will be mashed together with onions, salt and pepper and fried in some kind of shortening. This meal, called "hash" in both English and French, is eaten for lunch or for another light meal.

Many families eat salt beef with every other kind of meat, as an extra. With roasts of chicken, lamb or pork, a small plate of salt beef is put on the table for each person to have a small quantity.

Fresh meat is roasted, fried or stewed. Roasts are



eaten on Sundays and special occasions. The meat is placed directly in the oven, sometimes with onions and in the case of chicken, a stuffing made from bread and onions will be added.

E.S. "Do you have something special on Sundays?"

E.Y. "Oh yes, yes, I have stuffed chicken on Sundays, yes."

E.S. "Stuffed with what?"

E.Y. "Oh yes, yes, your bread, onions and a little bit of lard and, oh, it's good. Yes, onions and everything, eh?"

(E.S. "Est-ce que vous avez que'que chose de spécial le dimanche?"

E.Y. "Oh oui, oui, j'ai un poulet stuffé pour dimanche, oh oui."

E.S. "Stuffé avec quoi?"

E.Y. "Oh oui, oh oui, vot' pain, les oignons et p'tit peu d'lard et pis, eh, c'est bon. Oh oui, des oignons et tout en grand, eh?") C2849

Fresh meat such as pork or lamb is often fried: the people seem to prefer fried food to any other kind. It is rolled in flour and fried in some kind of fat or shortening with onions, salt and pepper.

A stew can be made from meat that has already been cooked and left over, or from raw meat. To make stew, the meat is fried then water, onions and vegetables are added and cooked.

"A stew? Well, fry a little piece of lard and then you take your chicken and fry it with your lard and then after you put a bit of water in it, your onions and some pepper and that. Then you put your little turnips in, some potato if you want then you put a pastry on it, oh, it's good."

("Un stew? Bien, fricassé un p'tit morceau d'lard et pis vous prenez vot' poulet pis vous l'mettez à fricasser avec vot' lard et pis après qu'vous mettez un p'tit peu d'eau d'dans, vos oignons et pis du poiv' et ça. Pis là vous mettez vot' p'tits

chou-raves d'dans, des patates si vous voulez pis vous mettrez un pâte d'ssus, oh, c'est bon.") C2849

Some people call a stew only something which has no pastry on top, and make a similar dish with a pastry which they call a pie. The process is the same for the two and only the name is different.

Soup is made much the same as a stew except that bones are added with the meat and are boiled instead of fried. Vegetables are added and the mixture is cooked for quite a while before the bones are removed. Soup is commonly made with the lower part of the legs of the animal which has nutritional value in the bones without a lot of meat.

As the legs of the animals are used for soup, most of the other parts of the body are used for various purposes to minimize waste. The organs of all animals are used.

Out of the brain is made a dish called pothead in which the brain is boiled and cooled forming a gelatine mixture.

"They boiled, all the head was cleaned, the nose and everything was cut, the skin taken off, there was only the bones and the brain left on it. They Boiled that until it was all, the meat fell off of the bones. They took it, took out the bones and fixed it with pepper, salt and fat, like grease, whatever, eh? Then they put it on a plate to cool, it became like a, like a cake, a meat cake."

("I' bouillont, toute la tête 'tait nettoyé, toute le nez, tout en grand 'tait coupé, la peau 'tait parti, su' qu'i' avait ienque les os et le cervelle et ça là. I' bouillont ça jusqu'à temps qu' c'tait tout la, la viande tombait tout de d'ssous les os. Et il preniont, tiriont tous les os d'd'dans pis là il arrangeait tout ça avec du poiv', du sel et du lard, comme d'la graisse, whatever, eh? Et pis mettiont ça dans les plats à froidir pis ça, ça

v'nait comme un, comme un gâteau à la viande.")  
C2854

The heart of the animal can be fried but more often is baked in the oven with a stuffing. The liver of the animal is usually fried and the intestines can be used to make a kind of pudding. Some people save the blood when an animal is slaughtered and make their pudding with that. These last methods of preparation using the organs of the animal are largely dying out because now people have fewer animals of their own and because they probably consider this type of meat something that is eaten when times are hard. People who like these things often substitute meat in the preparation.

Only one person in the community said that her family smoked meat and fish. Others said that they had never done it and many added that they did not like the taste. Meat and fish are smoked in the same way, in a small wooden box where they are hung over a fire that burns for eight hours.

"Well now, you got a little square, little square made wid board an' we got a little pan down below, eh? We puts something in de pan to burn, eh? An' all yer herring's hangin' up above dat. You makes a smoke, you shut de little door, you leaves it dere for eight hours, eh? An' when de eight hours is up yer herring is smoke enough." C2849

## Vegetables

The types of vegetables that are grown in Black Duck Brook, how they are grown and stored will be discussed in the chapter of this thesis concerning outdoor work. The

actual preparation of vegetables is very limited and consists in boiling or sometimes frying.

Potatoes are the staple of the diet of this area and a large quantity of them are prepared for every meal. They are almost always peeled and placed in a pot to cook, often with other vegetables in the same pot. All vegetables are cooked until they are quite soft, as people of this area do not enjoy partially cooked or crisp vegetables.

Next to onions, potatoes are the vegetables that are most often fried. These are cut in slices or fingers and placed in deep hot fat until brown on the outside and soft inside.

As was mentioned in the description of "hash", other vegetables are sometimes mashed together and fried. Aside from that, some vegetables are used to make wine and others for pickles but this will be discussed later under the subject of preservation. Other methods of preparing vegetables are either unknown or not used, probably due to the fact that few women have cookbooks and all of them prefer the old traditional ways of preparation.

#### Dairy Products

When members of the community kept cows, milk and the products made from milk were available during the spring and summer months. Most families with one cow

had enough milk after the calf was fed to provide them with fresh milk, cream and butter. Several families kept more than one cow and sold the extra produce.

As there is now only one cow in the entire community, most people use canned evaporated milk in their tea and coffee, give it to their babies and children diluted with water, put it on cereal and use it everywhere instead of milk and cream. They have a way of distinguishing fresh milk from canned milk; the former they call cow's milk and the latter they simply call milk. For whipped cream they sometimes use a powder mix available on the commercial market. In place of butter they buy margarine at the local store but never butter because of the high cost.

When milk was collected, some of it would be kept in its natural state for drinking directly. The rest of it would be passed through an instrument called a milk separator. This is an enamel or metal bowl into which the natural milk is poured. In the bottom of this bowl is a hole with a number of filters through which the milk passes. It then flows through one of two exits, one on top of the other. The cream, since it is lighter and floats on top, will pass through the upper hole and the milk will come out at the bottom.

"A separator, there is a big bowl above, eh? And you pour your milk into the bowl and the milk runs out. There are two, there are two, um, two plates. There is one for the cream and the other for the milk. When you turn your separator, the cream goes in one and the milk goes in the other."

("Un séparateuse, i'a, i'a une, une grosse bol haut d'ssus, eh? Et tu chavires ton lait dans la bol et le lait coule à travers. Y a deux, y a deux, um, deux plats. I' en a iun qui va pour la crème et l'aut' qui va pour le lait. Quand qu' tu vires ta séparateuse la crème passe dans iun et le lait sort dans l'aut'.") C2854



Photograph 9 Mrs. Regina Lecoure's separater.  
Photograph taken in November 1977

Those who did not have a separater could obtain the same results by leaving the milk to settle. The cream rose to the top and could then be skimmed off but this process was longer, expecially for someone who had several cows.

The milk that was separated from the cream could be consumed by the family but would be given to the pig if the family owned one. The cream was used in its natural form to put in tea or coffee, to use with fruit, cereal or desserts. Most often, it was made into butter by

churning it.

Before cream could be churned it had to be cooled and prior to the days of refrigeration, this was usually done by putting it in wooden or enamel buckets and lowering it deep into the well where the water would cool it.

"Then I had to put my cream in a pot with a cover on it, then I tie a sheet over it and put it, take a rope and put it way down in the bottom of the well in the water. More than one rope broke! (laughs) Then you had to let your cream cool in the well like that."

("Pis là fallait mettons ma crème dans l'pot, le couvrir dessus, pis là j'ammare un linge par-d'ssus pis la mettons, prenons un amarre pis descendons en bas la fontaine dans l'eau. Plus qu'un amarre est cassé! (laughs) Pis là fallait quitter la crème refroidir dans la fontaine comme ça.") C2855

To churn butter, one takes the cream and puts it into a container with a cover in which there is a hole. Through this hole one places some kind of long instrument which beats the cream until it becomes hard. Years ago the women had traditional wooden churns but other women used bottles. Today there are no churns to be seen. When quantities diminished many women made butter with an electric mixer which takes less time and energy. When the cream hardens into butter it must be washed in clear cool water to remove any milk remaining in it. It is then salted.

"So you comes an' you takes all de cream off a dem pans, eh? An' you puts it in a big churn, eh, a big glass bottle er something. So, when you got enough in dat churn, in dat bottle, just about full, den you takes a, a little t'ing, what about dat big on, an', I don' know what would you call dat, now? Ah, I can't tell you, I fergets de name of it.

Anyway, you puts a hole t'rough de cover, puts de, da stick in t'rough da handle an' den you churns it, eh? An' when you do dat about a half hour an' your butter is made, ah? 'Steure, my God, das how is made, an' den you drains de buttermilk off of it, an' yer butter is dere, ready to wash. Now you got ta wash dat butter, s'pose in ten waters un--, until you sees a little bit white in de water, when you sees no more white your butter is clear. So you salts that an' it's ready, ready ta eat." C2848

## Bread and Cakes

Bread is one of the most important staples in the diet of the people. It is eaten with every meal, usually provides the main ingredient in every meal and sometimes is eaten as a meal in itself.

Since such a large quantity of bread is eaten so often, and since families were so large, bread was made two or three times a week but most women now make it only once. Bread is traditionally made on Mondays and after that, whenever the supply gets low, usually Thursday or Saturday. Most women prefer not to bake on Sunday.

When my informants were young, most of them started mixing and baking bread as early as the age of eight or nine. In families where there were several young girls, they took turns.

"We made bread, I was very small, they made each of us take our turn then...And if you were outside in the summer playing or wherever you were, you had to come home and make your bread."

("Faisons du pain, nous aut'es, j'tais tout p'tite, on faisait faire chaque not' tour ce temps-là... Pis si tu 'tais dehors à carnasser dans l'été ou n'importe ailloû-c-que t'es, faulait tu rentrais faire ton pain.") C2856



Making bread has become easier with the introduction of fast rising yeast. Before it was available, the bread had to be started in the evening and mixed on the following day.

"But in those days you couldn't make bread in the day, you could, you mixed it in the evening before going to bed, eh? You, they were in blocks about that big, two inches or one and a half inches square... and you left that to soak in water and sugar and when it was soaked, risen, you put that in your bread. But you had to make your bread the night before and the next morning you got up early and you mixed your bread."

("Mais dans ces temps-là tu pouvais pas boulangier dans l'jour tu pouvais, tu boulangiais l'souère avant d'aller coucher, eh? Tu, i' 'tient en blocs d'à peu près la grandeur d'ça, près deux pouces ou un pouce et d'mi cârré...et tu mettais ça à tremper dans l'eau avec du suc' et quand qu'il 'tait trempé, levé, tu mettais ça dans ton pain. Mais foulait qu' tu faisais ton pain une souèrée d'avant et le lendemain matin tu t'es levé d'bonne heure et tu boulangiais ton pain par-d'ssous.") C2854

At that time wood stoves were used and it was possible to bake only one loaf at a time in some stoves. The fire had to be kept burning until all the loaves were baked and this was a day-long process.

"But they cooked them one at a time, eh? It took one hour to cook one loaf. If they had ten loaves they were all the blessed day cooking their bread, eh?"

("Mais i' tchuisaient iun à la fois, eh? Ça prenait une heure à tchuire un pain. S'il avient dix pains il avient pour toute la sainte journée à tchuire leur pain, eh?") C2854

Today, with fast-rising yeast, electric stoves and smaller families, the bread making process takes only part of a day. Many women still bake in the same way they learned as children with only the slight modifications mentioned above. Their mixing bowl and baking tins are

often the same ones that they have been using for years.

Women used to buy large quantities of flour at a time when it had to last through the winter. This continues to the present and most women buy one hundred pounds at a time.

There are a limited number of ingredients used in making bread and most women bake in the same manner.

"Well, you've got your flour and your dry yeast and salt, you cover a little shortening, eh? Put your shortening in. It's all you need, water, and then you mix it. You let it rise well then you mix it again. Then you let it rise again and you put it in pans. Once it is high enough you put them in the oven."

("Bien, vous avez vot' farine pis vous avez vot', vot' dry yeas', pis le sel, vous paillez un peu d' shartning, eh? Mettez vot' shartning d'dans. C'est tout c'que vous avez besoin, de l'eau et pis là vous boulanger ça. Vous l'quittez lever bien pis là vous arboulangez par-dessous. Pis là vous a quitté erlever encore pis là vous l'mettez dans les plats. Pis une fois qu'il est haut assez ben, vous les mettez dans le four.") C2848

Years ago when the flour supply got low, women would make the bread partly from flour and partly from potatoes. Only one of my informants made bread this way but most of them remember seeing their mother do it. The bread is made in the same way but boiled, mashed potatoes are used in place of some of the flour.

"you cook your potatoes, eh? Then you mash your potatoes well and you put them in, then your flour and water and potatoes all together. That makes a nice bread, you wouldn't believe it."

("vous tchusez vos patates, eh? Pis vous crassez bien vos patates pis vous les mettez là pis delayer vot' farine et l'eau et pis des patates et tout ensemb', là. Pis ça fait du gentil pain, vous

croirez pas.") C2849

Before putting the bread in the pans most women grease the pans with margarine and then make the sign of the cross on the dough with a sharp instrument. They say that they do this because in the Catholic church, bread is the symbol of Christ's body and is thus sacred. It is said that in Quebec women cross bread so that they will not lack it in the future.<sup>45</sup>

Sometimes if there is dough left over after the pans have been filled, it is shaped in small patties and fried in fat. Adults and children eat these as snacks with molasses over them, which they call "galettes".

The cakes that most women make now are bought at the store in a package mix to which only wet ingredients are added. One of my informants made a particularly tasty spice cake and when I asked her for the recipe, she laughed and told me it was a package mix.

Before this type of mix became available, cakes that were made at home were simple since the women had few ingredients and no cookbooks. Basic ingredients such as flour, sugar, butter and molasses were used and occasionally some raisins or berries. Some cakes were sliced in two

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Pierre Des Ruisseaux, Croyances et Pratiques Populaires Au Canada Français, (Montréal: Editions du Jour) 1973  
p. 58

horizontal pieces and berries would be put in the center. Most cakes were not frosted but eaten with fresh cream.

At certain times of the year, especially Christmas, cakes with more ingredients would be made and women would also use candied fruit to make Christmas and wedding cakes.

Pies are also quite simple. Meat pies have already been mentioned and fruit pies vary only slightly. The pastry is mixed in the same way; with flour, lard, salt and water, but the bottom of the pan is lined with pastry as well as the top. In the French of Black Duck Brook a pie, which speakers of Standard French call "une tarte" is referred to as "un pâté", which in Standard French means a paste. Small pies, referred to in English as tarts are called "des tartes" in this area and the pastry dough itself is called "la pâtisserie".

The most common pie filling used is jam made from berries picked in the wild. There are many types of berries and all of the edible ones are boiled down with sugar and used in various desserts.

Home-made cookies, like the cakes and pies, are simple and restricted to basic ingredients. The favourite cookie of most people is molasses buns made from flour, molasses, butter and raisins. As mentioned, store-bought cookies are considered better and are given to guests and eaten on special occasions.

## Preserves

In Black Duck Brook there are only three types of food that one can consider preserves: jam, pickles and wines. There are many sorts of jams made from the berries that grow abundantly in the fields of the area but there are few types of pickles, since few vegetables commonly used for pickling are grown. There are almost as many types of wine as there are jam since it is made from the same sort of berries. Many women say that wine can be made from almost any fruit or vegetable. As well as wine, the men have found ways of making a type of beer.

All preserves used to be made in the fall for that is the time when the berries are picked and the vegetables are harvested. More recently, women store their berries in their deep freeze and make the jams over the course of the winter as the need arises. Wine is also made in the fall when the berries are picked primarily because it takes about four months to ferment and thus it is ready for the Christmas season.

Among the types of berries found and picked in this area are strawberries, raspberries, cranberries which are also called marshberries, partridge berries, blueberries, and squashberries.

Once the berries are picked, they are cleaned and the twigs, grass and insects that may be found on them are removed. They are rinsed in water to clean them and are placed in a large pot to be cooked. Jam is made from all

berries in the same way. A little water is added as well as enough sugar to sweeten the berries to taste. They are then brought to a boil and cooked for several hours until they are soft.

"You let it boil, your sugar and your berries, eh? You let them boil until they are (one word) then once it is thick it is cooked."

("Vous la quitter bouillir, vot' suc' et pis vos graines, eh? Pis vous les bouillir qu'ça vient (one word) pis un' fois qu'alle est pas' alle est tchuit.") C2849

When it is cooked it is placed in jars; most people used sealing machines to keep it fresh.

Only one informant made pickles. Others have preserved beets in vinegar, and still do. This is a simple process: the beets are sliced and put in bottles of vinegar although they may be cooked for a short time before.

My informant make pickles with onions, cauliflower and cabbage. She said that she had grown cucumbers and put them in pickles but that she did not like them. With these vegetables she adds vinegar, salt and mustard to pickle them.

Wine is usually made by the men although it is not commonly done now since beer has become available. Women will generally say that the home-made wine and beer was much more appreciated when it was only available during the Christmas season, and seemed to taste better as well.

Wine is commonly made from raspberries, blueberries or beets although other berries can be used. The process

is the same for all kinds.

"Well, you boil your berries just a little bit because the juice comes out, eh? Then you put that in a five gallon, a little barrel and then you put your sugar and water and a little bit of dry yeast, a pack of dry put all that in. You close it tight than you leave it for a week, eh? When you go to look at it, it's all finished working, it's good like that."

("Oh bien, vous bouillez des graines justement un tout p'tit peu là parce que tout le jus est sorti, eh? Pis ça vous mettez ça da, bien su' d' cinq gallons, un p'tit baril et pis vous mettez vot' suc' et pis l'eau et pis bien un p'tit peu d'dry yeas', un pack de dry mett' tout ça d'dans. Vous l' bouchez tight là, pis vous l'quittez là pour une semaine, eh? Quand vous allez ouëre ça, est tout fini d' travailler, ben pareil que c'est bon.")  
C2849

There are several variations on the above description. Firstly, whether or not it is clear from the above, the wine is placed in a barrel or bucket and is left for about a week. It is then transferred to bottles and left for a longer period, up to several months. Some people do not add yeast to their mixture for they say that it will work in the same way but take a little longer.

One informant said that her father used to make a type of beer using yeast, molasses and water and raisins when they were available. She was not sure of the quantities or how long it took. Another woman told me that beer could be made from spruce but she had never seen it done. The same woman told me that she made a type of gin using the following recipe:

"I made, eh, I made gin, it's called, lemon gin, I've often made lemon gin...with oranges, with oranges and a pack of yeast cake. I think it's sixteen oranges, pack of yeast cake, a slice of

bread, toast, like a slice of toast. You put that on and you leave it there, I think it's for ten days...You put that in a bucket, eh? In a dish. You put the slice of toast on top and you leave it for about ten days. And after that you pour it and put it in bottles then you leave it work in the bottles enough."

("J'ai fait, eh, j'faisais du, ah, ah du gin, comme s'appelle, du lemon gin là, j'ai souvent fait du lemon gin...avec des oranges, avec des oranges et pis des, ah, patchet d'yeast cake. Ej pense c'est seize oranges, patchet d'yeast cake et pis in, un taille de, de pain, toast, like, pack d'toast. Tu mets ça par-d'ssus tu l'laisses là, je crois que c'est pour dix jours...Tu mets ça cans un, un seau, eh? Dans l'dish. Pis là tu mets ta taille d'pain en-d'ssus pis tu l'laisses là pour une dixaine d'jours. Et après ça tu coules tout ça pis là tu l'mets dans des bouteilles pis tu l'laisses travailler dans les bouteilles assez.")  
C2850

So much of the woman's daily work was cooking and the preparation of foodstuffs. Another of the jobs she performed daily was cleaning various articles in the home. This will be considered in the next chapter.



## TRADITIONAL CLEANING METHODS

In this thesis the change between old ways and new is most obvious in the subject of traditional cleaning methods. Since the installation of electricity in 1964 the women of Black Duck Brook possess the same modern appliances and time-saving devices as the average North American housewife. No longer must she patiently heat her iron on the stove but merely plugs it in. She no longer toils over a scrubbing board but uses her automatic washer. She no longer cleans her kerosene lamp every evening but switches light on and off...

Ann Oakley in Woman's Work: The Housewife Past and Present<sup>46</sup> cites several studies concerning the number of hours that a housewife spent working during the last four decades. She states: "The amount of time housework takes shows no tendency to decrease with the increasing availability of domestic appliances."<sup>47</sup> In the light of my conversations and interviews with the women of Black Duck Brook I must disagree with this statement because I feel that it is inapplicable to them. The women have all expressed to me the difficulty and long hours involved in maintaining a household before the advent of electricity.

Some examples of the women's thoughts about the difficulty of the past in comparison with the ease of the

<sup>46</sup> Ann Oakley, Woman's Work: The Housewife Past and Present, (New York: Random House) 1974, pp. 6-7

<sup>47</sup> Ann Oakley, p. 6

present are thus expressed: "C'tait de la misère" (C2852), "And you had to carry water and heat it to wash all that, there were no washers then." ("Et fallait châllir d'l'eau et puis chaffer de l'eau pour laver tout ça pis c'te (one word) i' avait pas d' washer dans ces temps-là." C2850), "There was all kinds of work, well, you know, you had to work so hard to get a little bit." ("Y' avait toutes sortes d'ouvrage, ben, tu sais, fallait qu' tu travaillais si dur pour aouère un p'tit peu." C2852).

Today the women have much more idle time and most of them watch at least two hours of television a day whereas before the coming of electricity such idleness was unthinkable. In this particular cultural context the decrease in the number of hours spent performing household tasks is only partly due to the introduction of time-saving devices. Another important factor is the decrease in family size, which means a decrease in the time spent doing many activities such as laundry and dishes since there are naturally less dishes and clothes to wash.

Although this is difficult to verify, it is likely that the women of today in Black Duck Brook have more relaxed attitudes toward cleanliness than in the past. This seems consistent with the general moral decline indicated by the increase of drinking, unemployment and illegitimacy and also consistent with their own recollections of how hard they worked in the past and what high standards their mothers upheld. This, of course, could

be due to faulty memories or the time-honoured belief of the elder generations that they worked harder while young than the young of succeeding generations.

One last point in this argument is that if women do indeed spend an equal amount of time performing household duties today as in the past it is because the same duties they performed years ago were necessary whereas today they are considered hobbies. No longer is it necessary for a woman to knit garments or to sew quilts and yet some do as a means of employing themselves during otherwise idle hours. However, in the past these were necessary occupations which ensured the comfort and warmth of the family.

All of the cleaning methods mentioned here were no doubt performed throughout Newfoundland before electricity and modern products. Many tasks done by the women of Black Duck Brook are similar to those done by the women studied by Hilda Murray.<sup>48</sup>

Cleaning activities can be classified by considering the individual activities which comprise the broader area of traditional cleaning methods on a temporal basis, that is, how often each activity is performed. Thus, there are activities which are performed more than once each

<sup>48</sup>Hilda Murray, pp. 204-214

day such as washing dishes, those done only once a day such as cleaning an oil lamp, those performed once a week such as washing clothes and those performed less than once a week, which are often seasonal.

There is hardly any classification of such varied subject matter which does not admit flaws and for the above system the problem arises due to variation among individuals. Due to certain reasons such as the size of the family or obligations outside the house, some women may not perform these activities at the same rate of frequency as others.

It is difficult to classify or organize cleaning activities into practical categories since the variation in physical objects to be cleaned is so great and the processes of cleaning involved are so different. There is, after all, nothing which connects the airing of blankets with the washing of dishes besides the fact that they are both examples of cleaning in a broad sense.

Another factor influencing variation is the transmission of tradition from mother to daughter. Many women perform a given activity at the same rate of frequency as did their mother from whom they learned how to perform the task. Involved here, too, is the factor of individual preference and varying criteria of cleanliness. Attitudes toward cleanliness can vary greatly even in this small community: where one woman portrays a relaxed attitude another seems quite

meticulous. Perhaps the most certain criteria on which to base attitude is the rate of performance. We can say with some assurance that a woman who washes her floor daily is more concerned with cleanliness than one who does it once a week, given the same circumstances, that is, the same amount of dirt.

Nevertheless, in Black Duck Brook the same activities are performed with approximately the same rate of frequency and this chapter shall be organized according to divisions of frequency: several times daily, daily, weekly and seasonally. Where variations occur they shall be noted.

In the light of these points concerning the past and the present this chapter will be oriented to the past rather than the present since, as noted, present-day housework is similar in many respects to that of the average, modern North American housewife. Some of the activities and processes described here are no longer performed and others are performed in a different way. For many activities a comparison between the past and the present will be given and, where possible, the factors that have produced these changes.

#### Activities performed more than once daily

The cleaning activity performed most often is that of dish washing since it corresponds to the number of meals eaten by the family every day. Usually three meals a day

are eaten and thus the dishes are done three times a day. The same number of meals, or more, was eaten in the past, as we have seen in the discussion of foodways. If dishes are not done for the simple desire for cleanliness and order, they are done for the practical reason that there are only a certain number of dishes, which will be needed for the following meal. If this is true today, it is much more applicable to the past when dishes were more valuable and families were larger.

The modern housewife, those of Black Duck Brook included, have numerous products available to them for the purpose of cleaning dishes: countless brands of liquid detergent, dishcloths, rubber gloves and abrasive materials.

In the days before these were available dishes were washed in a pan,

"Pans, pans, eh? Pans, not like now, it's plastic now but before it was pans (one word) white iron pans."

("Les plats, des plats, eh? Des plats, pas comme asteure, c'tait de plastique asteure mais avant c'tait des plats (one word), des plats en fer blanc.")  
C2845

Water was heated on the stove:

"Yes, I heated the water on the stove, sometimes put the pan, the pan on the stove and other times heated it in the kettle on the stove."

("Oui, j'chauffions de l'eau su' le poêle, des fois mettions l'plat, le plat su' un' poêle, pis d'autres fois le chauffer dans le, dans l'tique su' la poêle.")  
C2855

The only soap product available was Sunlight soap but

this was not as effective as today's products and could leave a taste of soap on the dishes.

"Well, we used Sunlight soap for the dishes. Yes, not very much though because you had to rinse the dishes in another water or else you could taste it in the food, eh? Taste on the dishes."

("Ben j'usions du Sunlight soap pou' la vaisselle, là, Oui, pas trop parce faulait, faulait rincer la vaisselle dans aut' eau à tous cas ç'arait eu goût de manger, eh? Goût dans la vaisselle.") C2855

More often there was no soap used, a fact attested by many women.

"No, we didn't have soap for our dishes. If that's not strange, eh? If you stopped at all the houses, there was nobody who washed dishes with soap."

("Non, j'avions pas d'savon pour not' vaisselle. Si c'tait pas tchurieux, eh? Et si vous arrêtez à toutes les maisons i' a parsonne qui lavait d'la vaisselle avec du savon.") C2852

Dishes, then, were washed in water heated on the stove either with Sunlight soap or no soap, and a dish-rag. Pots and other difficult cleaning problems were cleaned in one of two ways. One could take wood cinders from the stove and scrub the difficult areas.

"And you took a cloth and some ashes, then you scrubbed your pots or your pans with that."

("Et vous preniez une lavette pis d'la cend' pis vous fourbissiez vos pots ou vos plats avec d'la cend'.") C2853

The other method was to put the pots on the stove with water in them to boil, which would remove the food by soaking it off.

"There was nothing like now to clean pots..."

It was hard to get everything off. You put it to soak on the stove with water in it to boil, that unstuck."

("Y avait pas d'arien comme asteure, de nettoye les pots... C'tait dur à tirer tout. Tu mettais à tremper su' la poêle avec de l'eau d'dans, à bouillir, ça décollait.") C2845

Dishes are dried as soon as they are washed, either by the woman of the house or another female, usually a daughter. Dishes are always done by the women. At the house where I stayed Mrs. Felix sometimes went out to her garden immediately after the evening meal to get the benefit of the light, expecting to do the dishes on her return. I would wash the dishes and suggested to her two sons, aged twenty-two and twenty-six, that they help. I was haughtily informed that they had never once done dishes and that they never intended to do so, nor did I once see a man employed in such a task.

Sweeping the floor is an activity which traditionally follows dish washing.

"every time you washed dishes--after breakfast, after lunch, after dinner--you swept"

("à tous les coups que tu lavais la vaisselle--après déjeuner, après dîner, après souper--tu balayais") C2858

Thus it was done three times a day or at the least, by some women, once a day. This was quite necessary considering that the kitchen is the center of activity and the first room that one enters on coming inside the house. This tradition of sweeping the floor several times a day still persists but today the broom is bought



at the store whereas years ago they were made at home. The art has long disappeared and few people remember how it was done. Even the best explanation I got was short.

"Well, people made their brooms before, I've seen them made. A broom, yes, with branches. Then a handle on it and fix it all around to sweep the floor."

("Ben, le monde faisait leurs balais avant. J'en ai vu faits. Un balai, oui, avec des broches. Faisait des balais a'c des broches. Pis une manche d'ssus pis l'arranger tout le tour, balayer la place.") C2845

#### Activities performed daily

Before electricity and electric stoves which even today not everyone in Black Duck Brook possesses, families used wood stoves. They were cleaned once a day, as most stoves of this period, with blacking bought at the local store. Blacking could also be obtained from batteries, according to one informant:

E.Y. "We didn't buy our blacking, eh? You know the, the big batteries they have for the dories, eh? You've seen those batteries- have you seen those batt--"

E.S. "I never saw one, no."

E.Y. "Well ya know the big batteries like that, Joe? For the dories, well, that's the "pok-ã-poks" lã, eh?...well, we went (one word) when they weren't any good any more, they threw them out, eh? Then we went and got them and we put them, eh, Joe, some (one word) beat it with the hammer and some sheets, eh? Beat it well and put it in a can. Then we put a little molasses tea in it."

E.S. "Yes?"

E.Y. (laughs) "Yes."

E.S. "What for?"

E.Y. ""To blacken the stove."

- (E.Y. "J'achetions pas not' blackin',eh? Vos savez les, les grosses batt'ries qu'il ont pour les canons là, eh? Vous avez vu ces batt'ries là, a-vous vu ces batt--")
- E.S. "J'ai jamais vu, non."
- E.Y. "Non? Well ya know des grosses batt'ries comme ça, Joe? Pour les canons, ben, ça c'est les pok-â-poks là, eh?...pis j'allions (one word) ça quand qu'i' les avient plus bons, ben i' les jetiont, eh? Et pis j'allions les ramanser pis là nous aut'es ej mettions, eh Joe, some (one word) battions ça avec le marteau et des linges, eh? Tout bien battu pour l'mettions dans un canne. Pis là je mettions un peu d'thé d'la melasses d'dans.
- E.S. "Oui?"
- E.Y. (laughs) "Oui."
- E.S. "Pourquoi?"
- E.Y. "Pour blacker not' poêle.") C2852

Kerosene lamps were also used before electricity and these were cleaned once a day as well since the oil used made the globe a dirty yellow colour.

"Yes, every evening you had to clean your globe... the parrafin, that's it, makes it all yellow, you know the, the globe inside, eh? You had to wash them every evening to get a little light."

("Oh oui, tous les souères faulait déttoye ton globe...la parrafin, c'est ça, v'nait tout jaune, t'sais, les, les globes én-d'dans, eh? T'étais obligé de les laver à tous les souères, donner un 'tit peu de clarté.") C2846

One informant remembered a time, not only when they had oil lamps but before.

"We've seen a time, we didn't have a lamp, eh? We had to take a piece of lard on a fork, eh? Then stick the fork in a bottle and the piece of lard burned, that was our light, that."

("Pis j'avons vu un temps, nous aut'es, j'avions pas d'lampe, eh? Faulait pren' un morceau d'lard su' une fourchette, eh? Et pis flicker la fourchette dans une bouteille pis l'morceau d'lard brûlait, c'est not' lumière, ça.") C2852

### Activities performed weekly

Floors were scrubbed at least once a week and more often depending upon the size of the family, the time of year and, in general, how much dirt collected upon it.

Today the majority of floors are canvas and are washed with soap and water and a long-handled sponge. When my informants were young all the floors were wood.

"We scrubbed the floor, no, no canvas, no paint, nothing but wood."

("Fourbissons la place, pas de, pas de canvas, pas d' peinture, ienque de bois.") C2855

Traditionally, the wood was scrubbed by young girls in the family. This was done with a brush and home-made soap or, as an earlier method, it was done with branches of spruce trees.

"Well, we had wood so we broke the branches of spruce, eh? Then it was a brush, eh, we tied that with line, like you would, then we took that and we rubbed our floor with it, eh? Cleaned our floor with that, eh? With spruce branches, eh?"

("Bien, j'avions de l'bois pis je câssions des branches de 'pruce, eh? Pis là c'tait une brosse, eh, j'amârrions ça 'vec la ligne comme i' faut pis là j'prenions d'ça pis j' frottions not' place avec, eh? Décrassions not' place avec ça, eh? Avec des branches de 'pruce, eh?") C2852

After several years of cleaning the wood floors became bleached and thus the sign of a clean floor was its white colour. When cleaned properly the floor was referred to by one woman as "white as my stove" ("blanc comme mon poêle là" C2855) In order to obtain this whiteness some women scrubbed the floor with sand.

"Then there were times on Saturdays I'd think, my gosh, our floor is all tracked, tracks, I would go along the coast and there were some places with sand, you know white sand? It was almost like white earth but it was, it was more like sand, eh? Then I'd go and cut some, scrub our floor and I scrubbed with sand under, eh? Then it went very white, that's what I would do, what I did. My God, it was hard just the same, t'ough."

("Pis i' a des, des, des fois le samedi ben, je pensions, my gosh, not' place est tout tracée, des traces, mais j'allions l'long d'la côte pis i' avait des places qu'il avient du sab', savez du sab' blanc, là? C'tait quasiment comme la terre blanche mais c'tait, c'tait plus du sab', eh? Pis j'allions hâcher ça, fourbissons not' place pis je frottions avec la sab' par-dessous, eh? Pis là ça v'nait tout blanc, pareil, t'ough.")  
C2852

The laundry was and still is one of the mojour chores of the week and one that, before the days of automatic washers and electric irons, could take àll day. The traditional day for the laundry is Monday but it may also be done on another day of the week, perhaps Thursday or Friday depending on the size of the family and the amount of clothes that each member possessed. One informant told me about a period during her life when her children were small. Each child had one article of clothing and thus it had to be washed every evening when all the children were in bed so that they would have something clean to put on in the morning. In cases such as this one could say that the laundry was done every day.

The process of doing the laundry can be divided into several smaller processes and each one shall be examined here in the order that they are usually performed.

Clothes that were badly stained, usually those worn by the fishermen, were soaked overnight before washing. They were soaked in a lye solution that was bought but lye could also be made from water and ashes, a process that several informants remembered.

"a couple of, of gallons, I think, of ashes then you take a couple of gallons of boiling water and ah, ah, a piece of some...Then leave that for several days and it became lye"

("Un couple de, de gallons, je pense, de cend' pis on prenait un, un couple de gallons d'eau bouillante pis ah, ah, un morceau de tcheque...Pis a laissait là pour tcheques jours et là ça venait en, en lessi")  
C2866

The actual washing was done in a wooden tub with water boiled on the stove and for lack of Sunlight soap many people used their own home-made soap. A typical wash-tub was made completely of wood and was formerly used as a barrel for fish.

The clothes were scrubbed on a typical scrubbing board which were, like the wash-tubs, made at home before they were available in the store or before the people could afford to buy them.

"with white iron, the, the frame was, was of wood, you know. And white iron, sheets of white iron"

("avec du fer blanc, le, le, le frame était, étiont en bois, vous savez. Pis de fer blanc le, les feuilles de fer blanc, là")

Clothes that had to be particularly white were bleached with blueing which came in squares that one can still purchase at the local store. Clothes were soaked in a solution of blueing and water or in a

solution of lye and water and were boiled on the stove.

"Well, you could have a big pot or a big dish, eh? You put a spoonful of lye in then put your clothes in to boil on the stove and that would bleach very white."

("Ben, vous pouvez avoir un grand pot, ou un grand plat, eh? Vous mettez une tchuverée d' lessi d'dans bouillir su' l' poêle pis ça ara eu blanchi tout blanche.") C2852

Since there are no small rivers or fresh water sources in the immediate vicinity of the residents, I found no evidence of clothes being washed in brooks or streams.

Drying, however, is always done outdoors even in winter.

E.S. "Do you hang your clothes outdoors to dry them?"

E.Y. "Oh yes, oh yes, yes."

E.S. "Even in winter?"

E.Y. "Oh yes, the nice days you hang your clothes outdoors and they dry enough to iron."

(E.S. "Est-ce que vous pendez les vêtements dehors pour les, pour les chasser?"

E.Y. "Oh oui, oh oui, oui."

E.S. "Même dans l'hiver?"

E.Y. "Oh oui, des belles journées vous les pendez dehors pis i' chassent assez pour les repasser, eh?") C2852

During rain or days that were too inclement to permit outdoor drying, clothes were hung in the kitchen over the stove, or in the case of a larger quantity, strung across the room, but this is usually considered the last alternative.

In the past, ironing was done with an iron heated on the stove.

E.S. "You had an iron in those times?"

E.Y. "Oh yes."

E.S. "Yes?"

E.Y. "Yes, we had the old-fashioned, eh? I saw one there in the woods the other day. (laughs) Yes, the old fashioned irons."

E.S. "Did you have to heat it on the stove?"

E.Y. "Yes, had to heat it on the stove. You pull the handle off and let it heat and when it was warm, put the handle on top."

E.S. "Um hum, did it stay warm a long time?"

E.Y. "Oh yes, a good while, yes."

(E.S. "Vous aviez un, un fer à repasser dans ces temps-là?"

E.Y. "Oh oui."

E.S. "Oui?"

E.Y. "Oui j'avions les old-fashioned, eh? J'en ai vu un là-bas dans l'bois l'aut' jour. (laughs) Oui, les vieux fashion erpass--, fer erpasser."

E.S. "Il faut chauffer su', sur le poêle?"

E.Y. "Oui, faut l' chauffer sur le poêle. Vous tirez vot' manche dessus pis là vous quittez chauffer quand qu'il est chaud crotcher vot' manche de su' en haut."

E.S. "Um hum, est-ce que ça reste chaud longtemps?"

E.Y. "Oh oui, un bon bout, oui, um hum.") C2852

At least one woman I spoke with did not feel the necessity of ironing all garments of clothing. She usually ironed clothing such as trousers and shirts but not sheets or towels. This is probably a matter of individual preference depending on such factors as the amount of washing there is and the amount of time available in which to do it.

The last process in the laundry is that of starching, which appears to have been a very common practice. Starch could be bought but was often made at home from flour or potatoes.

"They cut potatoes in water...they took the water and put it on the piece of clothes."

("I' coupiont les pommes de terre dans l'eau... i' preniont l'eau pis i' mettiont su' l', su' l' morceau de hardes.") C2858

"you mix your flour with a little bit of cold water then you boil your kettle and you cook your starch, if you have some blueing put it in, you could put blueing in, eh? Then you put your clothes in, eh, yes."

("vous mélanger vot' farine avec un petit peu de l'eau frette pis là vous bouillez vot' tique et pis vous tchusez, tchusez vot' empois, si vous avez du bleu, mett' dedans, vous pouvez mett' vot' bleu dedans, eh? Pis là vous mett' vos hardes dedans, eh, oui.") C2852

One informant said that she starched shirts and curtains, and another starched table cloths, aprons, dresses, blouses and shirts. Again the clothes that were starched were a matter of personal preference according to the woman's tradition and her standards.

One activity that is today considered part of the work of the housewife is that of dusting. Although this is done to some extent in Black Duck Brook, there is no tradition of it, simply because there were no articles that required dusting, according to the woman's standards. The furniture was wooden, usually painted, and was used on a daily basis, implying that dust did not have time to collect on them. Articles that may have had to be dusted such as knick-knacks, expensive furniture or books were lacking in the community since the people had neither the money nor the inclination to have them in their homes.

"you know, people before didn't have things like that, eh? No, people didn't have things like that, they had nothing to dust, eh? No, there was nothing but wooden chairs, and you don't need to dust those, eh?"

("tu sais, le monde d'avant avait pas des affaires comme ça, eh? Non, le monde avait pas des affaires



comme ça, il aviont arien d' duster, eh? Non, a eu ienque des chaises en bois mais t'as pas besoin d' duster ça, eh?") C2852

Nor did many of the families have a front room in the sense that it is used elsewhere in Newfoundland, that is, only for special visitors. In Black Duck Brook this kind of room was either used on a daily basis or simply did not exist. Even today some houses consist of only two or three rooms.

#### Activities performed seasonally

Aside from work that is done on a daily or weekly basis, there are certain jobs to be done at a given time of the year or several times a year when the need arises.

There are three of these jobs, the washing of bed-clothes which is done in the spring and the fall, the making of soap when the need arises and major house-cleaning of which the most important task was the washing (or papering or painting) of walls, traditionally done twice a year, before Christmas and before Easter.

In days gone by the only source of heat in the home was the kitchen stove which in winter provided little warmth in the bedrooms. Thus, many more blankets were required in winter than in summer. Those used in summer were naturally lighter than the blankets and quilts used in winter. Both types were woolen but the winter ones were thicker and quilts were used only in winter.

The blankets used in summer are washed in the fall

when it becomes too cold to use them and are then put away for the winter unless they are needed for extra warmth. Those used during the winter are washed in the spring when they are no longer needed and are put away for the summer until the cold weather begins. Some women wash both summer and winter blankets before and after they are used so that both kinds are washed twice yearly.

In days past, the washing process was the same as for clothes. Blankets were always dried outdoors on a fence or tree, as they are today. Some women also air their blankets more often.

E.S. "How many times a year do you wash blankets?"

E.Y. "Blankets? The fall and the spring."

E.S. "Twice?"

E.Y. "Twice."

E.S. "Ah. Do you air them more often than that?"

E.Y. "Oh yes, oh yes, in the summer, put them outdoors, hung outdoors."

(E.S. "Combien de fois par année est-ce que vous lavez les couvartes?"

E.Y. "Les couvartes? L'automne et l' printemps."

E.S. "Deux fois?"

E.Y. "Deux fois."

E.S. "Ah. Est-ce que, est-ce que vous les mettez à l'air plus souvent que ça?"

E.Y. "Oh oui, oh oui, l'été, oh, mis à l'air astuere, pendé dehors.") C2852

The making of soap occurred two or three times per year, according to how much one made at a time and how quickly it was used. There are only three ingredients used in the process: a type of fat derived from a fish or animal source, lye and water. Only one woman mentioned another ingredient; the addition of half a cup of salt.

The fat was obtained from sheep or pigs and was saved as it was cooking. Some women made fat from cod livers.

"we had to collect all the cod livers, eh? Then we put them in a barrel and we left them there for quite a while, eh? When the sun had melted all the livers there would be oil, eh?"

("faulait qu'ej ramansions tous les foies d'la morue, eh? Pis là je mettions ça dans un baril pis ej la quitions là pour un bon boute, eh? Quand qu' le soleil arait fondu tous les foies qui arait du l'huile, eh?") C2852

The lye used was usually that bought in the store but could be made at home as previously described.

These three ingredients were placed in a large tub and "cooked", that is, heated and boiled for about two hours. It was then cooled at which time it could be cut in blocks. The soap has been described as of a brownish hue and smelling of oil. The following is an informant's explanation of the process described above:

"I took some canned lye. I put about two gall--, one gallon, I think, of water in a, a pan...I took a pound...of lard, the grease of sheep and pig mixed and I put that in and I let it boil for two hours and then I put a cup, a third, a half a cup of salt and I stirred it like you would then I collected it to put it in the cold... The next day I went and I cut my soap, cut in pieces and that I put somewhere dry... Well, you didn't use it right away after, you had to leave it about fifteen days...to let it dry and then you can use it."

("je prenais le lessi en canne. Je mettais à peu près deux gall--, un gallon, je pense, d'eau dans, dans un, un plat...je prenais un liv'...du saindoux par c'est, c'est de la graisse de, de mouton et pis de cochon mêlé pis là je mettais ça d'dans et laisser bouillir pour deux heures et là je mettais un, une tasse, un tierée, une demi-tasse de sel d'dans pis

brâssais ça comme i' faut pis là je prenais pis là je ramansais pour mettre au froid...Le lendemain ben j'allais pis je coupais mon savon, coupé par morceaux pis ça, dans je mettais au sec...Ben i' usiont pas tout de suite après, i' faut le laisser tchinzaine de jours...pour le quitter secher là pis l'on pouviont se sarvir.") C2863

Twice a year most women of Black Duck Brook perform a major house-cleaning which includes the floors and walls of every room. This is usually done before Christmas and before Easter, the latter being the equivalent of "spring cleaning" known elsewhere in North America. When asked at what time of the year they did a major cleaning most women gave a reply similar to the following:

"Well now, when it gets near to Christmas, eh, oh, but close to Easter, eh? You know a big day like that, well we washed everything, eh, everything. Yes, because it's a big day, yes."

("Bien asteure si ça v'nait proche de Noel, eh, eh, mais proche de Pâques, eh? Tu sais un grand jour comme ça là, ben j'avons tout lavé, eh, tout en grand. Oui, parce c'tait un grand jour, oui.") C2852

At this time of year, the major cleaning task was the walls. Up until a few years ago all the walls were covered with paper, often from newspapers. One man in the community has an old sheet of newspaper that he said was on the walls of the house he had grown up in as a child. The newspaper is La Presse of Montreal and the date is November 9th, 1931. Newspaper was a very cheap method of covering walls, and even store-bought paper was cheaper than paint until a few years ago. Today the reverse is true and paper has become so expensive that it is rarely

seen.

E.S. "Did they have paper on the walls in those days?"

E.Y. "No."

E.S. "What did they have, paint?"

E.Y. "They had, they had newspaper."

E.S. "Yes?"

E.Y. "Yes, that's what we used in my time, we papered with newspapers, you know, newspapers, yes."

(E.S. "Est-ce qu'on avait, ah, des, le papier sur les murs dans ces temps-là?"

E.Y. "Non.?"

E.S. "Qu'est-ce qu'on avait, de peinture?"

E.Y. "On avait, on avait des journaux."

E.S. "Oui?"

E.Y. "Oui, c'est ça que j'avions dans mon temps je tapissions avec des journaux, vous savez les journaux, oui.") C2852

One woman said that every wall in the house was papered every year and another explained the process:

"Well, you had to make, you had to have flour, we made some paste then boil the kettle and heat it, you know, make starch, eh? That you put on to make it stick, eh?"

("Bien, fallait que je faisions de, fallait d'la farine, c'est là, je faisions d'la pâte pis bouillir le tique et le chauder, vous savez, faire de l'empois, eh? Qu'on met dessous pour faire coller, eh?") C2852

When walls were papered, especially with newsprint, they yellowed quickly with the passing of the months and the soot from the wood-burning stove.

After the introduction of paint the walls are washed down at Christmas and Easter and painted whenever the family have both the inclination and the money, factors which vary considerably from household to household.

Cleaning and cooking were done often, and usually on a regular basis. Another of the woman's tasks, that

of the fabrication of clothes and household items, was done less regularly and only as often as required to clothe the family. The making of textiles will be discussed in the next chapter.

## TEXTILES

The women of Black Duck Brook made much of their clothing and many articles in the home by hand. They not only knitted and sewed but weaved cloth and spun wool to make material for garments. Mats, rugs, doilies and table cloths were also made.

The study of textiles has already been undertaken elsewhere in Newfoundland. One study concerns the eastern part of the island<sup>49</sup> and another deals with a small fishing community<sup>50</sup>. My own study reveals many similarities between the manufacture of material and the making of items in Black Duck Brook and eastern Newfoundland.

This chapter is divided into four smaller parts: knitting, from the shearing of sheep to the construction of the finished product; weaving; sewing, which includes a discussion of the typical dress of years past; and the fabrication of mats and rugs.

### Spinning and Knitting

The previous generations of the people of Black Duck Brook relied heavily on sheep for both food and clothing. The clothing was produced from the wool of

<sup>49</sup> Gerald Pocius, Textile Traditions of Eastern Newfoundland, (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies) 1978

<sup>50</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 265-274

the sheep through a succession of several different processes. These were shearing, carding, dyeing, spinning and knitting. Wool was also used to make blankets and mats, which shall be discussed later.

Today people still keep sheep, some of which they slaughter in the fall for meat, and all of which they shear in the spring for wool. Only two women in the community still do their own spinning and carding and these occupations are now considered more a hobby than a necessity since all clothing can now be purchased.

The number of sheep kept by each family varies according to the size of the family, and thus its needs. Twenty years ago and more, each family kept proportionately more sheep than at present. The largest number of sheep kept by women was an average of twenty-five to thirty (one woman kept fifty), today the average is between eight and twelve. Since the sheep are bought or bred in the immediate vicinity, no one is able to name the particular species of sheep which they own.

The sheep are kept in a barn in winter and are let out to graze as soon as the snow melts. After the spring shearing they are free to wander for the summer until the fall when some of them, usually the lambs born that spring, will be slaughtered.

The majority of women still shear their own sheep and knit the wool but the intermediate processes of carding, dyeing and spinning are performed at a mill.



There are mills in several provinces to which women send wool. There is the Codroy Valley Woolen Mills in Newfoundland which is newly opened although there was a different mill in the Codroy Valley years ago. There are two mills in Prince Edward Island, MacAusland's Woolen Mills and Condon and Sons. In New Brunswick women send their wool to Briggs and Little.

Prices for processing vary and most women do not know the costs since they send their wool on an agreement known as "the half system". In this system the woman sends a certain amount of raw wool to the mill and gets back half that amount in processed wool. The cost of processing is paid by the half of the wool which the mill keeps.

Prices that are mentioned are as follows: four years ago the cost of processing one pound of wool was fifty-five cents. Today's figure is about ninety cents, although these figures no doubt vary from mill to mill. The mill in Codroy Valley buys raw wool for one dollar per pound and sells it back for two dollars and fifty cents per pound, thus the cost of processing one pound is one dollar and fifty cents. There is a difference in every mill according to whether the wool sent for processing is washed or dirty.

The women can send their wool to the mill for any or all stages of processing. That is, she can send her washed wool for carding then spin it herself, she can

send unwashed wool for washing and carding, she can have it dyed or not dyed or she can have it spun as well. Most women choose to have all processes done at the mill although they say that the wool processed at home is better than that processed at the mill in terms of strength, warmth and durability.

### Shearing

Shearing is always done in the month of May and during that month according to the weather. The sheep will be sheared early in May if the weather is warm and the threat of snow has passed. If cold weather persists the shearing will be left until the latter part of the month since the owners do not want to subject their sheared sheep to the cold because they then have no natural protection.

"the end of May, sometimes I knew, eh, that goes by the weather, eh? If it was good weather, well, we'd shear early, if it was bad weather, well, we'd have to wait until later, eh?"

("le darnier d'mai, des fois je savais, eh ç'allait par le temps, eh? C'est qui faisait du beau temps, ben, j' tondions de bonne heure, eh, si c'tait du mauvais temps, ben, faulait, qu' j' tarrions tard, eh?") C2848

No matter when the sheep are sheared, however, the people say that they can always expect an unexpected snowstorm shortly after.

When the day for shearing arrives all the sheep are caught and put in a pen or other enclosure if they are not already there. Only one woman sheared her sheep in

an area other than an open field. She had enough space to shear in the barn and preferred to do so.

Shearing has always been the work of women. The men may, if they are not involved with fishing or planting, help the women to catch the sheep but will do no actual shearing. During the time when each family had more animals and when the men were busier, women of the community would co-operate, all shearing one woman's sheep each day until all the shearing was done.

E.S. "Did you always do the shearing?"

M.F. "The women, yes, sheared the sheep."

E.S. "Alone?"

M.F. "Well, the men helped to catch them but if they were fishing the women helped each other, the women of the house would help each other."

(E.S. "C'est vous qui les tondez toujours?"

M.F. "Les femmes, oui, tondaient les moutons."

E.S. "Toutes seules?"

M.F. "Ah, ben, les hommes donnont la main les attraper ben s'i' 'tiont à pêche, ah, bien les femmes se donnaient la main, les femmes d'la maison se donnaient la main iune à l'autre.") C2850

The only tool necessary in the shearing is a pair of scissors. Most women use ordinary large kitchen scissors although some have shearers described thus:

"It's not made like a, it's made like scissors but the, the, the blades were big, eh, big like this. (indicates five inches) They opened and closed by themselves, if you closed them, they'd open by themselves."

("C'tait pas fait comme un, c'tait fait comme un ciseau mais les, les, les lames 'tiont larges, eh comme ça d'large. (indicates five inches) I' fermont pis rouvont de ieusses-mêmes, si tu les fermais mais i' rouvont d'ieusses-mêmes.") C2850

Electric shearers were not used because the area has

had electricity for less than twenty years and because they are expensive and can not be used in the field as easily as scissors.

Shearing can be done in a variety of ways, usually that way in which the woman can work most quickly and efficiently is the way she chooses. Some women tie the legs of the sheep and lie them on their sides, shearing one side after the other. Some women prefer to have the sheep stand tied by the neck to a post. Likewise, some women shear the legs and stomach first working up to the back, some part the wool down the middle of the sheep's back and shear down both sides while others start at the neck and work down the back in a circular cut so that the long wool on the back comes off in one piece.

At the same time that sheep are sheared, the ears of the lambs are cut in such a way that each person has a distinctive marking by which he can recognize his own sheep. Each person in the community also knows the marking of the other owners. The mark is a cut of a specific shape such as a triangle, a hole or a combination of two, cut in the ear.

During my stay in the community of Black Duck Brook I had the valuable opportunity of being a part of a sheep shearing day, helping Mrs. Felix, who taught me to shear. The day began at nine-thirty after a hearty breakfast. Mrs. Felix's eldest son had caught the sheep and penned them into a temporary pen he had made the day before.

He is a sensitive, conscientious young man and helped his mother shear, although his father did not participate. The three of us sheared a total of fourteen sheep with the half-hearted help of another of her sons and one of his freinds. I watched Mrs. Felix shear the first sheep, a spirited young ram who had not been sheared before. Mrs. Felix always starts at the neck and works down the back with experienced, confident cuts. The first sheep took her an hour to shear but others which were older and calmer could be sheared by her in less than half an hour. She made the task appear simple so I started to shear one myself. I soon realized that an inexperienced person has much more trouble, being ignorant of the configuration of the animal's body and the most efficient way of holding both the wool and the scissors. I was also unprepared to find the wool so greasy and so many lice and ticks over its body.

The first sheep I sheared took well over two hours, the second about two hours and the last one hour. The work was exhausting since we were stooping over the sheep standing upright and the scissors were blunt, which caused the muscles of the hand to become very sore as well as blisters to form. Neither of us used gloves which would impede the feel of the animal's body and increase the chances of cutting it.

During the day, Mrs. Felix worked unceasingly from ten in the morning until five in the afternoon stopping

for neither food, drink nor a cigarette. The day passed quickly and pleasantly if one enjoys hard physical work. At four in the afternoon someone passing by told us the time and we laughed because we had both thought it was several hours earlier.

When all the sheep were sheared the wool was gathered in large bags and put in the barn until it could be sent to the mill.

### Washing

For the following four processes we must revert to the past since so few women still wash, card, dye or spin wool.

The wool was washed in large tubs with water which had to be boiling in order to kill the lice in it. All of my informants mentioned using Sunlight soap in powder form as a detergent or no soap if none was available. The wool was washed at least twice and as many as four times depending on how dirty it was and on how quickly that dirt was washed out. The wool was then rinsed in cold water.

"Well, you wash it in one water and then you take it out of that water, you put it in the tub and you boil it, you keep the water hot with boiling water and that kills the lice...you take it out of there, you put it in cold water again, you take it out, you wring it and rinse it and wring it in that. Then you can put another lot of wool in that water, like that it saves some water, eh? Then you do the same thing again, you keep your water boiling all the time, and you heat it gradually."

("Ben tu la laves, et dans un' eau et là tu la tires de d'dans cette eau-là, tu la mis dans la boey et tu

la bouillante et ça tue les poux...tu ertires de d'dans, tu ermis de l'eau frette et tu la tires, tu la tords et rinses et la tords de là-d'dans. Là tu peux ermett' un' aut' boey d'laine dans cette eau-là comme ça, ça sauve un peu d'eau, eh? Pis tu refais la même affaire, tu tchiens ton eau à bouillir tout l' temps et tu la chaude à mesure.") C2850

After rinsing the wool was wrung and sometimes picked to take out twigs, grass and dead insects. It was then put outdoors to dry, either directly on the ground, on sheets or blankets, on a fence or even on trees. They drying took several days, depending on the weather.

### Carding

Carding wool is a long, tiring occupation during which the tangled wool is combed over and over so that all the fibers point in the same direction. This process was done with two identical cards which are flat pièces of wood about four inches by six inches, protruding from which are metal spikes used to comb the wool. Handles are attached to the wood.

"Well, it's a board, about that long (six inches) and about that wide (four inches) and it has a handle on it, eh? Then there are two of them, eh? And it's full of teeth and you card it, eh?"

("Bien, c'est une planche, ça, d'ça d'long (six inches) pis à peu près ça d'large (four inches) et pis i' a une manche d'ssus, eh? Pis i' en a deux, eh? Pis là c'est plein d'dents pis la vous cardez, eh?") C2848

No one said that cards could be made at home but were readily available at local stores.

The left hand holds one card stationary with the teeth

pointing downward. A piece of wool is placed between the cards and combed with even strokes of the right hand going in the same direction. When all the fibers are going in the same direction the wool is taken off the cards by rolling it into rolls about six inches long and one inch in diameter. These are called rolls in English but have several names in French: "des rolls", "des roulottes", "des rouleaux" or "des écardons".

Some informants remember carding garments that had already been knitted. This was done when the garment was no longer serviceable for some reason such as because of tears, or because the family had outgrown it. It would be carded in the same way but it would take longer to obtain a roll. If the garment had been dyed the wool could be mixed with white wool or wool of a different colour to obtain a new colour. For example, red mixed with white would produce pink. Thus, new garments of new colours could be created easily by making ingenious use of what one had.

### Dyeing

The dyeing process is usually performed after the wool is spun since it is more difficult to card wool when it is dyed than natural. When the people dyed their own wool, the most common colours were grey, always used for socks (which could also be obtained from mixing wool from black and white sheep), blue and red. Socks



were always topped with a band of red or blue and mittens were traditionally white.

Most of my informants used dye that was bought at local stores or sent for in St. John's. This dye was a type of powder and the women followed the directions for use which came with the product.

"Well, you put (one word) in a big pot, a big pile of what you wash and then you put a little cup of vinegar and then you put your dye in what you have in your packet, and then after you put your wool in and then you leave it...get hot, hot but not boiled."

("Bien, vous mettez votre (one word) des grands pots, un grand pile de ce vous lavez et pis vous mettez un peu d'tassé d' vinaig' et pis là vous mettez vot' teinture d'dans c' que vous avez dans vot' patchet, et pis après vous mettez votre laine d'dans et den vous la quittez...v'nir chaud, chaud mais pas bouilli.")  
C2848

Store-bought dyes must not be boiled lest the wool be dyed in uneven patches.

Most informants remember seeing their mother dye wool with natural dyes, that is, dyes that come from plants. Some informants have dyed this way in the past. The most common plants used were moss, flowers, tree bark, onion peels and berries.

The colour was obtained from the plant by boiling it, usually with the wool in the same pot. Some women boiled the plant first to obtain the colour and then added the wool. With natural dyes one adds salt and vinegar as well as with store-bought dyes, but informants say that natural dyes will colour the wool without the use of any other substance and will not fade. One informant explained how

to dye wool with tree moss:

"I put our wool, I put, I put the moss in the pot, then I put a row of wool and a row of moss and a row of wool and a row of moss then I let it boil. I put a little bit of salt in there, you know, I let it boil until the water becomes clear."

("Je mettions not' laine, je mettions de faire, mettions la mousse dans le pot pis je mettions un rang de laine pis un rang de mousse pis un rang de laine pis un rang de mousse pis je laissons bouillir. J' mets un p'tit peu de sell dessus, vous savez, j' quitions bouillir jusqu'à temps que le l'eau vient toute claire.") C2862

Another explains how to dye with berries:

M.D. "Partridge berries, "des graines de plaine" we call them, they're blue berries on the ground an' the field, well, they dyed with that too, that made a real nice purple. (Les graines de plaine, là, des graines de corbeau, j'appelions ça, c'est des graines de bleu su' la terre et la plaine, pis tandiont avec ça aussi, ça v'nait un mignon d'purple)...well, dey used ta put de berries in de pot, an' a piece of clothes like cotton, eh? Flour bag.

E.S. "Would ya boil it er what?"

M.D. "Boil, yeah."

E.S. "Put anything in it?"

M.D. "No just a little bit a' salt...coarse salt."  
C2848

One informant told me that her favourite dye came from a small yellow summer flower of which she did not know the name.

### Spinning

Spinning is a process whereby carded wool is twisted and pulled to form a firm string of an even thickness although the thickness will vary according to what garment will be knitted. Wool is twisted and pulled, or spun, by the means of a spinning wheel although in some cultures

it is done much more simply.

Spinning wheels vary in size and complexity. Those used in Black Duck Brook were small and simple, having been made by carpenters of the community. Only two of my informants showed me their wheel, the others had lost or broken theirs. It is therefore difficult to ascertain the exact nature of each woman's wheel since their descriptions were unclear and disjointed:

"It's a wheel, dere was four, t'ree paws on dat to hol' it up an' dere was a piece wid a iron in't... put yer wool on yer spool...if I had it here I could show you." C2848

Of the two wheels I saw, one was what the informant called a Scotch wheel, obtained in Prince Edward Island, whose frame is square and which could be worked with less energy and attention. The other wheel was made by a man named Alec Jesso who died twenty-eight years ago. This wheel is the classic type although simplified since all parts were made by hand. It has four legs joined together with wood near the floor and nailed on to this wood is the pedal which one presses to turn the wheel. There is a long, solid piece of wood on top of the legs which slopes upward at the front. Joined to this piece of wood are two more pieces into which the wheel itself is secured. This wheel was made from a circular band of a large barrel. A piece of strong string is placed around this wheel which moves the spindle onto which the wool is spun. The spindle is attached to the large bar with two smaller sticks.



Photograph 10 Mrs. Regina Lecoure's spinning wheel, made over thirty years ago by Mr. Alec Jesso. Photograph taken in November, 1977.

The spinner sits beside the wheel and works the pedal with her feet which turns the wheel, which in turn causes the wool, which is attached to the spindle, to twist. The wool is held in the left hand and is pulled and twisted with the right hand. It is important to work smoothly and consistently so that the wool will be of an equal tension and width. When one carded roll is spun the spinner joins another roll onto the end and continues so that all the rolls are spun into one continuous thread. A piece of paper, usually brown wrapping paper, is wound around the spindle and the wool is spun onto that. Two of the balls of wool are then spun together on the wheel to form wool of double thickness, called two ply.

After the wool is spun together it is either rolled

into balls by hand or into skeins which women say they roll over the back of a straight-backed chair.

Not all of the wool is spun together, only that wool that comes from the animal's back which is about four or five inches in length. The wool which comes from the legs and the stomach of the sheep is much shorter, an inch in length, and is spun together to be used to make mats and rugs. It can be spun with the longer wool but informants say that wool spun of varying lengths is of a worse quality, more susceptible to wear and breakage.

### Knitting

A great number of garments were knitted by the women of Black Duck Brook including socks, mittens, caps, sweaters, dresses, skirts and long underwear.

Garments could be knitted by hand with needles or on a machine. These machines would be ordered from a catalogue and brought by boat. Not everybody could afford a knitting machine although it was the fastest method of knitting. If a woman owned a knitting machine, most garments would be made on it. This machine consists of a round cylinder about six inches in diameter at the top of which there are hooks and in the center of which are more hooks. The wool is attached to the hooks on top. These hooks are removed as one wishes to decrease, or added to increase. The center hooks are turned around by the means of a wheel whose teeth turn them. As the wheel turns the



Photograph 11 Mrs. Mathilde Bozec's Knitting machine. Photograph taken in November 1977

stitches are made. The wool is knitted in circles as long as desired. For garments such as sweaters and dresses the wool is cut and sewn together.

Knitting by hand is done with two or more needles of varying lengths and widths. Today these needles are made from plastic and aluminum but most of my informants remember needles made from iron and one remembers home-made needles.

"needles, eh, my late father used to make needles, there were barrels with circles all round and then we took that and cut it in pieces."

("des aiguilles, eh, c'est mon défunt père i' faisait

des aidguilles, i' avait des barils 'vec des cerc's tout l'tour et là je prenions ça pis i' coupiont par morceaux.") C2862

Large needles, called "skivvers" in both English and French, are used with firm wool to make big garments such as sweaters or skirts which are made with large stitches. Small needles are used with fine wool for garments such as baby clothes.

The most common garments knitted by hand were socks and mittens since each member of the family, especially the men, needed an abundant supply for logging and fishing during the cold weather. These were knitted with thick wool and as durable as possible since they were subject to such wear.

Women learned to knit at an early age and few of them ever followed a pattern. When they were taught to knit by their mother they also learned the number of stitches necessary for a certain size, as well as how to adjust the size by increasing or decreasing.

Women would often get together to perform several of the processes described in this chapter. These would be parties, "frolics" or "bees", when one woman of the community would invite others to visit her and all would work together. The work performed would be done for the hostess who was obliged to supply the wool used, since it was only their time and work that the women donated. Sometimes the women of the community would get together to work for a less fortunate family, and in this case each

woman would supply a certain amount of wool as well. The hostess would also supply refreshments which would be eaten around midnight, usually after more than five hours work. During the "frolic" women would talk, joke, tell stories and discuss community and family interests. No men would attend these parties and often "the men didn't have to hear" what was said.

Women would have this type of party for carding, in which case the party would be called "une carderie", they would have spinning parties called "une filerie" and knitting parties called "une brocherie".

M.F. "The spinning bees, you took your spinning wheel on your back down in Black Duck Brook and you went up to Winter Houses with the wheel on your back to the bee...And then there was a big dinner, it was like a picnic, a party, as you say. Oh yes, in winter, yes, or in the fall..."

E.S. "And it was only the women?"

M.F. "The, just the women."

E.S. "What did they talk about? Did they sing?"

M.F. "All sorts of things. Sometimes, but good jokes, oh some nice jokes. Oh, it was really interesting, you know. If there was a spinning bee and we weren't invited to go we'd find that hard."

(M.F. "Des fileries, tu prenais ton rouette su' ton dos dans bas d'L'Anse A Canards et tu montais en haut ici aux Maisons d'Hiver avec l'eroutte su' l' dos à la filerie...Pis là c'tait un grand souper pis c'tait comme un pique-nique, like a party comme t'appelles là. Oh oui, dans l'hiver ou dans l'automne..."

E.S. "Et c'était juste les femmes?"

M.F. "Les, juste des femmes."

E.S. "De quoi est-ce qu'elles parlaient? Est-ce qu'elles chantaient?"

M.F. "De toutes sortes. Des fois, mais les belles blagues, oh des belles parties d' blague que c'tait. Oh, c'tait vraiment intéressant, vous savez. S'i' avions une filerie et pis j'tions pas invitées pour aller ej trouvions ça dur.")



## Weaving

Weaving is an art known to the first women of Black Duck Brook, probably handed down to them from many generations. These women had small, roughly made looms and weaved only in plain stitch. As cloth became more readily available the art of weaving decreased until there was no one who weaved and few who remembered how to do it.

In 1939 a program was started by the Jubilee Guild Field Workers who went every year for several weeks to teach the women the art of weaving. For some women it was simply a revival of an old art whereas for others it was a new activity. They obtained new looms from St. John's or Nova Scotia and learned the methods and terminology from English women who were trained to teach others. Thus, the upsurge in the weaving was not a true tradition of that culture since it was re-introduced from others outside that culture and since, without their influence, weaving would probably not have increased.

Weaving was done with wool on an apparatus called a loom which varied considerably in size. One woman remembered her mother's loom as being eight feet by six feet which, for household purposes, may be considered large. There are no looms left now in the community and all women had great difficulty in describing the process.

Quite simply, wool is attached lengthwise onto the machine and other strands of wool are woven through and across these strands with a shuttle. Treadles are foot

pedals which are used to raise these lengthwise strands in order to permit the crosswise strands to be woven between them. The number of treadles used and the order in which they are pressed determine the eventual pattern of the material. Once the strand is woven into the lengthwise ones, they are "beaten" tightly together by the means of a large comb-like apparatus called a beater. This pushes the strands tightly together and makes the material tightly woven.

An accomplished weaver can use the treadles to create different patterns or use wool of different colours to create different patterns. It is said that years ago some women were able to weave plaids.

The art of weaving, which once provided many articles of clothing as well as blankets, has died out. Most women do not perform any craft which is not necessary. However, a recent interest among the young has sprung up in the area and weaving, as well as other crafts, is being taught at the Bay St. George Community College in Stephenville. Each year this College receives more applications than it can accept.

#### Household Articles

Years ago many of the articles found in the house were made at home. Some of these articles can still be found although few women still make them. The most common craft still performed today apart from knitting is crochet.

This is done with a roll of cotton or wool and a hook. The material is pulled through itself with the hook in a variety of patterns to create such things as table cloths, cushion covers, edging for pillow cases and doilies. The cotton is bought whereas the wool is usually spun at home. The crochet hook is always bought now but used to be fashioned with a nail which would be bent.

Women used to make all floor coverings, of which there were three basic types. The first requires a brin cloth, some old rags and a hook. The brin could be bought by the yard for twenty-five cents or sacks from potatoes, flour or sugar could be used. The old cloth or rags would be cut into pieces slightly longer than the piece of brin, which determined the size of the mat, and the width of the smallest finger. These strips would be woven through the brin with the use of the hook. This hook could be the same as a crochet hook or could be made with a piece of smooth wood into which was stuck a nail bent at the end. This type of rug is made by weaving the pieces of rag lengthwise into the brin with the hook. It is usually woven tightly and has no nap.

The second type of rug is also made from old cloth cut into strips. Three strips are braided together to form one length which is curled around itself and sewn together to hold it in place. The result is a circular or oval-shaped cloth mat.

The third type of mat is made from wool and brin. For this purpose the short, coarse wool from the sheep's stomach and legs is used. It is woven as is other wool and then pulled through the brin with a hook, as is done for the first type. When woven, this wool, woven loosely and secured to the brin, is cut to form a nap. Rugs made this way are commonly brown, obtained from moss dye, or beige, obtained from wool dyed brown and mixed with white wool.

One informant said that woolen rugs could also be made by cutting a garment already knitted. The cut wool would be curly and when woven into the brin would become fluffy.

#### Dress

The clothes that the people of the community of Black Duck Brook have worn have been characterized for years by their usefulness. There has never been much money to spend on extras and aside from the clothes that were considered essential, there was very little else. The women were ingenious at making clothes over to fit smaller people and at patching old clothes to get more wearing time.

This generality admits variation according to the amount of money that each family had and it seems that there is quite a discrepancy in the amount of clothing. For example, one woman told me that her family had only one outfit each whereas another woman explained various

fashions to me, all of which were current in larger centers at the time.

There was some attempt to keep abreast of current fashions which were transmitted to the people by mail order catalogues before the advent of television. They did not have the resources to buy new outfits each season that the style changed, but when acquiring something new they made an attempt to obtain what they considered to be in vogue. Generally, it seems that the basic styles, such as skirt lengths and trouser widths, were adhered to but variations and accessories were ignored.

Clothes were obtained by buying them or by making them at home. Those that were bought were purchased at a local store in Black Duck Brook or sent for from Eaton's in St. John's or Toronto. The local store in the community was a general store run by the company of Abbott and Haliburton. No one is sure when it first opened but they say that it has been closed for about twenty years. One could buy articles of clothing, cloth and sewing goods there. Clothing that was ordered was brought to the community by the coastal boat service, which stopped in the area once a week during the years 1920 to 1967.

Each spring several travelling salesmen would stop by to sell clothing that they had purchased in Halifax or St. John's. It is said that these salesmen were foreigners, and one woman said that some were from Syria.

There was a distinct difference between what people

wore during the week and what they wore on Sundays and, of course, the difference that the change of season brought. These changes shall be considered in discussing children's, men's and women's clothing. Clothes that were worn for occasions such as funerals and weddings shall be discussed under the chapter headed Custom.

Apparel here concerns the last thirty years. There was little information to be gathered about an earlier time although one woman remembered her aunt dressed in long skirts with high collars. The most striking change that has occurred since then is in the amount of clothing each person possesses. It was not uncommon to hear informants speak of when the women owned one or two skirts and the men one or two pairs of trousers. Since confederation in 1949 more money has been put into the community and people can afford to have more. Nevertheless, even today they possess much less than the amount of clothing a North American urban dweller considers necessary. Another great change is the amount of contemporary clothing that is bought. Years ago all clothing, from underwear to overcoats, was made at home whereas today little is made.

### Children's Clothing

While she was pregnant, a woman worked at preparing clothes and diapers for her expected child. This task was made easier if the child was not her first for in such cases she needed only to make the necessary repairs and

to wash the clothes. When a woman expected her first baby she made everything herself that she could not get from friends or relatives who had no more use for the garments.

Babies' clothes were usually made from white flannelette but dresses, shirts and diapers were also made from the material of flour and sugar sacks if flannelette was scarce. These sacks would be bleached and washed until they were soft enough for use.

"Oh yes, it was all ready before the baby was born. They sewed themselves, they made diapers and dresses and shirts, it was all make with flannelette, white flannelette."

("Oh oui, c'tait tout fait avant qu' le bébé 'tait éné. I' coudiont ça ieusses-mêmes, i'faisiont les, les drapeaux et les robes et les chemises, c'tait tout fait avec la flannelette, la flannelette blanche.") C2849

Infants clothes were the traditional blue for boys and pink for girls. As they grew, other bright or pastel shades were used when possible. Infants were dressed in little shifts or dresses until they began to walk, at which time the boys wore pants and the girls remained in dresses. Boys wore shirts, sweaters and pants, short ones were worn in the summer until the boy reached the age of eleven or twelve. (One informant cited the age of fifteen or sixteen.) Girls wore skirts with blouses or sweaters or worn-out dresses, the good dress being kept for Sunday. Boys, too, would have a special pair of trousers for Sunday.

Boys' hair was cut while they were still quite small and was kept short until recently although even today there is no male in the community with hair that reaches to the shoulders. Girls' hair was usually left to grow until the girl was old enough to choose a style she wanted. While young, girls wore their hair in ringlets or braids.

Children frequently went barefoot and several informants have attested that the first shoes they had were obtained when they were adolescents. In winter they would wear very heavy woolen socks or boots made from animal hide to keep their feet warm and dry. Adults also wore skin shoes which were made by the men years ago.

"They made, the men used skin shoes, they killed their animal...They dyed the skin, they went collecting bark and they had a way to fix it in the tub, in the big tub then they put the skin in. They dyed it. Then after it was hung on the barn where it dried. And then they fashioned it... after it was dry they formed the shoes in it. They sewed them and put legs on it like a boot, eh? It came up to the knee."

("I' faisioint, les hommes usioint des souliers de peau, i' tusioint leur, leur pièce de bête. I' tandioint la peau, i' allioint qu'ri l'écorce de bouleau et il avioint une façon à arranger ça dans l'boey, dans l' grand boey pis mettioint la peau dedans. I' la tandioint. Et après alle a 'té pendu su' la grange, ailloû-c-qu' alle shessait. Et pis l'arrangioint bien, c'est comme ça de bien... après qu'a' 'té shessé i' taillioint les souliers de d'dans. I' les coudioint pis i' mettioint des hoses qu'il appelloint ça su' l'une jambe d'ssus, un leg, long, ce qu'est un boot, eh? Qui montoit jusqu'en haut du genou là.") C2850

These boots were made completely of leather and sewn together with leather strips. Men wore them during all seasons but children only wore them in winter.





Photograph 12 Sheep hides hanging to dry.  
Photograph taken in May 1977

Some children went without feet covering in all kinds of weather.

"Oh yes, if we had a pair of shoes we had to keep them for Sunday, there was no way you could wear shoes during the week...Oh well, I was often bare-foot. We went to school...in the mud and in the water, our feet all cut with the mud and in the evening they bled...Maman would burn cream, she took some cream from the separator then she boiled it on the stove and she rubbed our feet with it."

("Dame, si j'avions une paire d'souliers fallait garder pour dimanche, i' avait pas moyen d'porter des souliers dans la semaine...Oh ben, j' 'tait en masse nu-pied, moi. J'allions à l'école...pis là c'tait dans la vase pis dans l'eau les pieds tout cassés 'vec la vase, le souère ça, ça saignait... Maman brûlait d'la crème, a' prenait d'la crème de séparateur là pis a bouillait ça su' l' poêle pis là nous frottais nos pieds avec ça.") C2855

Winter garments consisted of home-made woolen mittens, woolen caps and a heavy coat. Coats for people of all ages could be cut and sewn from worn blankets.

## Men's Clothing

Men's clothing consisted basically of three types: those worn while working, those worn during the week when not working and the best clothes kept for Sunday.

Since most men worked at the fishing industry, working clothes were old, usually woolen for warmth. Long woolen knitted underwear could be worn under them during the cold weather. These clothes were covered with oil skins, plastic pants and jackets which are worn over pants and sweaters, much as are used today. Before these commercial oil skins became available or before they could afford to buy them, clothes for fishing were made from flour sacks and treated with oil to make them water-repellent.

"Oh yeah, clothes like today, I think, they had waxed clothes that they put over, eh? There were, there were lots who made their, their coat and their trousers with flour sacks and then, I don't remember too well, but they made them themselves and they put a sort of oil on them which stopped them from leaking."

("Oh bien, des vêtements comme aujourd'hui, j' crois bien, il avioent des hardes cirés pasqu'i' usioent par-d'ssus, eh? I' en avait, i' en avait joliment qui faisoent leur, leur, leur pal--, leur palétot et leur pantalon de, avec des sacs à farine et puis, pas me rappeler beaucoup bien mais i' les faisoent ieusses-mêmes et i' mettioent une sorte de l'huile d'ssus qui ah, les empêchait de couler, eh?") C2850

High rubber boots were also used for fishing since it was important that the man was kept as warm and dry as possible, being subjected to cold, rain, wind and spray.

Before rubber boots were available the men wore skin shoes treated with oil. They also wore woolen caps and white mittens knitted especially for the fishery, with double ply wool to make them durable and warm.

Clothes worn during the week consisted of shirts or sweaters and trousers. There was a slight variation in the style of trousers worn, from very wide to very narrow as the styles changed. Suspenders were commonly worn with pants, belts being less common although some men wore both at the same time. Shirts were usually sewn from cotton as were trousers. There was a period when these garments were sewn from home-made cloth.

If a man possessed a suit it would be kept for Sunday and worn with a clean white shirt and tie. The Sunday suit was also worn for courting on Saturday nights. Men commonly wore dark colours such as navy blue, brown or black. Hats that were in style were worn aside from the practical woolen caps, and felt hats were common for a long time.

### Women's Clothing

Unlike the men who had different clothes for working, women's working clothes were and still are their everyday clothes. The wearing of slacks by women was introduced about twenty years ago but was not fully accepted until quite recently. Today one seldom sees a woman in a dress for she feels that slacks are much more practical and comfortable. One woman told me that it had been more than a year since she had worn a dress.

Before slacks women wore skirts and dresses of cotton in summer and of wool in winter, often woven at home.

Length varied according to the style of the times, from down to the floor at the beginning of the century to the mini-skirts of the sixties. Today the length is around the knee. Various sorts of blouses were worn with the skirts, mostly plain and some made from sack-cloth.

Much of the woman's wear was made at home: dresses, blouses, skirts and underclothes were sewn either by hand or by machine if one was available. Knitted skirts and dresses were also common.

All of my informants said that they wore shoes but descriptions vary considerably. In earlier days they, too, wore skin shoes. Later, bought shoes that were worn were characterized by their durability and practicality. Informants mention sturdy laced shoes but also high-heeled ones for special occasions.

Stockings were worn by women and were usually woolen, especially in winter, but silk stockings were also mentioned although these were reserved for special occasions as well.

The Sunday outfit of women consisted of their best dress, stockings, and shoes. Hats were worn since they were required during Mass and again, styles vary according to the style of the day. Straw hats and hats with ribbons and feathers were mentioned.

Women's wear of every decade is characterized by its simplicity. Women had neither the time nor the money to

waste on jewellery or adornments. Many women said their only piece of jewellery was their wedding band, in the past fashioned from a coin of money. There were several men in the community who could make wedding bands but none of my informants could remember the process by which it was done. Engagement rings were unknown until recently.

"But not much, oh, it wasn't very often you would see someone with jewellery."

("Mais pas beaucoup, eh, c'tait pas souvent qu' tu les voyais avec des bijoux.") C2849

Neither did women wear make-up, which was considered not only unnecessary but frivolous. If it was worn, it was restricted to powder, rouge and sometimes lipstick. There was little evidence of any kind of cosmetic being made at home from natural products although one man told me that women would sometimes rub fresh beets on their cheeks for rouge. He added that many people laughed at women who did this,

Women did not start to cut their hair until recently. It was traditional to let the hair grow long and pin it at the back of the head in a chignon, on top of the head with combs or wrapped around the head in braids.

### Sewing

Before sewing machines, women did all their sewing by hand with needles and thread bought at the local store. The first machines were brought to the community in the early 1920's and were manufactured by Singer. They worked



Photograph 13 Mrs. Regina Lecoure's sewing machine, bought about 1922. Photograph taken in November 1977

by the means of a foot pedal and several women still own this type.

There was no specific time of the year when sewing was done, but most often during the idle seasons. Sewing, as well as other crafts, was done in the evening in the kitchen.

Some women in the community were recognized as accomplished seamstresses and others would sometimes pay them to make certain garments, such as suits or wedding dresses. This is still done, and two women, Mary Felix and Margaret Huon, are often called upon to make dresses and suits.

Most women sewed as they knitted, without any commercial patterns. They themselves would cut out a pattern on a piece of paper or directly on the material. One woman boasts that she can copy any dress without any instructions or pattern.

Sewing was learned at a very early age and most women say that as children they sewed little outfits for their dolls with scraps of material left over from their mother's work.

The preceding three chapters describe the large part of the woman's work in the home. In her own mind, however, her most important function was often the bearing of children and this topic is discussed in the following chapter.

## Pregnancy and Childbirth

Until several years ago and, to a certain extent, up to the present, French Newfoundland families in the Port-Au-Port area, including those of Black Duck Brook, were comprised of an average of ten children. There are several families in the area with fewer and some with a greater number.

Due to these large families, women spent a large portion of their adult life in various stages of pregnancy and looking after infants and children. Despite the fact that this state and the activities which are associated with it are common-place, the recurring theme with women of that culture and generation is that sex, pregnancy and childbirth were secret. There was a definite taboo which governed this area of human life, a taboo which is gradually changing.

One might expect that people in a culture where pregnancy is frequent would treat the state with some degree of nonchalance. In the past this was not the case but women who were not permitted or encouraged to discuss the subject while young will now do so, although perhaps with some degree of embarrassment.

Information in this chapter comes from five women who I had interviewed for several hours before broaching this subject. In those cases the subject was introduced gradually in connection with a similar topic and the women responded quite confidently.



One informant is an English woman of eighty-six years of age who acted as a midwife for many years in the vicinity of Lourdes, the larger community about six miles from Black Duck Brook. She is called by some people "the mother of Lourdes" and claims to have delivered nine hundred and sixty-three children, which was not uncommon. She now lives in a small shack on the outskirts of Lourdes and although she is willing to talk she only speaks sensibly for short periods, her mind often wandering to irrelevant topics.

This chapter discusses the broad area of pregnancy and childbirth in the chronological order of the process, that is, before pregnancy, during pregnancy, the birth itself and practices after birth. Each of the four divisions will include, where applicable, beliefs and changes that have occurred over the years.

#### Before Pregnancy

This section deals with the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next and with what children were told concerning pregnancy and birth. It discusses the acts that young girls performed as predictions and deals as well with the subjects of contraception and sterility.

Consistent with the taboos already mentioned, children and young girls were told nothing whatsoever about the process of sex, pregnancy and childbirth. When a woman gave birth all children were sent to a relative or friend,

where they stayed until the birth and post-natal procedures were completed. On their return they saw the new baby but never dared to ask where it had come from. Those who were too young to observe this silence were given explanatory stories to satisfy their curiosity. The most common story was that Santa Claus brought the children, an explanation used in any season of the year. They were also told that babies were found beside rocks or in the garden.

As they grew into adolescents, some young girls learned nothing more since no information was offered to them and they themselves dared not ask.

"It seemed that we couldn't ask her anything, eh? Because she was, she was strict, eh, oh yes, yes, she was strict."

("Ça paraissait qu'ej pouvions pas y demander arien, eh? Parce qu'alle 'tait, alle 'tait stric', eh, oh oui, oui, a' 'tait stric'.") C2852

How these women finally did learn is still confusing since they tend to reply "I learned by myself" ("J'ai tout 'ppris pour moi-même" C2852). The subject was so secret that one woman tells that she knew nothing about it until after she was married.

E.S. "But how could a girl know things like that? Did their mother tell them?"

E.Y. "My gosh, not, not, not in my time."

E.S. "No?"

E.Y. "No, not in my time, my mother didn't tell me nothing about that. I learned it all by myself, eh?"

E.S. "Yes."

E.Y. "And me, it's only since I was married that I knew, eh?"

E.S. "After?"

E.Y. "Yes."

E.S. "Yes?"

E.Y. "Only when I was married I knew, I knew nothing before."

(E.S. "Mais comment est-ce que...une fille a pu saouère des choses comme ça? Est-ce que leur mère leur a dit?"

E.Y. "My gosh, pas, pas, pas dans mon temps."

E.S. "Non?"

E.Y. "Non, dans mon temps ma mère m'a pas arien dit d'ça. J'ai tout 'ppris pour moi-même, eh?"

E.S. "Oui."

E.Y. "Pis moi, c'est ienque depis (inaudible) mariée, ben, j'ai su, eh?"

E.S. "Après?"

E.Y. "Oui."

E.S. "Oui?"

E.Y. "Seul quand qu'ej 'tait mariée j'ai su, j'ai pas arien su avant.") c2852

Another woman says that although her mother told her nothing concrete, she did warn the girls in a subtle way.

"our parents told us without, like I say, without really telling us what it was but they told us and prepared us to be careful without, you know? Without, without needing to tell us and we knew, but they said "It's not right to sit on a boy's lap, it's not right to get too close to a boy, to let yourself get too close." They didn't tell us why but they taught us that, you know?"

("nos parents nous disaient sans, comme je vous dis, sans nous dire vraiment l'histoire quoi-c-qu'i' 'tait la vie mais i' nous disient et nous préparient pour d'faire attention nous aut'es mêmes sans, vous savez? Sans, sans aouère besoin d'nous dire pis ej savions mais il avont dit "Ben, c'est pas bien ça, assire su' les genoux d'un garçon, de, de quitter de s'mett' trop proche. I' nous disaient pas pourquoi mais i' nous apprenient ça que, vous savez?") C2853

Some women mentioned that they learned about sex and pregnancy at about fifteen years of age from an elder sister. It also appears that young men were no better informed than the women.

"I had big brothers, men, and they didn't know nothing."

"J'avais des grands, des frères, des hommes, eh pis i' saviot pas arien.") C2852

Today, as in the past, girls and women of Black Duck Brook have no chance for work or a career of any kind unless they move to larger centers. Female children are taught their role while very young and as early as the age of ten all my informants were performing many different household chores.

Since the only future to which these women could aspire was that of wife, housekeeper and mother, they were interested in discovering as many details as possible about this future and often turned to acts of divination for this information.

There is no evidence that these acts are still performed since today they are considered nonsense or "des foll'ries". The degree of belief in them during the time that my informants were young is also questionable: it is doubtful that they believed whole-heartedly and more likely that belief was partial. The girls may have chosen to believe those divinations whose outcomes were favourable and to scoff at those which failed to please them.

In general, women did not speak to me about such things which can be broadly categorized as belief. They much preferred to tell "the truth" and I often got the impression that they did not understand why I wanted to know nonsense, which was indeed difficult to explain.

The following beliefs were all given to me by one

woman who remembered them only after I assured her that I wanted to hear them, and she showed some degree of embarrassment by laughing nervously during the conversation.

A girl can predict the man that she will marry by placing two stalks of clover side by side in a field where no one knows of their whereabouts. The next morning, if the stalks are crossed one over the other, the man that the girl had been thinking about will become her husband. If the stalks remain uncrossed she will never marry the man.

("I' prenaient deux tref'es, des tref'es dans l' champ...et tu les mettais iun côte d'l'aut' et pis le lendemain matin, t'allais ouère quand tu t'es levé dans l'place ailloû-c-que parsonne savait que c'tait pis si les deux tref'es 'tient croisés, t'avais ton homme mais s'i' 'tient virés iun cont' l'aut', ben, moi, j'asseyé ça moi...pour un garçon, eh, quand qu'ej 'tais fille et les deux tref'es s'avont croisés mais je l'ai pas marié. (laughs)")  
C2853

Another method of predicting a husband is by placing a mirror under the pillow of a girl without her knowledge. The man about whom she dreams will become her husband.

("En-d'ssous d'la tête, prends un miroir, un p'tit miroir, l' mett' en-d'ssous q'la tête et tu rêveras à çui-lâ, non, ça pas l'miroir qui faulait tchiqu'un mettait sans qu' tu le savais...Et à le, à le jeune que t'avais rêvé, c'est çui-lâ t'aras marié.") C2853

A third method of predicting a husband is to eat cakes of salt before retiring. These cakes were made of flour and water with a large quantity of salt which caused such a thirst that the sleeping girl awoke. The man about whom she had been dreaming before she awoke would become her

husband. It is also mentioned that the girl may dream that a man brings her a glass of water but it is not clear in the explanation whether or not this is necessary to make the prediction valid.

("Tu mettais d'la pâte, d'la farine et de l'eau pis tu mettais du sel, une tapée d'sel, t'êt' vraiment salé pour t'donner la soif. (laughs) Tu mangeais ça, va aller t'coucher pis la nuit bien sûr la soif ça t'reveillais mais t'as rêvé à là, tu pouvais rêver si t'aras 'té riche ou pauv', eh? Pis c'tait beau sa-- 'té beau d' saouère ça dans ces temps-là... moi, j'asseyé une soirée aussi mais j'ai pas rêvé, j'avais trop soif, m'a reveillé trop vite. Mais i' rêviont qu'i' ah, um, comme un jeune qui (inaudible). Il ariont v'nir porter à bouère dans l'quart ou dans l'chopine, eh? (laughs)") C2853

This method of divination is found in other areas of Canada such as Acadia in New Brunswick.<sup>51</sup>

A last method of predicting one's future husband is to obtain a piece of wedding cake. The piece of cake is passed through the ring of the bride and when placed under the pillow of a young girl the man about whom she dreams is destined to become her husband. This custom is still practised at weddings but there is no indication as to when it was first introduced into the culture.

My informant told me two methods for predicting the number of children a woman will have. For the first method, a girl or woman must raise her eyebrows in such a way that wrinkles are produced in the forehead. The

<sup>51</sup> Pierre Des Ruisseaux, Croyances et Pratiques Populaires Au Canada Français, (Montréal: Editions du Jour) 1973, p. 61 and p. 109

number of wrinkles which appear indicate the number of children the woman will bear.

The second method is more complicated and requires the wedding band of a married woman and a hair which is taken from the head of the girl who wishes to know the number of children she will have. The hair is tied to the ring which is then held over, but just inside, a glass half-filled with water. The number of times that the ring taps the glass without any intentional movement of the hair indicates the number of future children.

The large number of children born to couples in this culture can be attributed to the fact that all franco-phones of this area have always been Roman Catholics and all followed explicitly the teachings of the Church. Today they adhere less strictly to the rules of the Church. Many of the younger generation do not attend Mass and birth control has become more accepted among younger women. Yet even today it is often a woman's goal to have a baby as soon as "decently" possible after marriage. There are two young women in the community who have married recently. One of them has a baby born several months ago and this woman claims that the other is jealous of her because she has not yet become pregnant. Indeed, it is known throughout the community that the childless woman is very upset, the evidence of which I witnessed.

There is no evidence that contraception of any kind was used, except perhaps a form of the "rhythm" method,

although it is debatable whether or not the women were knowledgeable enough to use this effectively. Women say that they knew of no ways to prevent pregnancy, including "home" recipes or methods. Indeed, if manufactured products had been permitted they would not have been available to the women of that area since the nearest drugstore even today is in Stephenville, a distance of some fifty miles. When asked if she knew of means of preventing pregnancy, one woman replied:

"No, there was no way, there was, no, no, no, you had to take what you got and that was that."

("Non, i' avait pas de moyen, i' avait, non, non, non, fallait l' prend quoi-c-qu' t'as 'trappé pis c'tait ça.") C2852

Women's feelings toward the bearing and raising of children are largely influenced by the Church and are thus attitudes of acceptance and resignation of an inescapable duty. One woman explains this:

"If you get married, you get married to have a family, eh? Oh, but if the good Lord doesn't want you to have any that's different but if you can have children, you can't get married and not have any, you know? The family comes with the marriage well, all parents and children know that by the priests who tell them, eh? Well, they knew that when we went to get married well, that was that. You're married, your family comes with your trouble, the rest of your troubles."

("Si vous vous mariez, vous vous mariez pour aouère la famille, eh? Oh, mais donc qu' le bon Dieu voulait pas qu' vous en aviez bien ça c'est différent mais si vous pouvez aouère des enfants, vous pouviez pas vous marier pis pas n'en aouère, vous savez? La famille v'ati avec le mariage, ben, le, tous les, les parents et les enfants saviont ça par, vous savez, par les prêt'es de dire, eux dire, eh? Ah bien, 'tiont, i' saviont tout quand j'allions nous marier ben j' savions qu' c'tait, c'tait ça.")



T'es mariéé, ta famille v'nait avec ta misère, l' restant d' ta misère.") C2853

Not every couple was able to have children, but cases of sterility were not common. Only one of my informants knew of any cause preventing conception but most stated that it could be caused by either the man or the woman. The one woman who said that she knew of a remedy that might cure sterility said that Dodd's Kidney Pills could be used when a woman had pains in her back or kidneys that prevented her from becoming pregnant.

Cases were mentioned to me where couples who did not have children of their own adopted them from other families. This practice was known even among couples with their own children. They were most often adopted by relatives, usually aunts or uncles. The adoptions involved only the child living with a different family and never a process of legalization.

### Pregnancy

This section, dealing with the actual term of pregnancy, can be divided into two smaller sections, each with several sub-sections. The first deals with the practical aspects of a pregnant woman's life: her duties, her clothing and the medical care she received. The second section can be classified as beliefs relevant to the pregnant woman: cravings, motions to avoid and methods of predicting the sex and day of birth of the child.

As established, the state of pregnancy was a common

one for most women and it is not surprising to learn that the duties a pregnant woman was expected to perform differ in no way from those she did when not pregnant. The reason for this is partly practical since her duties were so numerous and time-consuming that there was no one else to perform them, and partly shaped by attitude. These women portray a remarkable acceptance of their lot in life. They see the duties they must perform and they do them because they must be done. In the past, these duties determined, if not the survival of the family members, at least their comfort.

An attitude explained to me by one woman which is probably widespread in the community is that it is harmless for the woman to work during pregnancy and is, in fact, good for both her and her unborn child.

"she worked a lot for her own good...if you stay sitting for too long, you don't do yourself any good"

("ielle travaillait beaucoup pour son bien à ielle-même...si tu restais d'assis trop longtemps, tu t'faisais pas d'bien") C2853

Another woman told me that she worked harder while pregnant because she felt stronger.

"when you're pregnant like that, it seems that you have more strength, that you can do anything, you have more courage"

("quand t'es en famille comme ça, ça paraît t'as plus de force et pis tu peux faire n'importe quoi, t'as du courage") C2852

A woman performed her regular duties without any special consideration or help until she went into labour.

Every woman with whom I spoke expressed the feeling that woman should not make a fuss about their state until they go into labour and one woman told me the following story:

"I saw one down here, a woman who lived here, she was in the middle of mixing her bread on the table and her man had to leave to get the midwife and by the time the midwife came she had her bread made and she was in bed and a half hour later the baby was born."

("Moi, j'en ai vu iune en bas ici, une femme qui reastaît ici, i' est en train d' boulangier son pain su' la tab' et son homme obligé d' quitter à, à charcher la chasse-femme et par l'temps qu' la chasse-femme arrivait alle avait son pain fait, ben, alle 'tait dans l' lit pis une demi-heure après bébé 'té, 'té éné.") C2852

This attitude is not unique to this area of Newfoundland, for in days past most women, regardless of where they lived, were obliged to work long, hard hours.<sup>52</sup>

For the last ten years the majority of women go to the hospital in Stephenville to give birth and regularly see a doctor during their pregnancy. Before this there was no nurse or doctor with whom one could consult.

Consequently, women received no medical care except for the midwife's kindly but usually ignorant counsel. The midwife would see the woman only once or twice during pregnancy and if problems were anticipated efforts were made to contact the nearest doctor.

During pregnancy a woman had no special clothes available to her. When she became too large for her ordinary

<sup>52</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 73-74

dresses she would fashion a large smock from a piece of material. These were often made from flour or sugar sacks and a woman did not expect more than this.

"No, you had to make them, eh? Yes, you had to make your clothes but, but if you had a piece, you'd only have a piece, eh? On top and then when it got dirty, well, you washed it in the evening and you dried it on the line (inaudible) the stove then the next day you put it on again."

("Non, fallait tu n'en faisais, eh? Oui, fallait tu faisais tes hardes mais dame, si t'avais un morceau, tout-c t'avais un morceau, eh? Par-d'ssus et pis là quand qu'i' v'nait tout sale ben tu l'lavais le souère pis tu chassais su' la ligne (inaudible) au poêle là, le, le le lendemain matin tu l' mettais encore.") C2852

There are not a great many beliefs concerning pregnancy and childbirth in this culture. It is possible that many of them have died out since women became more knowledgeable. Those which remain, however, are firmly believed.

The most firmly held belief concerns cravings, referred to as "des envies", which pregnant women have for certain foods. Evidence of this kind of craving for food is found elsewhere in Newfoundland.<sup>53</sup> Foods mentioned are jam, strawberries, chocolate, fresh meat, lobster and starch such as is found in uncooked flour. According to this belief, a woman may eat anything she desires while pregnant and the substance will not harm her, even though

<sup>53</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 60-62

it might if she were not pregnant. On the other hand, it is also believed that if a pregnant woman who craves a certain food is unable to obtain it, she will leave a mark resembling that food on her child's body if she touches her own body while craving the food. The mark left on the child's body is often in the corresponding place of her own body. The mark can be seen on the baby at birth and remains with him for varying lengths of time and often for the duration of his life.

I heard several stories from my informants of this phenomenon, once with a strawberry mark on the neck, which is said to turn redder in the summer, once with the shape of a lobster on the knee and the most detailed story concerning a craving for chocolate:

"There was a woman who, she had been to the store and she saw some, some candies, some chocolates. And she wanted to eat some so much but she didn't have the money to have them because in those times it was really poor, that was well before my time. And then, when she looked at the chocolate there she put her hand on her face. She wanted them so much, eh? And when her baby was born, he had all his side, his face all brown, like a chocolate, colour of chocolate... and it stayed there a long time."

("I' avait une femme qui, alle avait 'té au magasin pis alle a vu des, des bonbons, des chocolats. Pis alle avait si bien voulu n'en manger, mais alle avait pas l'argent pour l'aouère parce dans ces temps-là c'tait pauv', ça c'est bien avant mon temps. Et puis, quand qu'alle ergardait chocolat là a' mis sa main su' sa fidgure. Pis alle, a' désirait tant, eh? Et quand son bébé 'té éné il avait tout sa côte, sa fidgure tout brown, pareil comme l' chocolat, couleur du chocolat...pis ça y restait pour longtemps." C2853

The belief in marks left by cravings is still strong for one young woman. While I was discussing the subject

with her mother, the daughter showed me a mark on her four year-old child's leg which she said was the shape of a rabbit. She felt that this was caused because she had had an unsatisfied craving for rabbit while carrying the child.

Another informant scoffed at the belief of unsatisfied cravings causing birthmarks but she tells that her daughter was born with a red birthmark on her lip. This mark faded only when the mother obtained a holy medal blessed by the priest with which he told her to cross the child's lip every day.

There are certain motions that the pregnant woman must avoid for the health of her unborn child. The most common movement is raising her arms above her head such as would be done for hanging clothes on a line or wall-papering. She must not stoop under anything such as a fence. These two motions were mentioned in particular but one informant said that the woman should not force herself to do anything too strenuous. Her reason was:

"We had to be careful of all those things because there was no doctor if anything was wrong."

("Etions obligées d' faire attention toutes ces affaires-là parce qu' i' avait pas d' docteur si d'quoi était mal.") C2853

There are two different reasons why these motions are harmful. Some say it is because the umbilical cord will pass around an arm or the neck of the infant, possibly strangling him. Another informant stated a different reason:

"It didn't mean that they would lose (the baby) but it meant that could have caused the baby wouldn't have been, it could be badly placed or it could stop, something could have happened, you know."

("Ça voulait pas dire qu'il ariont perdu mais ça voulait dire que ça arait pu causer qu' l' bébé arait pas 'té, ç' ara pu s' mal placer, ou qu'il arrête, tcheque chose qu' arait pu v'nir, savez.")  
C2853

These forbidden actions are not unique to this region and culture, for they are found in other areas of Newfoundland and French Canada.<sup>54</sup>

While a woman is pregnant there are usually two questions foremost in her mind. They concern the sex of the unborn baby and the exact day of birth.

There was only one method known of predicting a baby's sex. One informant said that when a woman had pains during her pregnancy, the child would be a boy if those pains were centered in the back. She does state that she herself does not believe this:

E.S. "Is it possible to predict the sex of the baby?"  
M.F. "Um...not, not really, oh well, they would say if you had your pains in your back that would be, well often, that was going to be a boy."

E.S. "Est-ce que c'est possible de prévenir le sexe du bébé?"  
M.F. "Um...pas, pas vraiment, oh bien i' ariont dit si t'avais tes douleurs dans l'dos ça arait 'té bien souvent ça va êt' un garçon.") C2853

Some other methods of predicting the sex of a baby are

54 Hilda Murray, p. 59

Pierre Des Ruisseaux, p. 115

found elsewhere in Newfoundland but are unknown in Black Duck Brook.<sup>55</sup>

Informants usually had their own ways of predicting the birth date. One woman said that the birth would take place four months, and usually exactly four months to the day, from the first time that the woman feels movement of the baby in her womb. Another woman said that nine months plus five days from the day of conception:

"...you count your days from the day that you got it, if it was the fifth or the third, eh? Then when you come to the nine months on the third you count five days after and that's it...It's always that, five days. I marked it for five or six of them and it was just that."

("...tu comptes tes jours que la jour t'ai attrapé là, si c'tait le cinq ou le trois, eh? Pis quand t'arrive les neufs mois su' le trois, là tu comptes cinq jours après pis c'est ça...C'est toujours ça, cinq jours. Moi, j'ai fait marqué si par oh, cinq ou six d'ieusses que c'tait jus' ça.") C2852

### The Birth

When a woman went into labour the midwife was sent for and remained with the woman until the process was completed and both mother and baby were resting comfortably, usually overnight.

At this time all children in the home were sent for the duration of the process to the house of a near-by friend or relative. The husband was permitted to stay but not to enter the room used for delivery. An elder female

<sup>55</sup> Hilda Murray, p. 67



relative, usually the mother or a sister, could assist the midwife but never a woman who had never herself given birth.

None of the midwives had had any kind of medical training and all of them acquired their knowledge through the process of transmission. The same lack of education and the same difficulties in having only midwives upon whom one could rely are noted in English Newfoundland by Mrs. Murray.<sup>56</sup>

The midwife with whom I spoke said that she was first asked to go during an emergency with another inexperienced woman since the regular midwife was attending another birth. She assisted at that birth and then at a few more with the midwife and then became known as a midwife herself. Most midwives were middle-aged, having already raised a family of their own.

How much equipment was used varied greatly. One informant said that the midwife brought only scissors and thread, another said that she brought nothing but told the woman to have rubber gloves, towels, hot water, scissors and thread. The rubber gloves were used for handling the baby before and immediately after birth although some informants said that the midwife used her bare hands which, according to one woman, were dirty and covered with rings.

<sup>56</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 70-73

The scissors were used to cut the umbilical cord and the thread to tie the cord about an inch from the baby's body.

The midwife was paid, according to one woman, fifteen dollars. Another informant, whose mother had been a midwife, said that her mother was paid five dollars and later ten, although often the people could not afford to pay anything.

The master bedroom or the bedroom where the mother slept was the room used for delivery. There was no evidence that the room itself was prepared in any special way for the birth, although the bed was. A plastic or rubber sheet was placed over the mattress and an old sheet or blanket placed over that. Some women burned this sheet or blanket after and others said that they washed it out and saved it for the next birth.

In cases where the baby was not in the right position, that is, the head emerging first, the midwife would insert her hand into the woman's womb to try to straighten the baby into a position facilitating birth.

"You had ta turn de baby. Now dere's sometimes de baby was comin' foot first, but a half now well dere's de ot'er foot ya couldn't find, ya had to find. But now ya always had yer water, yer hot water an' everyt'ing have your hands as soft as you could an' whenever she take a pain now see, well, dat's de only chance ya had to go an' work a little at it because clear a' dat she'd never be able to stand it." C2868

There were some births which the midwife was not knowledgeable enough to handle alone, in which case the doctor would be sent for. He was usually so far away that by the time he arrived the situation had either righted

itself or it was too late to help. Nevertheless, all women insisted that there were very few problem births.

There is no evidence of beliefs concerning irregular births. When asked if there was anything significant about twins, babies born with cauls, those born feet first or born with deformities, none of my informants responded affirmatively. From their verbal and facial expressions I could tell that the women thought it strange that I should even expect to hear of such things.

In cases of a woman being overdue, there was nothing done except waiting because most of them did not believe in tampering with nature. Babies born prematurely were usually sent to the hospital in Stephenville although before that time they were kept at home and treated with special care. It was mentioned that one premature baby was kept wrapped in lamb's wool in a shoe box under the stove for four months until it was healthy enough to be treated as a normal infant.

#### After the Birth

A woman was expected to resume her duties soon after giving birth. Some said that they had stayed in bed for three days, whereas others stated that their period of recuperation was nine days. During those days, however many they may be, the midwife came every day to wash the baby until the woman resumed her duties. One woman was very particular about the length of time a woman should spend in bed. She said that for eight days the woman

remained in bed but was permitted to sit up and to move around but the ninth day the woman had to stay in bed all day as quietly as possible for that was the day that all her bones went back into place. The next day she was permitted to get up for a while after which she resumed her work gradually so as not to tire herself.

In another area of Newfoundland there is a custom known as "Up-Sitting Day" on which the woman celebrates her recovery.<sup>57</sup> There is nothing similar to this in Black Duck Brook.

The baptism of the child, which takes place at varying lengths of time after its birth, will be discussed in the chapter pertaining to custom.

Since children were no rarity for many families, the infant was not treated with any special consideration after the novelty of his birth had diminished. What had to be done for his well-being was done but there was neither the time nor the money to waste on treating him lavishly.

Babies were breast-fed until recently. Women believe this method to be healthier and one woman explained that she feels it unites the mother and child more closely.

E.S. "Is it better?" (breast-feeding)

E.Y. "I believe so. I believe that the children... are more Catholic, you could say. It doesn't seem the same to me, eh? Because, you know, if you were, if you have a child and he's raised on your milk, he's the same as you, eh? But if he's raised on other kinds of milk, he's not like you."

<sup>57</sup> Hilda Murray, p. 92

(E.S. "Est-ce que c'est meilleur?"  
 E.Y. "J'crois que oui. Ej crois que les enfants...  
 sont p'us catholiques on dirait. Ça me paraît  
 pas pareil à moi, eh? Parce tu sais, si 'té  
 si t'as un enfant ben pis i' est élevé su' ton  
 lait, eh, il est pareil comme toi, eh? Mais  
 s'il est 'levé su' d'aut'es sortes de lait, là  
 il est pas pareil comme toi.") C2852

Informants nursed their babies for varying lengths of time. One woman's children were weaned at six or seven months whereas another woman fed hers until thirteen months. This may be considered quite late as some women in Newfoundland weaned their children as early as two or three months.<sup>58</sup> When their babies were weaned, all women gave them the same food as the rest of the family although it would be chopped finely or mashed. Processed foods for babies were not available at that time and even today are not used.

We have seen that this area of life involves certain beliefs. Other stages of life as well as certain times of the year involve other customs and beliefs in this part of Newfoundland. These are taken up in the next chapter.

## CUSTOM

Customs are activities or actions which people repeatedly perform during certain events, and are often events in themselves. These activities are performed year after year as generation succeeds generation.

This thesis deals with two major classifications of custom: those performed on the same day every year, called calendar customs, and those which occur at different stages of an individual's life, called the rites of passage.

The customs of the people of Black Duck Brook will be discussed in reference to the past since increased communication has caused many of their old customs to disappear. The customs which have changed will be noted but not ones which have been recently introduced into the culture since they resemble so closely the customs of the North American cultures.

### Calendar Customs

Calendar customs are those traditions which occur every year at the same time. Each culture has celebrations at a different time of the year according to how their customs were shaped over the years due to the facilities available to them, their environment, climate, and external influences.

The calendar customs found in Black Duck Brook are today very similar to those found elsewhere in North

America. Since isolation diminished, American customs have become a part of the French people of this community. For example, the children now celebrate Hallowe'en on October 31st whereas the eldest generations remember only La Toussaint (All Saints' Day) on November 1st as a religious holiday.

American customs were not the only ones to be introduced into this culture. The Irish Catholic priests, who had such a firm control over the parish for so many years, introduced such Irish customs as St. Patrick's Day. There is, in fact, some belief among the people that these priests endeavoured to suppress the French traditions and to replace them with Anglo-Irish ones.

Scattered evidence of French traditions remain in some of the customs performed and in the memories of the older inhabitants. Many of these have completely died out or have been diluted by other influences.

What the present calendar customs of Black Duck Brook represent is a mixture of customs brought from France and modified according to a new land, those introduced by the Irish and possibly other ethnic groups present in Newfoundland, and most importantly, those traditions and customs introduced by the English North Americans: Newfoundlanders, Canadians and Americans.

Those customs to be discussed here include New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, Candlemas, Lent, including Shrove Tuesday and Good Friday, Easter, All Saints and Christmas.

These customs have been chosen since some elements of the French tradition remain and since one can see how external influences have modified them. The more recently introduced customs such as Valentine's Day and Hallowe'en will not be discussed since they are the same as elsewhere due to the widespread commercialism which characterizes them. Most people say that Hallowe'en was introduced only ten years ago and Valentine's Day about the same time. They were probably brought earlier to the area by the American service men stationed in Stephenville. From there the new customs were probably spread by Newfoundlanders who had some contact with the base.

Throughout the discussions of these customs, it must be remembered above all that the people had very few material possessions with which to celebrate. They had very little at most times of the year yet if something valuable to them was obtained such as a new garment or some fruit or candy, it would be saved for the nearest feast day. Many people have insisted that holidays were much more meaningful when what they take for granted today was a long-awaited luxury.

#### The New Year (Le Jour de l'An)

New Year's Eve is celebrated on the last day of each calendar year. In Black Duck Brook the real celebration begins at midnight although friends and relatives will gather together during the evening at private homes since



this is part of the twelve days of Christmas. At midnight it was traditional for each man to lead his rifle and to go outside to shoot off his gun at the stroke of twelve.

"New Year's Day, eh, everybody prepared their guns and cartridges...they loaded it themselves, yes, with their lead and their powder, they loaded that and when midnight came they were all outdoors. They were behind the houses, behind the stores. They got there and when the clock struck midnight someone would shoot off the gun first. Then you heard it everywhere, all over the place, gunshots... it lasted for a good five or ten minutes."

("Le Jour de l'an, eh, tout le monde se préparait avec leur fusil et de cartouches...ça i' chargiont ieusses-mêmes, oh oui, avec leur plomb et leur poud', i' chargiont ça et quand que ça venait à minuit, derrière les magasins. I' se mettiont et quand que l'heure sonnait minuit, c'tait tchiqu'un allait tirer son coup de fusil premier. Pis t' entendais ça toute la grandeur là, toute la grandeur d' la place, les coups de fusil...ça durait pour bien cinq ou dix minutes.") C2857

While the men shot off their guns the women and children banged pots and pans and burst the balloons which were on the Christmas tree.

After this greeting of the New Year the people of the community would go from house to house to dance to the skillful music of the violinists and accordion players, to drink home-made beers and wines and to sing. Traditional songs have been mostly forgotten and are today replaced by the popular country songs of the day. The celebration continued into the early morning, about two or three o'clock, when the village retired to arise on the morrow for the celebration of New Year's Day. This day was marked by a special meal eaten early in the afternoon when all the

food saved from Christmas was eaten.

As delectable a meal as could be had was prepared during the day by the women while the men continued to celebrate with home-made brews. The women prepared a roast of lamb, pork or chicken with salt meat and any other delicacy such as bottled lobster, various kinds of vegetables, piles of home-made bread, jams, pickles, pies and cakes made in advance.

New Year's Day again found the villagers congregating at one house or another to dance, play cards, tell jokes and stories and to sing.

Years ago this practice was repeated many times throughout the year on holidays and during the long winter evenings. Before television and radio, evening gatherings were the only source of amusement since the community was much too small to warrant public places of gathering, aside from the church, which in those days was used for the sole purpose of religious functions.

These gatherings, called "veillées", were often started spontaneously on an idle evening.

"Yeah, dey was happier dan dey are now. An' you go somewhere an' you know, maybe couple'll go in a house dere an' den de first t'ing de house'll be packed, everybody'd gather there. You know, dey'd know where dose two were gone well den dey'd all get dere. The first thing there'd be a dance." C2851

During these parties the women would chat in the kitchen and the men would play cards in a bedroom. Later the music would start since almost every male could play some instrument. People would dance the traditional step-

dances to this music. One gentleman in his sixties boasted to me of his great skill as a step dancer and explained how he had danced on the sides of his ankles, which he showed to me and which I saw were still out of shape, having been strained many years ago.

There would be singing of traditional songs, many in French, but few of which are remembered today. There were also folktales, called "des contes", told by the story-tellers of the community. During these tales all the company remained quietly entertained, seated on the floor and greatly appreciative of a unique source of entertainment. Only one person in the community remembers some of these tales, one of which is contained in an appendix at the end of this work.

People of all ages attended "veillées" and this is still true, for young and old share the same sources of entertainment. Today, however, the young can go off by themselves by car to a club in a neighbouring town, but often they choose to stay at home.

There are other forms of entertainment such as television and bingo games three nights a week which have replaced the content of the traditional "veillées" but not completely the gathering itself. Today the people call their get-togethers "times" or "kitchen rackets" but the principle entertainment is the consumption of alcoholic beverages. There is also music and dancing of various kinds.

## Candlemas (La Chandeleur)

Candlemas occurs on the second day of February and is known in French Newfoundland as La Chandeleur. It has disappeared from the living traditions of Black Duck Brook in the last thirty years and according to one man the last Chandeleur celebration took place in 1950.

On this day one of the elder men of the community was appointed king or "le roi de La Chandeleur". It was his duty to go throughout the village carrying a staff cut in the woods and fashioned by himself which he was not permitted to put down for the evening of the feast. His principle task was to knock on each door asking for food for the feast of Candlemas. All those who wished to participate would give some item of food: potatoes, sugar, molasses, bread, tea or whatever they had, although no one would be banned from the feast if they could not afford to donate. Those who donated would tie a piece of ribbon, a rag or some other coloured material to the king's staff to show that they had donated. The food would be carried by two or three men who went collecting with the king.

The food would then be taken to a house, not necessarily the king's, but one large enough to accommodate all those who intended to come. The women would cook the food and then everyone would gather for the "souper" at seven or eight o'clock.

After the meal the dance would begin. Songs and dances would last until late in the night for La Chandeleur was one of the most important parties of the year to

which adults and children alike attended.

Later, before the tradition died, the feast and dance was held in the school house when there was one in the community. It was much bigger for a large gathering and inconvenienced no one. When the feast was celebrated in the school, the food would be cooked first for there were no facilities in the school for food preparation.

In other places of French Canada, there are certain beliefs concerning this day.<sup>59</sup> I found no evidence of these in Black Duck Brook nor did I find evidence of the feast elsewhere as it was celebrated here.

#### Lent (Le Carême)

The forty days of Lent which lasted from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday were marked in Black Duck Brook by fasting since the inhabitants were all ardent Roman Catholics.

It appears that all those over the age of twenty-one were obliged to fast while those under that age were encouraged to do so, but not forced. It was mentioned that in some families younger children were forced to fast.

Fasting consisted of two elements. Firstly, everyone chose some food of which they were particularly fond, a common choice was butter, and promised not to eat it for

<sup>59</sup> Pierre Des Ruisseaux, p. 93

the duration of the forty days. Many people also chose to renounce tobacco. Secondly, everyone fasted each day until noon when they were allowed their first food of the day.

There is evidence that Shrove Tuesday, known in French cultures as Mardi Gras, was not in Black Duck Brook the festive occasion it was in other French areas of North America such as New Orleans. Informants say that for as long as they can remember Shrove Tuesday was simply a day when pancakes were made.

French Newfoundland women, as well as women in other areas of Newfoundland<sup>60</sup> made pancakes, putting objects into the pancakes which predicted the future of the person eating the particular pancake in which the object was found. The finder of a ring would be the next person of the company to marry, the finder of a religious medal would be religiously inclined or becomes a priest or a nun, the finder of a nail would be a carpenter, the person who found a straw would become a farmer, he who found a button was destined to be a bachelor or in the case of a woman, a spinster, and the person who found the coin of money would become rich. Today, this custom is practised primarily in families with young children.

Good Friday (le vederdi saint) is the most important

<sup>60</sup> Hilda Murray, p. 231

day of Lent since it represents the day that Christ was crucified. Most people say that it is also the most religious day of the year.

In the memory of the elder generation, Good Friday was a day dedicated to prayer. It was forbidden to eat anything except dry bread at noon and fish in the evening, although it appears that many people ate nothing at all. It was also forbidden to work: no cooking, cleaning or carrying of any kind would be done. All work had to be completed the day before.

If the people were unable to attend mass, as they often were due to distance and weather conditions, the family would gather together to say prayers, the rosary and read the Bible most of the day.

Although the Church's laws are no longer so strict concerning Good Friday, many of the elder people still follow some or all of these customs. For others it suffices to attend Mass, which is now easily done because of the improved road and widespread ownership of cars.

#### Easter (Pâques)

In the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church, Easter is the day that Christ arose from the dead and is thus a day for great celebration. It also marks the end of fasting which occurs during Lent and is thus a day for feasting.

As long as the people can remember it has been the

custom to eat eggs on Easter morning. The eggs, collected from the chickens during the weeks before Easter, were all saved for this day and were then either boiled or fried. There was usually a contest among family members to see who could eat the most eggs.

Although eggs were eaten, there is no evidence that they were hidden as the chocolate ones are now hidden for children to find. Children were given candies on Easter if possible. There was also no evidence of eggs being coloured or decorated.

Eggs were eaten in the morning and an Easter dinner would be prepared for early afternoon. This dinner was the same as that prepared for Christmas and other holidays, but because of the time of year there was often little extra. Spring is the worst season of the year for those who live off the land since the food saved during the winter has been mostly consumed and what remains must be strictly rationed until the new crop is harvested.

"Then for breakfast we had eggs, we had all the eggs we could for Easter. We collected all, all winter, eh? Then for dinner it was the same, it wasn't often we had a chicken or a turkey or, it wasn't like it is now."

("Pis là pour déjeuner j'avais les oeufs, j'avais tous les oeufs qu'ej pouvions pour Pâques. Pis là raman-sions tout, tout l'hiver, eh? Pis pour dîner c'est pareil, c'tait pas souvent t'aras eu un chicken ou un turkey ou c'tait pas comme de ce temps-là.") C2855

There was one tradition pertaining to Easter known as the Easter "pok", a term which comes from the dialect word for Easter. In their dialect the French equivalent of



Easter, Pâques, is pronounced "pok".

From midnight, marking the first hour of Easter, to noon on Sunday, each person tried to get as many "poks" as possible. This consisted of catching a person unawares and hitting him with the fist in the center of the forehead. The hit, often quite hard, was a "pok". There was a race to see who could get the most "poks" although if a person was hit by another he could not try to hit the person who hit him since the "pok" had already been won.

One informant told me that one year her husband went out late Easter Saturday evening. She went to bed before he returned, knowing that he would attempt to "pok" her on his return. She slept with her head at the foot of the bed and fixed the bed so that it appeared that her head was where it usually was. She put a small glass against the door so that when he pushed the door open the sound alerted her. He crept to the head of the bed and raised his fist whereupon she jumped up and hit him in the forehead with all the strength she had. She added that he never tried to "pok" her again.

This custom is no longer performed with the same seriousness. It is only done in those families where the parents did it as children, but it is no longer done consistently every Easter, but only when someone happens to think of it.

### All Saints' Day (La Toussaint)

All Saints' Day, which falls on the first day of November, is known in French tradition as La Toussaint. This used to be a day resembling Good Friday, although not so strict. There would be prayers said throughout the day for the saints and the older people would fast. When possible people would attend Mass.

The day following All Saints', November 2nd, is known as Le Jour Des Morts (the day of the dead) and it is on this day that the people visited the cemetery to pray for the dead. The custom was to go about three o'clock in the afternoon and to bring flowers if they were available.

Niether of the two days mentioned above are still regarded with the seriousness they used to be. It is only the very old who remember the customs of their youth who make an attempt to observe them. Many of the younger generation do not know what the days represent, let alone what is done on those days.

### Christmas (La Noel)

Christmas was by far the biggest celebration of the year, and yet it is the one which has changed the most in recent years. This change is largely due to the increase in material possessions, wealth and the commercialism broadcast by the media. In general, people say that Christmas celebrations in the past were much more frugal and yet much more special.

"It (baked goods) was only for Christmas an' when

Christmas'd come well everything was so good, eh? But now dere's no -- Christmas is nothing, no use for you to make a cake for Christmas, you got dat cake every day. No difference, so dere's not'ing good for Christmas. An' take a roast for Christmas or a chicken or some duck or whatever it is, s'no good because you haves dat whenever you feels like it now." C2851

In the past, preparation for Christmas started as early as late summer when women would save the berries they picked then for Christmas. These berries would be well packed and saved or made immediately into jams. At the same time men would make their home-made beers and wines from the berries which would be brewed for the Christmas season. Wine-making has also been noted by Hilda Murray whose informants made it from blueberries, dogberries and dandelions.<sup>61</sup> Now there is beer available every day of the year at the local store and nobody bothers to make their own.

Preparations would increase gradually until two weeks before Christmas when cakes made with molasses and raisins, pies made from jam, candies and toys would be prepared and hidden away. An extra supply of wood would be cut and brought to the house because as little work as possible was done during the actual days of Christmas. Excitement would increase at the same time since this saving caused such anticipation of the pleasures to come.

"Everything we got at the store we saved, it was for Christmas, eh? Everything ready for Christmas, we had it all there, eh? Yes, oh yes, you couldn't touch that, it had to be saved for Christmas, eh?"

<sup>61</sup> Hilda Murray pp. 230-231

("Pis tout c' qu'ej avions au boutique, j'ramansions, c'tait pour Noel, eh? Tout pâr  pou' cas Noel, lâ, eh? Oui, ah oui, j' pouvions toucher, fallait l' ramansions pou' not' Noel, eh?") C2849

On Christmas eve all those who could attended Mass. Those who were not able to get to the church in Lourdes said the rosary together at eleven o'clock until midnight.

Some families ate their Christmas dinner at midnight and others the following day. Informants say that those who ate at midnight followed the old tradition, and some people in the community still follow this tradition. The women of those families which eat at midnight spent most of the day preparing but the next day they could relax since the family would eat left-overs from the Christmas meal. Children who were young enough to believe in Santa Claus went to bed before midnight.

"the one who was too little, who waited for Santy Claus, he couldn't eat at midnight. He went to bed and then when it got light...the next morning that was his joy."

(" ui-l  qui 'tait trop petit, qui 'sp rait Santy Claus, lui pouvait pas manger   minuit. I' s'en allait s' coucher et pis quand que c'est que s' v'nait light...le lendemain matin qu' i' 'tait sa joie.") C2854

Although the tradition of Santa Claus is found in France under the name of "P re Noel", it seems that the tradition in Black Duck Brook came more recently from the English since the French name for Santa Claus is unknown. He is consistently referred to as Santy Claus and informants say that this was the correct French term.

E.S. "What do you call Santa Claus in French?"

M.B. "But 'twas nice, Santy Claus, well, you know, it's English 'n' French, is the same." C2851

Other families in Black Duck Brook ate their Christmas meal during Christmas Day, usually around noon. The women would arise early in the morning to finish those preparations which had not already been completed. The same kind of meal would be eaten. There was no consistent tradition concerning which kind of meat would be eaten on Christmas Day. It was preferable to have several kinds but whatever was available would suffice, either pork, lamb or beef, all three of which were raised in the community.

It was not the custom for adults to exchange any sort of gift, token or card. Children got something whenever possible, usually a doll for girls and a toy gun for boys, which were bought. There were few home-made gifts mentioned for children, the reason being that home fabrication was too expensive.

E.S. "Did people make gifts at home?"

M.F. "Not very often, not very often, because they didn't have the money for that...but most money they had for gifts was for the little ones."

(E.S. "Est-ce qu'on a fait des, des cadeaux à la maison?"

M.F. "Pas trop souvent, pas trop souvent, parce i' avait pas d'argent pour ça...mais le plus d'l' argent qu'i' avait pour aouère les cadeaux, 'tait pour les p'tits, oui.") C2854

Nevertheless, one woman said that she sewed dolls and animals for her children every year from material she had left over from her sewing. The entire toy would be stitched, including the face. She mentioned in particular a large duck she had made from a piece of white satin and which she

gave to a family who had nothing for their children.

She also described dolls' houses and barns that she had made from cardboard cartons. She dolls' houses were complete with stick furniture, little dolls who lived in the house, wall paper and curtains. The barns had divisions for stalls, straw, stuffed animals and people made by hand.

She would start in the fall to make these gifts and would do it in the evening after all the children had gone to bed. She also recalled the trouble she had keeping the toys hidden.

Many of my informants remember years when there was no money for toys, and when a Christmas present consisted of a piece of fruit, or even a part thereof, or a cookie.

"sometimes we had a couple of candies in our stocking and an apple but when they couldn't get that, well, Maman made molasses buns. She cut them with, I don't know, there were some like men and others like women they were patterns, eh? She cut that with that and we girls had the women and the boy had the men in our stockings."

("des fois, ben, j'avions un coup' de candy dans not' bas, pis une pomme, pis là quand qu'i' pouvoient pas aouère ça ben Maman faisait des, des buns à la m'lasses. Pis a' coupait ça avec, sais pas, i' en avait ceux comme des hommes, pis d'aut'es comme des femmes, c'tait des patrons, eh? Pis a' coupait ça avec ça pis nous aut'es j'avions les filles pis le garçon avait les hommes dans le bas.") C2855

"Ah den we didn't have much so maybe we'll have an apple between t'ree or four of us but dat was just as good now, den, as a dozen of apples now. 'Cause I remember Christmas, I never forget it. Dad, him, because we were bare feet half of de time, an' he used to take us on his back and ah, the two of us, me and my brother Steve, he used to take us in his arms and go and kick in the snow ta see what Santy Claus left...coupl'a' apples maybe. Sometimes 'e

kick in de snow and bye an' bye he find one, ah, so glad, you know, I never forget dat...Bring us in de house den and he'll cut dat apple an' maybe das all we get, now, see, das all Santy Claus brought." C2850

It seems that the poverty of this area, if not unique, was more extreme than elsewhere in Newfoundland.<sup>62</sup>

Children's Christmas presents were usually to be found in the stocking hung behind the stove in the kitchen. At least one family had the tradition of hiding fruit outside in the snow, much as is done in some cultures with eggs at Easter. Today the custom has changed and presents, much more elaborate and expensive, are found under the tree.

One of my informants claims to be the first person in the community to put up a Christmas tree. She brought the tradition from Corner Brook where she lived for a while before her marriage.

M.B. "I t'ink I was de first one down here to get married dat put a Christmas tree up, eh?"

J.B. "Yeah, Christmas tree."

M.B. "An' dey used never have Christmas trees or decoration. But ah, when I got married I ah, started dat, I had decoration, my dear, 'n' I put up de decoration of crepe paper we had den, you know, we cut dat up 'n' so after, well, everybody started dat 'n' dey kept it up, eh?"  
C2851

Yet another of my informants said that her mother had always had a tree for as long as she could remember, some fifty years. Since both women live in the same community,

<sup>62</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 227-229

one of the two must be mistaken.

The decorations most often mentioned that were used years ago on the Christmas tree were crepe paper and balloons. Some people fashioned beads or shapes from turnips. Another woman said she cut egg cartons into bell-like shapes and covered them with coloured paper or sometimes the silver paper from cigarette packages. One informant said she coloured egg shells with any kind of dye or paint that was available. Some would make bows or streamers from christmas paper or ribbons.

The tree would be cut by the man or the man and his wife and in the old tradition would be put up and decorated by them after the children had gone to bed. It would remain up for the twelve days of Christmas of a few days longer.

The Christmas season traditionally lasted twelve days, from December 25th to January 6th, known as Old Christmas Day (Le Vieux Noel or Le Jour des Rois or Les Rois). In the memory of the older people, Old Christmas Das was also a great celebration but one that was geared to the adults.

During the twelve days of Christmas, there would be a party in the community every night, each night at a different house. During these parties people would dress in disguise and go from house to house, a traditional Newfoundland custom known as mummering.

Those of the community who chose to do so disguised themselves with old clothing. They wore suits inside out,



long underwear and ensured that no article of their clothing would give away their identity. Mummers would often exchange such tell-tale clothing as shoes and dress up as a member of the opposite sex. They would make masks from cardboard or paper bags or place sheets over their heads in which small holes would be cut for the eyes and mouth. They would disguise their voices as well by putting pebbles or other small objects in their mouth or by talking in a lower or higher pitch than normal.

Informants often remark how difficult it was to guess who their visitors were, which is surprising since the community was so small and its inhabitants knew each other quite well. But mummering was a long-practised custom and doubtless the people knew how to disguise all parts of their person.

These mummerers went from house to house where they would play pranks and sing songs. Those whose houses they visited were obliged to give them food and drink if they were asked, which was usually beer and cake. The hosts were to guess who their disguised visitors were and when their identity was correctly guessed, the visitors would remove their disguises and leave that house when all visitors had been identified. The following is an account of an evening of mummering:

"Yeah, an', ah, den dat night dey want a dance, well den we had dis kitchen dat dere was not'ing in it yet so we let dem have de kitchen fer a dance. So when de dance started dere's one a' de mummers...came in but dere was one a' dem 'e had dressed up at Winter Houses an' dis lady tol' him: "Whatever You do", she

said, "don't you tear my dress." Because in dem times you know a dress was something hard to get. So he had her skirt on an' a blouse an' something over his head. An' dey start at 'im an' when he left dere wasn't a piece a' de skirt left. (laughter) My dear, dey tore it ta all by ribbons. Dey used to spin him right around dat chimney, when he go around try to get away from de one side dere'd be anot'er crowd on de ot'er side an' dey'd catch him like dat, dey had him just like a spin top. How much did we laugh t'ough, dat night, oh it was a sin, t'ough, because we shouldn't a' laughed. But we didn't know about de skirt, see, we didn't know he wasn't supposed to tear it." C2851

It is not known when this custom was first brought to the community or whether it was brought from France. It is still performed by teenagers but it is no longer a welcome custom since in recent years the pranks played have become destructive and malicious, such as tearing down fences. Also, with cars providing easier transportation many people drive to the community who are not known there. Thus they are not welcome since they may cause destructive damage but cannot be identified.

#### Customs of the Rites of Passage

The following customs are associated with the rites of passage, which are important stages of an individual's life in which he is considered to cross the threshold from one stage of life to another.

The first stage of life, birth, is discussed in detail in the chapter of this thesis headed Pregnancy and Child-birth. The stages to be discussed here are baptism, marriage and death, the latter which marks the final stage of

life and not an intermediary stage. There will also be some discussion of the role of the Roman Catholic Church and the priests who have represented it.

Baptism, marriage and death are so closely related to the Catholic religion in Black Duck Brook that it is impossible to separate the two. The customs which have developed around these rites of passage are customs which are an integral part of the rituals of the Catholic Church. It is the priest who performs baptisms, marriages and funerals, thus he was, and still is, the central character in the important stages of the people's lives.

There was no priest for the area around Black Duck Brook until 1912. Before that time a priest would visit the area from neighbouring parishes such as Port-Au-Port or Stephenville although such visits occurred only twice a year or at best once every three months. The primary reason for this was transportation since at that time there were no roads linking Black Duck Brook to the main portion of the Port-Au-Port Peninsula. The priest usually came by boat across the bay or on horseback in the summer and with a horse and sled in winter. Winter visits, however, were extremely rare and some of the older people say that there was a time when the priest would never come during the winter months.

Before 1912, the priest's visits were so infrequent that an elder of the community would be appointed by him to act in his place during emergency cases. According to

the memory of one elderly gentleman, Mr. Joseph Bozec, whose father had been appointed by the priest, it was the eldest person in the community who was awarded this right, although it is likely that other factors such as soundness of mind and body and religious conviction influenced the priest's choice.

As was previously mentioned, informants say that this man would act only in case of emergency, notably deaths. Since burial was usually desired before the priest's visit, his appointee would perform the service. He would also perform marriages if those involved preferred not to wait. It was always the midwife who performed the ceremony of baptism in the priest's absence.

However, the priest who is now serving the area of Lourdes told me that priests did not appoint people to perform ceremonies. He said that an elder of the church would lead prayers but did not have the right to bury someone or to unite a couple in marriage.

There is no doubt that such a person was appointed, but perhaps he was appointed by the community rather than by the priest. There is also some discrepancy as to what he had the right to do.

There have been six parish priests serving Black Duck Brook since 1912. In that year the communities of Three Rock Cove (Trois Cailloux), West Bay, Lourdes, Mainland (La Grand' Terre) and Black Duck Brook were united into one parish. A parish church was built and

since then these communities have had their own priest, who lives in Lourdes.

The first priest, Reverend Father Pierre Adolphe Pinault, was the only French priest that served the area and has become almost a local legend. There are a few people living who were young children when Father Pinault lived in the area and they all remember him as an intimidating and frightening character. Informants tell how children would run and hide at the sight of him, how harsh were the penances he have and how exacting he was in his requirements. Father Pinault was born in Prince Edward Island and served the parish from 1912 to 1928.

The other priests who followed Father Pinault were Reverend Father Micheal O'Rielly, born in Ireland, who served the area from 1928 to 1941, Reverend Father Ronald Jones, a native Newfoundlander who served the area from 1941 to 1952. Reverend Father Robert Dale Hardy was born in Massachusetts and served from 1952 to 1961, Reverend Father Richard G. Tompkins, another Newfoundlander, ran the parish from 1961 to 1969 when the Reverend Father Francis Buckle, the present parish priest, took over. Father Buckle is also a Newfoundlander.

### Baptism

The amount of time between birth and baptism varied considerably. One informant said her children were baptised a month after their birth, another said as soon

possible.

Mothers would take their babies to the parish Church in Lourdes, and often carried them the entire distance in their arms. One woman, who lived in Long Point, a distance of some ten miles, made this trip for all her children:

"Yes, had to carry him from Long Point up to Lourdes in my arms, eh? Yes, I wouldn't want to carry one today, my arms aren't strong enough for that. My gosh almighty, I tell you, I made some trips to Lourdes with my babies."

("Oui, faut le chârrier de Long Point jusqu'à en haut à Lourdes, là, dans mes bras, eh? Oui, voulais pas chârrier iun asteure, mes bras sont pas bons assez pour ça. My gosh almighty, je t'en assure que j'ai fait des tournées à Lourdes avec mes bébés.") C2852

In Lourdes, the ceremony which took place in the church was the same as all baptisms since they were similar throughout the Catholic Church. The baby always wore a long white dress, usually made at home since they could not be bought.

"Well, it wasn't pretty bought dresses and all those things they have now but sometimes you could get a pretty piece of white stuff, you'd make a dress with that."

("Ben, c'tait pas des, des jolies robes achetées pis tous les affaires qu' i' a asteure mais des fois tu pouvais attraper un joli morceau d' stuff blanc, pis faisais une robe avec ça.") C2856

The dress would usually be made with great care and would be kept in the family for all the children.

The name given to the baby was chosen by the parents and would be a name that they liked, often the name of a saint or the name of a relative. When the child took his first communion, at the age of about twelve, he himself

chose another name, always the name of a saint.

It has been said by several informants that the English priests discouraged giving French names to infants. They said that when the parents told the priest the name they had chosen, if that name was French, the priest would suggest an English name. Since the priest's word was the highest authority, the parents would abide by this decision.

I am very grateful to Father Francis Buckle of Lourdes Parish and to Father Joseph Kelly of Port-Au-Port Parish who permitted me to study the parish records for the area of Black Duck Brook. These records show us the kinds of surnames that people had, and the Christian names they were given.

We find several surnames from the years 1900 to 1911 are no longer found in this area such as: Gasté, Busaut (also in the forms Buisson, Besaut, Busson), LeTaccaneaux (also Leganeux), Rioux, Madore, LePrieur, Chiasson, Secardin (also Secard) and LeRoy. These names are all of French origin and were either changed to English names, or the families died out or moved away. From the diverse spellings of some of the above, one may hypothesize that the people themselves did not know how to spell their names and that the priests were either unfamiliar with French pronunciation or, at best, inconsistent.

One of the principle founding families of Black Duck Brook, some descendants of whom still live there, went by the name of Duffenais. From cemetary headstones, church

records and family possessions I have found the following versions: Duffenais, Duffenay, Duffeney, Duffnay, Duffnais, Duffney and other versions spelled with a single "f".

It is interesting to note, as well, how some of the names have been anglicized. Lainez and Lainé were found in parish records of the early century and have now become Lainey. Some people with the surname Benoit have changed it to Bennett. LeRoy became Lorwell, LeCorre has become Lecore or Lecoure and Fermangé has changed to Fermanger. Other common family names found during these years are still to be found: Young, Benoit, Ryan, Bozec and Felix.

It is interesting to note in these records the number of times a couple had a child. Records for ten years (1900 to 1911, minus 1908) show the following: one couple had six children, five couples had four children, six couples had three children, five couples had two children and twelve couples had one.

Since we do not know where the parents, whose children's baptisms are recorded, came from, we cannot say that their Christian names are typical of Black Duck Brook. We shall therefore discuss the names they gave to their children.

Most children were given two names which are, for the most part, recorded in Latin. Out of a total of sixty-six children, fifteen were named Jospeh (Josepha or Josephus) and twenty-three were named Maria or some form of that name. This is, of course, considering both first and second names.



Boys' names that appear more than once are: Angelus (2), Augustus (2), Français or Francis (3), Jacobus (2), Joannes (3), Ludovicus (2), Martin (2), Paul (2), Petrus (3) and Yves (2). Girls' names that appear more than once are: Adelia (2), Anna or Anne (5), Cecilia (2), Elizabeth (3), Helena (2), Isabella (2), Marguerita or Margarita (3) and Mathilda (3).

Other names which occur only once are, for boys: Albertus, Arsemius, Arthur, Baptiste, Benedictus, Edward, Guallerius, Henricus, Les, Louis, Lucien, Matthias, Patrick, Philip and Thomas. The girls' names are: Agnes, Alicia, Alline, Anastasia, Bertha, Celina, Clementia, Emilia, Eunice, Louisa, Lydia, Magdalene, Melanica, Nellis, Philomena, Rosa, Sophia, Stella and Susannah.

As one can see, there is quite a variety of names, some coming from the French tradition and others from British. Since they were given in Latin, it is unknown whether the people were called by the French equivalent or by the English one. It would be most useful to find what names these children went by later in life and what nick-names they were given.

The central characters of the baptism aside from the baby, were his god-parents. These were close friends of the parents, often a brother or sister. Each child had a godmother and a godfather.

Their main duty, according to the Church, is to supervise the religious and spiritual development of the

child and to raise the child in the event of his parents' death. In practice, the principle duty of the god-parents was simply to attend the baptism, acting as witnesses, the godmother holding the child while the godfather held his hand. It was also mentioned that they were expected to give the child gifts at his baptism, on his birthdays and first communion. Informants added that the god-parents have the theoretical obligation of raising the child in the event of his parents' death, although they say that this was not done in practice.

Illegitimate births, which have increased drastically in recent years, were not common when my informants were young. However, those children born out of marriage were not permitted by the Roman Catholic Church to be baptised until the mother had made public penance. As it was unheard of not to baptise a child, this was invariably done, although it could be extremely embarrassing for the mother.

One Sunday after Mass, but while the congregation were still present, the mother would rise from her seat, walk around the church and up to the altar where she would kneel and ask pardon from God, the priest and the congregation for her sin. One informant mentioned that the woman would usually be in tears before the priest would absolve her. Only then could her child be baptised in the way of the Roman Catholic Church.

## Marriage

During the last fifty years weddings have become more and more elaborate. They were, in the first quarter of the century, very simple affairs not by choice but because there was not a lot of extra food or money with which to celebrate.

Both the man and the woman would dress in their best outfit but the woman would usually manage to obtain a special dress, since this was the most important occasion of her life. This dress was usually white but not necessarily: it could be the favourite colour of the bride, such as blue. One informant told me she was married in a light blue suit. Later, whenever possible, the bridal dress would be similar to that traditionally worn today.

"it was like now. She had her veil and her dress and her white shoes, it was most often white dresses... there were some who got married in blue."

("c'tait comme asteure. Alle a son voile et sa robe et ses souliers blancs, c'tait plus des robes blancs qu'i' 'tiont...I' en avait qui se mariont en bleu.")  
C2850

There was no special time of the week or hour of the day when most people chose to get married, but they often chose a Sunday after Mass since they and their friends were already at the church. There was no season during which people wanted especially to marry and before 1912, they had no choice: they got married when the priest visited. Today, most young couples like to marry in June.

Before cars became common, the wedding couple would drive together in a horse and cart to the church in Lourdes.

There, with friends present, the ceremony was performed. This ceremony, like the ceremony of baptism, was similar to those performed throughout the Catholic Church. After the ceremony the company returned to the bride's former home for the wedding feast. This feast was similar to that of other festive days such as Christmas, and included roast meat, vegetables, breads, pies, cakes, wines and beers, and the traditional wedding cake. Until recently this cake was not square but consisted of three round cakes, each one bigger than the next, which were placed directly on top of one another. The ingredients of the cake would be similar to the traditional dark fruit cake used today.

There would be dancing, music and food for the duration of the party, which usually lasted the entire day and sometimes into the next day for close friends and family.

The wedding customs which informants mention concerning both the past and present are the same as the customs performed today in North American Christian weddings. They are customs which may have been transmitted by the English, since many French men married English women. These are customs such as wearing "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue", which must be English since there is no French equivalent to the saying. Other customs include throwing the garter to single men and the bouquet to single women, the bride and groom making a wish as they cut their cake, the bride and groom being obliged to kiss to the clang of silverware on glass and passing the

wedding cake through the bride's ring for unmarried women to dream on, which is also done in Quebec.<sup>63</sup>

During one of my stays in the community one of the girls who had been brought up in the community got married. She had her wedding ceremony and reception in Stephenville and not at the family home as is the older tradition. Many of the elder people of the community said how much they prefer the old type of party which, they said, was more intimate, more jovial and meaningful.

### Death

Many of the old customs concerning death, wakes and funerals are still carried on today as they have been for many years. The dead are still waked in the home and are buried in the cemetery which has been used for many years.

No one is certain how long this cemetery has existed, since not all markings on the grave markers are legible. There were several people buried in Long Point before Black Duck Brook was established as a community, and five burials about two miles from the present cemetery. Since the first house in this immediate area was built in 1871, the cemetery would probably have been established some time after this.

The cemetery is an interesting one, covering an area of approximately ninety feet by seventy feet and enclosed

<sup>63</sup> Pierre Des Ruisseaux, p. 60



Photograph 14 The cemetary in Black Duck Brook  
Photograph taken in November 1977

by a rough wooden and wire fence. The oldest markings in the cemetary are simple wooden crosses, long since fallen



Photograph 15 The oldest type of cemetary marking.  
Photograph taken in November 1977

into the ground, whose engravings have been completely obliterated by countless seasons. There are some headstones which were brought, according to informants, from marble works in St. John's. When bought these were apparently elaborate affairs.



Photograph 16 Headstone brought from St. John's. Photograph taken November 1977

"My gosh, were dey ever nice! 'Twas all done up wid beads an' dose big wreaths, you know, an' 'twas all covered inside, all glass, y'know, all de beads an' de t'ings were all inside." C2851

There is at least one headstone in French although no one could say where it had been obtained. This headstone reads:

A LA MEMOIRE  
 JEAN BAPTISTE  
 LATACONNOUX  
 NE EN FRANCE  
 DECEDE A L'AGE DE 94  
 QU'IL REPOSE EN PAIX  
 19 NOV. 1869 30 DEC. 1963



Photograph 17 French headstone.  
 Photograph taken in November 1977

A common type of headstone was made by a man in the community who used cement, fashioned it into a block and carved the information himself with a pointed object. The information includes his own name and is marked in capital letters on the bottom of the writing. It reads: "MADE BY JOACHIM BENOIT".

When a person died, his corpse would be prepared by a member of the community. One informant said that this was





Photograph 18 Headstone made by Joachim Benoit. Photograph taken in November 1977

the job of the closest of kin while other informants said that it was preferable for a stranger to prepare the corpse, or for lack of a stranger in a small community, a person who was not closely related to the deceased.

To prepare a corpse, the hands and face would be washed and it would be dressed in the best clothing that the person possessed. Some informants said that many elderly or sick people put aside specifically in anticipation of their death.

Mourners of the dead were expected to wear special clothing to show that they were in mourning. These clothes were traditionally black but often a black arm band around

the left upper arm was considered adequate.

"They didn't always wear black because, you know, they couldn't use black all the time for a year but they had their piece of black."

("I' portiont pas tout l'temps du nouère parce, vous savez, pouviez pas user du nouère tout l'temps pour un an mais il aviont leur morceau nouère.") C2849

Both men and women wore mourning apparel for varying lengths of time depending on their relationship with the dead person:

"I think the father, the father and the mother it was a year and the grand-father and the grand-mother was six months, the aunt, the uncles. Well, your brother or your sister, it's the same blood, so you're obliged to be a year, too."

("Ca me semb' le père et la mère c'tait un an et l' grand-père et la grand-mère c'tait six mois, la tante, les onc'es. Bien, ton frère ou ta soeur c'tait la même sang, c'est comme ça qu' c'-- t'es obligé d'êt' un an aussi.") C2849

When a person, including children, was in mourning, he was forbidden all forms of entertainment for the duration of his period of mourning. Dancing, music and card playing were all forbidden until recently. Now these rules are not held and people tend to return to their normal routine soon after the deceased is buried.

Before a person is buried it is customary to wake him, that is, to keep his body in the home so that friends and relatives can come to pay their respects. In most cases, people are still waked in their own home although some can be waked in the church in Lourdes.

Most people wake their dead in the best room in the house although informants mentioned that others did it in

the person's bedroom or even in the porch. The windows of whichever room was used would be darkened with dark material found in the house since few people had special curtains set aside for this purpose. Candles would be lit, and upon the person's body, the upper half of which remained uncovered, would be placed a dish or shell of holy water and a small branch or twig in the shape of a cross which was found in the woods.

The coffin would be made after the person's death by a carpenter in the community and while this was being prepared the dead person would rest on planks set up between two kitchen chairs.

People say that they placed nothing on the exterior of the house to show that a person was being waked there. The reason they give is that such advertising was unnecessary since the community was so small that each person was aware of another's death almost as soon as it occurred.

All those who wished to attend a wake would do so, and often the house would be completely full. The people would be served refreshments, such as bread and soup. They would also pray for the dead but the number of times that prayers were said was a matter of individual preference. Some say that they said prayers every hour on the hour and some say that they were only said at ten thirty or eleven o'clock in the evening.

It was customary for a wake to last at least two days and two nights, the burial taking place on the third day

after death. During the period between death and burial, the corpse was not to be left unattended.

When the corpse was taken from the house to the cemetery, it is commonly believed that a person of the house must stay behind in the house until the deceased is buried. If not, informants say that another death would occur in the same house within a few months.

It was also believed that as the corpse was passing along the road on the way to the cemetery, the inhabitants in each house that was passed should pull the curtains and kneel to pray until the corpse had passed out of sight. At that time, they would pray for the soul of the dead.

It has been said by many informants that wakes were always serious and formal affairs. During conversations with two elderly couples this was shown to be untrue. They say that during the busy seasons of the year a wake was often the only opportunity to meet neighbours and to exchange anecdotes, opinions and stories. Thus, a wake could be a great source of entertainment despite the fact that there would be no singing, music or dancing. Wakes were often a good time for playing practical jokes although informants tell that most people were considerate enough not to joke while there were any close of kin present. The following conversations illustrate these jokes:

"Yes, an' dey'll, ah, see half a' de crowd'll go sleep den y'know, because de house'll be packed an' dere'll be a wake like dat. An' den if dere'll be a coupla' young people dey'll lay down somewhere an' go to sleep, well dere's some, de rest'll go an' dey'll blacken deir face an' dat, you know, the two eyes an' ...An dey wouldn't know anyt'ing about it. Get up an'

dey'll mix aroun' wid de crowd, everybody'll be laughin'." C2851

"One place a man had died in de night, he died in his sleep in bed, see, an' de legs hauled up dis way (fetal position) so when dey put him on de, dey didn't have de coffin den dey used ta put 'em on boards...An' dey had ta straighten out de two legs an' tie it down, eh? So while dey were sayin' de rosary one fellow crept up behind de sheet an' spotted a knife an' cut de string. (laughter) De two legs came up!" C2851

"Or at, ah, at, ah, Campbell's Creek dere was one like dat an' dey had him on a board but de head was right in breas' a' de window, see? An' den dey always leaves de window a little bit open... yeah, for de fresh air, see? So while dey were sayin' de rosary 'e rose up de--(laughter) My God! Ah well, me, I t'nk I would a' screeched!" C2851

"I remember one time dere was an old man down at Long Point dat died in de heart a' de winter. Dey brought him up to, up dere to bury 'im an' dey were diggin' de grave. Dey couldn't finish so dey left, dey left him dere in de graveyard. While dey were digging one fellow takes, he gets in de sleigh, on a horse sleigh, left him dere in de graveyard. While dey were digging one fellow takes, he gets in de sleigh, "Come on, boys, let's go for a ride!" (laughter) Hauled de sleigh around." C2851

"Not'er fellow died, not so very long ago, seven or eight years ago, I s'pose, an old Frenchman, he was a deserter from France, but an awful storm, dey buried 'im an' dey had a great big rock, one a' de fellows takes de rock an' he t'rows it on de coffin, "Now", he says, "you got away from France but", he said, "I'm damned if you gets away from here!" (laughter) C2851

We have seen most of the aspects of a woman's life inside the home. This was not the only work that she performed, and some of her other duties took her outdoors. The next chapter discusses the various kinds of this outdoor work.

## OUTDOOR WORK

In the past, much more of the work of a woman was concentrated outdoors than it is today. Much of this outdoor work is labour often associated with men since it is theoretically considered that of the man. The woman often did this work in the absence of her husband if there were no older children upon whom one could rely. Many men of this area went to Corner Brook or Deer Lake to the logging industry during the winter months. Thus, for three or four months of the year all the work would be done by the women. On summer days the men would be involved in the fishery from before sunrise to after sunset, and thus for many summer days the women worked alone.

There are three major divisions of a woman's work outdoors and each of these will be treated separately in this chapter. They are gardening, care of animals and helping with the fishing industry. Much of the discussion in this chapter centers around the outdoor work of women as it was until about fifteen years ago. Since then, few people still grow large gardens or keep many animals. The women are needed less and less outdoors because there is less to do and also because the men, who are largely unemployed, have plenty of time to do such chores themselves.

It may be noted that some activities take place out of doors which are not discussed here but in another chapter. These would include such activities as drying

clothes which is always done outdoors even in winter and the shearing of sheep. Other activities may be done in the house or outside according to the individual preference of the woman. These would include such activities as washing clothes or cleaning game.

### Gardening

There were two sorts of gardens cultivated in the community of Black Duck Brook and the women were greatly involved with both types. The first to be discussed and the least important since it was not necessary for survival is the flower garden. This was optional according to individual preference yet despite all the other work of the women there is evidence that at least small flower gardens were planted outside the front door of many homes.

Flower gardens were always and without exception the work of women. One male informant sounded both amused and aghast when I asked him if he grew flowers.

E.S. "Were there any flowers?"

M.F. "Flowers?"

E.S. "Yes."

M.F. "Yes, well, flowers like you have in front of the doors..."

E.S. "That was the women rather than the men?"

M.F. "Oh that's, that's, that is the women!"

(E.S. "Est-ce qu'il y avait des fleurs?"

M.F. "Des fleurs?"

E.S. "Oui."

M.F. "Oui, ben, comment faire pousser des fleurs comme t'as devant les portes..."

E.S. "Ca c'tait plutôt les femmes que les hommes?"

M.F. "Oh ça c'est, ça c'est les femmes!") C2847

Because of the close proximity of some houses to the sea, some women were unable to grow flowers successfully.

"Too close to the sea. Plant some flowers, t'ough, in front of the door here...but they burned with the water, salt water, eh? Couldn't, couldn't save any flowers, none of them because it's too close to the sea."

("Trop proche d'la mer. Planter des fleurs t'ough, devant la porte ici là...mais i' brûlions avec l'eau, l'eau salé, eh? Pourrions, pourrions pas sauver de fleurs, ien d'ça parce c'est trop proche d'la mer.")  
C2855

Most women who grew flowers dug the ground, fertilized it, planted the seeds, weeded and watered it alone. The ground was dug in the spring. There were usually separate beds for each type of flower but the arrangement was according to individual preference. One woman planted different flowers in the same bed so that, from the time the snow melted until it fell again, when one type of flower died, another would be in bloom.

The most common type of fertilizer for flowers was stable manure which was saved from the barn during the winter and spread in the spring. Another woman used raw kelp which she spread in the fall eight to twelve inches deep.

Flower seeds could be bought in Stephenville but some women sent for them at companies on the Canadian mainland. The types of flowers grown are usually gladiolas, tulips, marigolds, pansies and roses. These types of flowers were also the most popular ones grown in the past. They were weeded two or three times each summer depending on the



number of weeds and the amount of time a woman had to do this.

Watering was done with a plastic or aluminum bucket and water taken from the well. This was only done during shortages of water and not on a regular basis. Some people say that such watering causes insects although they were not certain if the insects were found in the water or whether this water caused them to appear on the plants.

Some people still keep gardens, among whom one of my informants, Mathilde Bozec, was so preoccupied with her garden that the only times that I could interview her were rainy days when it was too inclement to work in the garden. She has a beautiful garden which people come from miles to enjoy. She grows a great many types of flowers and mentioned to me without pausing: dahlias, tulips, crocuses, pansies, nasturtiums, daisies, roses of all colours, primroses, petunias, peonies, begonias, snowballs, aseants, bluebells, hollyhocks, cactus, forget-me-nots, carnations, snowdrops and geraniums. The French names of these flowers are not known since they are bought in packages with English writing. Mrs. Bozec brings many of her flowers indoors during the winter in a special room set aside for them. She loves her garden so much that it is a family joke that each year she makes her garden a little bigger. She speaks often of her love of gardening:

"I like to be workin' in de garden. I starts wid de pair a' gloves on and first t'ing - I don't notice when I takes off my gloves, you know - first thing I'm bare hands in dat. My hands not fit ta look at,

I gotta have my hands in de ground. I tol' dem dat, I said, "When I dies give me enough ground because I'm gonna be workin' from in under!" C2851

The vegetable gardens are much more serious since in the past all the vegetables eaten by the family were grown by them and if there was not enough, due to a bad crop or some unexpected occurrence, the family would go hungry or depend on relatives or friends for aid. Even today some families grow enough vegetables to last through the winter although if there is not enough one can buy them in the local Co-op store.

Every family grew their staple vegetables: potatoes, turnip, cabbage and carrots and many families also grew other vegetables although these were not considered necessary: onions, beets, cauliflower and a small amount of salad vegetables.

The men usually plowed the land with a horse and a small plow. Some men plowed in the fall the the spring while others plowed only in the spring.

Years ago all planting was done on a co-operative basis. That is, all the community would plant one person's garden one day and someone else's another day. This co-operation worked for two reasons: firstly, each family had their own large gardens to plant and they knew that if they helped their neighbours, their neighbours would help them. Secondly, the hosts would invariably give a party after the work was completed for all those who had participated. They would provide home-made beer or wine for this party and some informants say that people would help simply

so they could attend the party and drink, which was then an infrequent luxury. This method of community co-operation has died out since few people still plant large gardens for which they need help and since beer is no longer a luxury.

These people planted by hand, using a shovel to turn the ground. Vegetables are planted by most people in drills.

In general, it is traditionally the men who look after the potato crop and the women who tend the other vegetables but this division of labour was not strictly adhered to because of the frequent absences of the men. It is not unknown for the women to plant alone.

"but there are a lot of women who did that alone and a lot of women who planted potatoes by hand, too"

("mais i' en a joliment des femmes qui faisoient ça ieusses-mêmes et joliment des femmes qui plantiont la patate aussi ça à la main") C2860

The women Mrs Murray interviewed described the work they did in the garden in much the same way as did my informants. <sup>64</sup>

Most of the seeds planted were obtained from stores in Port-Au-Port or Stephenville. The only vegetables that were saved to be planted the following year were potatoes although some informants said that their parents kept all kinds of vegetables for seed.

<sup>64</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 250-254

It is believed by most people that planting should take place while the moon is waxing. It is believed that the vegetables will grow better and bigger when planted then.

"That's the day to plant the, the small seeds, the potatoes, pardon, when the moon is growing...and when the moon wanes, in the decline of the moon, well, you could say that it's not so good, it doesn't grow so well."

("Ça c'est le jour planter les, les p'tits granelles, les patates, pardon, quand la lune profita...et quand que la lune décroît, au déclin de la lune, ben, on dirait qu' c'est pas si, ça pousse pas si bien.") C2847

It is also believed that it is better to plant when the tide is rising and not when it is falling, for the same reason. The influence of the growing moon is noted in other places such as Nova Scotia<sup>65</sup> and Quebec. It is said by a researcher of Quebec belief that

"l'opinion courante des gens, lorsque la lune est à son croissant, elle exerça une action plutôt favorable comme d'ailleurs sera favorable dans le même ordre de fait la pleine lune. Par contre, on est d'avis que la lune décroissante exerce une action plus ou moins défavorable ou à tout le moins "corrosive" sur les êtres et les choses" <sup>66</sup>

Fertilizer was spread by the men usually and four types were used, either stable manure, seaweed, caplin or herring, presumably which ever was most readily available since there was no special kind of fertilizer used for

<sup>65</sup>Mary L. Fraser, Folklore of Nova Scotia, (Antigonish, N.S.: Formac Limited) no date, p. 29

<sup>66</sup>Pierre Des Ruisseaux, p. 46

specific vegetables. In earlier days informants say that their parents spread wood ashes boiled with water as a fertilizer.

Stable manure from both cows and sheep was collected from the barn during the winter and stored until spring. Some people spread the manure immediately after the seeds were planted while others preferred to wait until the plants appeared. Then it was spread over potatoes after they had grown four or five inches and on other vegetables at one or two inches.

Those who used seaweed spread it in the fall, usually quite thick. This would rot into the ground over the winter. It was not usually put on after planting since the salt is said to burn the leaves of most plants.

Several kinds of fish were used as fertilizer. Caplin were spread whole while the guts were the only part of the herring or cod to be used. These could be spread in either spring or fall.

Today people use mostly bought chemical fertilizer and lime obtained in Stephenville. Each of these fertilizers are designed for different vegetables. A few people still use sheep manure but only on potatoes. Cow manure is no longer available since there is only one cow still kept in the community.

The vegetables were watered when the rainfall was low although some people say that they never watered potatoes because they did not need it. The watering process was done simply by taking an aluminum or plastic bucket or

container and throwing the water over the plants. As was mentioned in reference to flower gardens, some people no longer water their gardens because it causes insects. Watering was always done in the evening although informants do not know why:

"After the sun has less strength, I don't know what, I don't know if a reason, there's a reason for, for that but it was the old people, well, I learned that from my parents."

("Après qu' la soleil a moins de force, sais pas quoi-c-que, sais pas si une rai--, i' a une raison pou', pou' ça mais c'est les vieux, ben, j'ai appris ça de, de mes parents.") C2847

Today people can obtain chemical pesticides to protect their gardens from insects but years ago there was nothing much to do in the event of insects. One step that was taken was to put salt water around the vegetables which is said to chase away the insects:

"Sea water, salt water is good, salt, I don't know that...chases them away...on the vegetables, salt water on they don't stay."

("L'eau de la mer, l'eau salée est bon, salée, ej sais pas, ça...les envoie de d'la...su' des ledgumes, l'eau salée d'ssus i' restont pas.") C2847

It is also mentioned that vegetables that are fertilized with seaweed will not be attacked by insects.

Weeding is done only once, usually in July when the vegetables are a few inches out of the ground. Like watering, this is done by both men or women, often with help from the children. Weeding has always been by hand. The weeds are pulled from the ground and collected with a rake or hoe. If the family had rabbits or pigs the weeds

would be given to these animals to eat. Otherwise, they would be burned.

The harvest took place toward the end of September for most vegetables although cabbage often stayed in the ground until the end of October. Harvesting was a family affair and every able-bodied person was expected to do his share. The men usually dug up the ground with a horse and plow while the women and children walked behind picking up the vegetables in buckets or sacks.

The same co-operation of the family was needed for harvesting of the hay crop which was left alone to grow. Each family who owned animals, which included everyone in a normal year, grew hay, often said to be one of the most time-consuming jobs:

"you had to work hard at de hay on account you had ta hurry while de weather was fine because den if you get rain on dat hay will dat'll give you double de work, see?" C2851

In the earlier days gathering the hay was a long process, as a conversation between a woman and her husband will show:

M.B. "An' we worked t'ough, I know we worked hard."

J.B. "But you had to den."

M.B. "See? It was something that had to be done."

J.B. "Dere was no gettin' out of it."

M.B. "No."

J.B. "Dose, dose fields had ta be all mowed an' raked by hand dose times."

M.B. "Yeah, 'twas all done by hand dem times."

J.B. "Whole month, month and a half at de hay."

M.B. "Only after de...yeah."

J.B. "Get bad weather..."

M.B. "Now after, well den you get de, de mower."

J.B. "Get de mower an' de raker."

M.B. "Yeah."

J.B. "An' den dat was fast." C2851

Hay was cut with a scythe and left spread out to dry.

It would be turned several times depending on the amount of moisture in the air and in the hay itself. Each night the hay was collected in cone-shaped piles, which people call "pooks". This name for haystacks is also found elsewhere in Newfoundland.<sup>67</sup> It would not usually be tied when dry but put loose in the barn.

About eighty years ago a family came to Long Point from France to spend their first summer, with the intention of staying. It is said that the husband and wife grew one hundred tons of hay that summer while building their house. They exchanged most of the hay with people in Black Duck Brook for vegetables to last the winter and for a young heifer.

Vegetables were stored during the winter in an underground cellar which was situated in the ground under the house or in the ground not far from the house. Each type of cellar had divisions made with wooden planks for each kind of vegetable, which were placed either directly on the ground or in pans, buckets or barrels. Some people say that they hung cabbages above the ground on pointed sticks.

The outdoor cellars had a part above ground which was used to store salt meat and fish.

Those people who had both kinds of cellar would fill them both in the fall. They would use the one under the

<sup>67</sup>Hilda Murray, p. 250



house during the winter months. It was accessible from the house by the means of a hatch in the floor of a room, usually the kitchen, The cellar out of doors would be used in the spring when the snow which covered it during the winter months would be melted.

Both types of cellar were usually large enough for a person to stand in, as high as ten feet and about four to six feet square.

### Animals

In the early years of my informants' marriages and during their parents' lifetimes, the people of Black Duck Brook kept many more animals than they do now. The following is a typical response:

E.S. "What kind of animals did you have before?"

R.L. "We had cows and we kept pigs."

E.S. "Chickens?"

R.L. "Chickens, yes, oh, we kept sheep, yes, I, we kept all those."

(E.S. "Avant, quelles sortes de bêtes aviez-vous?"

R.L. "J'avions des vaches pis j'gardais des cochons."

E.S. "Des poules?"

R.L. "Des poules, oui, oh, j'gardais des moutons, oui, j'ai, j'avons tout gardé ça.") C2855

Each family kept one or more cows from which they would obtain milk and butter during the summer. Some families kept four or five cows each year although I did not hear of any more than five being kept at one time. Today there is only one family in the community which keeps a single cow. Sheep were much more plentiful and most families kept as many as twenty or thirty and one family had fifty. The

highest number of sheep kept during the year refers to the summer months when the lambs are young and in the autumn this number diminishes when the lambs are slaughtered for the winter's meat supply.

Chickens were also common in the community and can still be seen today wandering at will. The number of these animals has also decreased. Whereas several years ago the people kept a dozen today few people keep more than three or four.

Pigs were less commonly kept and I did not hear of any family who kept more than one at a time. These animals are no longer kept because they have become too expensive to feed. The same is true of horses: few were kept since they were only needed to work the garden and to haul wood in winter and could be borrowed from a neighbour.

Animals of this area were all obtained there. The same family would keep the succeeding generations of their animals or sell to neighbours any they did not want. Since people bought their animals from neighbours they are unaware of the species of all animals.

The amount of work involved in taking care of animals varies considerably from season to season. In the summer, fortunately, there is little to do since the animals are sent from the barn in the spring. They are driven down the peninsula in the direction of Long Point where they graze and are free to wander at will. During the summer they are never fed by man.

In reference to the times when people had more animals, the major job to be done during the summer was milking the cows and this was done twice daily almost without exception by the women. The morning milking was done about five o'clock when the men had gotten up and finished breakfast in preparation for the day's fishing. The cows were then free to wander and to return on their own to be milked in the evening. Often they did not return until late:

"and in the evening we couldn't go to bed early because the cows, ah, we had to milk our cows, sometimes it was ten or eleven o'clock before those animals came, came at midnight sometimes, and later than that often. And then we had to milk them and separate the milk and wash our things and let the calves drink, all those things before we could go to bed."

("pis le souère j'pouvions pas aller nous coucher d'bonne heure parce que les vaches, ah, fallait tirer nos vaches, des fois c'tait dix ou onze heures avant que ces bêtes-là arrivions, arrivions à minuit des fois, et p'us tard aussi souvent. Et pis fallait ej tirions ça 'steure pis séparer not' lait et tout ça pis laver nos affaires et pis à bouère nos veaux, toutes ces affaires-là avant qu'ej pouvions aller au lit.") C2850

In the autumn the animals are caught and brought back to the farm. Those to be slaughtered are chosen, which the family will use as food throughout the winter. The main slaughtering was of the lambs that had been born in the spring, as very few were kept over the winter. Before refrigeration methods the animals were not slaughtered at one time but at various times throughout the autumn and winter so that the family could have fresh meat. A few chickens and the pig, if one was kept, would be slaughtered

at this time.

Slaughtering is the domain of the man of the family and although the women often help in some way it is rare to find one who has done the actual slaughtering herself.

E.S. "Did you kill animals?"

M.B. "No, not me, no."

E.S. "That was always the men?"

M.B. "That's the, the job, the work of the men, yes. I have never gotten into that. I keep myself clear of that."

(E.S. "Est-ce que vous avez tué des animaux?"

M.B. "Non, pas moi, non."

E.S. "C'est toujours les hommes?"

M.B. "Ca c'est le, le, la job, l'ouvrage d'les hommes, oui. Jamais 'té là-dedans. Non, je m'mets clair d'ça.") C2850

Slaughtering is done near the barn where the man either shoots an animal in the head or cleaves the head with an axe if there is someone to hold the animal still, which was the work of the woman. He then cuts the animal's throat for the blood to escape since if the animal is not bled the blood will get into the meat, turning it black. The blood is usually collected in buckets for the women to make blood puddings.

This is another activity that should take place during the waxing moon. The explanation for this is:

"if ya kill a sheep in a bad (i.e. waning) moon, well, when you fry your meat, your meat all crunch up right small, eh?" C2845

The winter is the time of year when the animals require most care because they are kept in the barn where they must be fed. Some people fed their animals twice daily and others fed them three times. As well, the barn

must be cleaned and both these jobs are usually done by the men if they are home. On fine winter days the animals are sent out of the barn while the cleaning is done, or for a longer period, depending on the weather.

One process pertaining to animals which does not require human assistance is the birth of the lambs in the spring. This is taken vary casually as I witnessed while visiting the community during the month of May. The family I stayed with owned about a dozen sheep and all that was done in regard to the lambs' birth was for the man of the family to go out in the morning to take stock of how many had been born the previous night. He would then return for breakfast and calmly announce to the family how many lambs had been born and how many had survived. The birth of a calf is taken more seriously since it is a more rare occurrence and since a cow is more valuable both in terms of monetary value and what food products it can produce.

In case of difficult births or sickness there was one man in the community who was invariably called. Emile Benoit had no formal training in this area but picked up the knowledge from his father and other elders of the community. He was also the person in the village who shoed horses which he learned from the man in the community who was the previous blacksmith. Emile demonstrates a natural affinity for such types of work as well as being an accomplished musician and village authority on many subjects.

The job of carrying water is one that now belongs to the past because all houses now have a water supply in the house, be it taps or a pump. Most wells were quite close to the houses, often only several feet from the door. The day's water supply would be collected in the morning. Some women say they did it themselves. This, of course, they would have to do when the men were absent or when they needed more water than was provided in the morning.

Water was collected in tubs or buckets and was a particularly difficult job in winter. Some people mention how they had to break the ice and shovel pathways to the well.

### Fishing

The women of Black Duck Brook no longer help their men in the fishing industry mainly because the fish are no longer dried. Their past degree of involvement varies considerably according to the capacities of the men to do the work. If he was alone he would require his wife's assistance to clean and salt the fish but if there was an elder son or relative to help him or if he worked with someone else, the woman would stay at home.

When asked about their part in the fishing industry there were different responses from the women.

"the women didn't go fishing but they went to the coast, y'know, to haul the cod up to the store, to wash the cod"

("i' alliont pas à pêche mais i' alliont à la côte, t'sais, hâler la morue en haut, au magasin, laver

la morue") C2848

"we had ta help de fishermen...cut-t'roat de fish, you know, you got ta cut-t'roat de fish an' you got ta take de, all de guts out, take de head off." C2848

"But I never, I never worked with the cod. I don't remember having worked on cod like picking or that."

("Mais j'ai jamais, j'ai jamais travaillé de morue. J'm' rappelle pas d' aouère eu travaillé d'le morue comme picker ou d'quoi comme ça.") C2859

"The women gave a hand the minute the fish arrived, oh, on the shore, well, there were a lot of women who would be there."

("Les femmes donnaient la main le minute qu'il ava', le poisson était arrivé, eh, à la côte, ben 'lors, les femmes y avait joliment d'ieusses qui étiont là.") C2861

None of the women I spoke to said that they ever went out in the boat with their husband to fish but the majority did go to the shore to help clean, salt and dry the fish. The same work of women in relation to the fishery is noted by Mrs. Murray<sup>68</sup> The cleaning process involves cutting off the head and removing the internal organs of the fish. It is then placed on flakes where it is spread to dry. During the drying process the fish must be turned and collected in the evening to guard against moisture. The entire process takes two to three weeks. There were no specific jobs which woman always did and none, except going on the water, which they never did.

<sup>68</sup>Hilda Murray, pp. 242-245

In the first decades of this century the people of Black Duck Brook canned the lobster that they caught during the spring and summer. This was done in a small factory which provided employment for many members of the community. The women played an instrumental part in this process:

"you had to put the lobster in cans then, well, that was women's work...the men got the water ready and the women boiled the lobster then the children opened them...the women washed it and packed it."

("faulait mett' le homard en cannes dans ce temps-là, ben, ça c'est l'ouvrage des femmes...des hommes mettaient l'eau pârée pis les femmes bouillient l'homard pis là les enfants ben les câssiont...les fesses la lavaient et la pacquaient.") C2862



## CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the traditional aspects of life in the French community of Black Duck Brook. It has centered primarily on tasks and processes that women performed until recently and has attempted to show the changes that have taken place over the years. Change is not unique to Black Duck Brook, and throughout Newfoundland a way of life has been disappearing. Mrs. Murray's thesis has noted similar changes which affected the community of her study.<sup>69</sup>

Among the factors that have contributed to change are increased availability of education, better transportation and greater communication with the world outside of the immediate area of Port-Au-Port.

In years past, few of the people of Black Duck Brook went to school, and of those who went, none of them did so for more than a few years. The older people still say that they did not need a school education to perform the tasks that ensured their livelihood, although some of them regret their illiteracy.

Today, and for approximately the past twenty years, it has been compulsory for children to attend school, and the school which they attend teaches them the same as children elsewhere in Newfoundland. These children read and write

<sup>69</sup> Hilda Murray, pp. 301-313

while many of their parents are unable to do so. Some of them learn trades and many of them leave their native community to find work elsewhere. Nevertheless, there are still many young people in school who attend only because it is required by law, and many of them leave school on the day of their sixteenth birthday. (Children under sixteen must attend school.) This is for them a great liberation which they celebrate openly.

It is said that education is an indication of the standard of living, but in Black Duck Brook life goes on much the same as before. Of course, the children are not often home to help with the work on the farm or in the house, but today there is much less work to do. Even though more people can now read, few of them do so as a hobby or on a regular basis. This is perhaps because many of the younger people who have been educated have left.

Education is not one of the most important factors that have changed the traditional way of life, but it is the primary reason for the decrease in the French language. Since schooling was conducted entirely in English, all who attended had to be familiar with English and many of them, according to their testimony, were sent home for not knowing English and were punished for using their mother tongue. Naturally most parents wished their children to have an education, and possibly a better life, so they attempted to learn English themselves, in order to teach it to their children.

Increased transportation has made it easier for the people to travel in Newfoundland and the rest of North America. Some of the older people have never been off the Port-Au-Port Peninsula, and think of St. John's as a distance of a couple of days' journey, but more of them have travelled to the Canadian mainland, especially those who have children scattered across North America. There was almost no travelling done in this area before the construction of the road in 1950. Before this date all those who came to or left the community did so by boat. People of Black Duck Brook who have visited other areas have had a first-hand look at other cultures and languages and have probably been influenced by them. Today, many of the inhabitants of the Port-Au-Port Peninsula area drive out to Black Duck Brook for a Sunday drive, and numerous tourists visit the area in the summer. There have also been, in the past few years, several groups of people doing language and geographical surveys of the area.

An amusing anecdote concerning visitors to the area is told of one woman in the community. The visitors were a group of five British girls who went to Black Duck Brook to spend the day looking for wildlife. No one in the community knew of their presence and when two of the girls knocked upon this woman's door she was quite surprised to see strangers. Apparently, the two girls had been separated from their companions and asked Mrs. Felix if she had seen

any girls around. Mrs. Felix, to whom the word "girl" in the British dialect sounded like her word "gull", asked the girls if they were tame. The visitors were most perplexed but assured Mrs. Felix that they were indeed tame. Mrs. Felix replied "Well, there aren't any tame ones around here, but the wild ones are always down to the beach pickin' t'rough de garbage."

Communication has played a vital role in the changes of this area. Not only have the people been saturated with English radio and television since 1964, but they have also had ample opportunity to examine life-styles different from their own. They see clothes fashions, food advertisements, time-saving devices and the "young and beautiful" image of American life. These products have become a part of their way of life, as much as they can afford. What was once unthought of, or an unattainable luxury, is now common-place.

The people of Black Duck Brook live today as do many Newfoundlanders of small communities. They eat basically the same food, they watch the same television channels, (There is a French television channel which originates in Quebec but most people do not watch it because they say they cannot understand the language.) their children attend schools belonging to the same or similar school boards, they work at the same jobs: fishing, farming or government job creation programs and they are plagued by the same troubles and fears: unemployment, crop harvests

damaged or destroyed fishing gear that they cannot afford to replace and raising their children.

There are two factors in the lives of the French speaking people of Black Duck Brook that make them different from the average Newfoundlander. In their memories they have stored the traditions of the old ways: they remember La Chandeleur and Le Jour des Morts, they remember stories of the "désarteurs" who first came to Port-Au-Port and the evening "veillées" when everyone would gather around to hear "contes", they remember that until recently they were teased and persecuted because of their language and heritage and most of all, they remember that their ancestors came from France.

Secondly, they speak a language different from the rest of Newfoundland, even if few of their children do. This is a language which dies a little every time a French Newfoundlander is put into the ground and is a language which few people care enough to try to preserve.

When the last of these French Newfoundlanders dies and takes his language and his memories with him, will the children that are left carry on these traditions? Unfortunately, if life continues as it is at present, the survival of the French in Black Duck Brook is nearing extinction. Only four of the children speak French and an even smaller number can tell you what La Chandeleur or "une veillée" is. We can only hope that their parents will see the value of their dying way of life and pass it

on to their children, as it has been passed on for more than one hundred years.

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## APPENDIX A LEXICON

The following lexicon provides a list of words in common use in the community of Black Duck Brook. It does not claim to be exhaustive for several reasons. Firstly, listed here are only the objects and processes pertaining to the subjects already discussed in this thesis. It does not contain common words found in everyday speech that may be used in referring to any number of topics. Secondly, there is no morphological or phonological analysis of the vocabulary, whose features may cause some words to differ from Standard French and even produce two forms of the same word in the same idiolect. Many of the speakers of this dialect have more than one word for the same object or notion: a Standard French word and a dialect word.

Some of the words found herein are similiar if not identical to the Standard French forms. These words have been included for the reader who may not possess a knowledge of that language, but not all Standard French words are included: only those which are most relevant to the subject area.

Many of these words in the dialect are different from Standard French only in their pronunciation. These words have been noted with a spelling that corresponds to the way that a speaker of Standard French would pronouce them if he saw them written. This method has been chosen since there are no speakers of the dialect who can write French well enough to spell dialect forms.



The meanings of the words found herein have been given to me by the people of Black Duck Brook. This does not imply that there are no other definitions for some words listed here, or that they cannot be used in other contexts.

This lexicon is divided into sections which correspond to the chapters in the main body of the thesis and are then arranged in alphabetical order according to the dialect form. Each word is identified by an abbreviation of its part of speech and followed by a phonetic transcription of that word. There may be more than one manner to transcribe some words, according to the differences in pronunciation, but the most common method of pronunciation is noted here. After each transcription the reader will find the English equivalent to the word, although some common words in the dialect are anglicisms. After the English equivalent there is the Standard French equivalent. The reader may note that in some cases the orthography of the Standard French word is the same as that of the dialect word, but the pronunciation is not the same. The pronunciation of Standard French words has not been included.

## Foodways

- aiglier; v.; [ɛ:glir] ; to turn or make sour; SF aigrir
- baker; v.; [bake] ; to bake or roast; SF cuire au four
- bâratte; n.; [barat] ; butter churn; SF same
- bârapper; v.; [barate] ; to churn butter; SF same
- belvet; n; [bɛlvɛ] also bleuet; [blyɛt] ; blueberry  
SF airelle
- bénédicté; n.; [benɛstɛ] ; prayer said before meals, grace  
SF bénédicité
- beurre; n.; [bœr] ; butter or margarine; SF beurre and  
margarine
- brâsser; v.; [brase] ; to mash; SF same
- bouillir; v.; [bujir] ; to boil; SF same
- calimaçon; n.; [kalimasõ] ; type of edible snail; SF coli-  
maçon
- canne; n.; [kæn] ; tin or can; SF boîte
- casserole; n.; [kasrɔl] ; saucepan; SF same
- chauder; v.; [ʃode] ; to heat; SF chauffer
- chavirer; v.; [ʃavire] ; to pour; SF verser
- chopine; n.; [ʃopin] ; the measure of one cup or a small  
container; SF tasse
- chou; n.; [ʃu] ; cabbage; SF same
- chou-rave; n.; [ʃurav] ; turnip; SF navet
- coq; n.; [kɔk] ; rooster; SF same
- couver; v.; [kuve] ; to cover; SF couvrir
- crâser; v.; [krase] ; to crush or mash; SF écraser
- crème; n.; [krɛm] ; cream; SF same
- dasher; n.; [daʃe] ; dasher; SF palette de baratte

déjeuner; n. & v.; [deʒœne]; to eat lunch or the lunch;  
SF same

dîner; n. & v.; [dine]; to eat dinner or the dinner;  
SF same

doballe; n.; [dobal]; dumpling; SF boulette de pâte

dorsouère; n.; [dorswɛr]; cupboard; SF placard

drum; n.; [drʌm]; oven; SF four

-er; prefix; [ɛr]; same signification as English prefix -er,  
sign of repeated action; SF -re

épas; n.; [ɛpa]; meal; SF repas

farine; n.; [farɪn]; flour; SF same

fléton; n.; [fletõ]; halibut; SF flétan

framouèse; n.; [frãbwɛz]; raspberry; SF framboise

fraise; n.; [frɛz]; strawberry; SF same

fredir; v.; [frɛdir]; to cool; SF froidir

frette; adj.; [frɛt]; cool or cold; SF froid

fricasser; v.; [frikasɛ]; to fry; SF faire frire

gadelle; n.; [gadɛl]; current; SF groseille

galette; n.; [galɛt]; fried bread dough; SF no equivalent

gibier; n.; [ʒibje]; wild birds; SF same

graisse (de lard); n.; [grɛ:s]; animal fat; SF same

graine; n.; [grɛn]; small seed or berry; SF same

graine de plaine; n.; [grɛndɔplɛn]; cranberry; SF canneberge

greyer; v.; [grɛje]; to set (a table); SF mettre la table

hash; n.; [has]; hash; SF hachis

humard; n.; [humar]; lobster; SF homard

lait; n.; [lɛ]; milk; SF same

ledgume; n.; [lɛʒʌm]; vegetable; SF légume

lunch; n.; [lʌntʃ]; snack or small meal; SF casse-croûte

- maquereau; n.; [makro]; mackerel; SF same
- masher; v.; [maeʃe]; to mash; SF brasser
- massacrer; v.; [masakre]; to spoil or rotten; SF gâter  
or abîmer
- melasse; n.; [mɛlas]; molasses; SF mélasse
- morue; n.; [mɔry]; cod; SF same
- mukoke; n.; [mukok]; cranberry; SF canneberge
- naveau; n.; [navo]; turnip; SF navet
- nisette; n.; [nizɛt]; maidenear; SF sorte de graine
- pabina; n.; [pabina]; squasberry; SF sorte de graine
- pain; n.; [pɛ̃]; bread; SF same
- palourde; n.; [palurd]; callibanjoe, a type of edible snail;  
SF bénitier
- patate; n.; [patat]; potato; SF pomme de terre
- pâte; n.; [pat]; type of dough; SF same
- pâté; n.; [pate]; pie; SF tarte
- plaque-bière; n.; [plakbjɛr]; bakeapple; SF chicoute
- poêle; n.; [pwɛl]; stove top; SF brûleur
- poiv'; n.; [pwɛv]; pepper; SF poivre
- pot; n.; [pɔt]; pot for cooking; SF casserole
- pothead; n.; [pɔthed]; pothead, meat prepared in gelatin
- prusse; n.; [prys]; spruce; SF épinette
- putine; n.; [putɛn]; pudding; SF pouding
- raisin; n.; [reizn]; raisin; SF raisin sec
- ramanser; v.; [ramãse]; to gather or to save; SF recueillir  
or mettre de côté
- rôti; n.; [roti]; roast of meat; SF same
- saler; v.; [sale]; to salt meat or fish; SF same
- saumon; n.; [somɔ̃]; salmon; SF same

séparateuse; n.; [separatæz]; separator; SF séparateur  
souper; n.; [supe]; small evening meal; SF same  
spice; n.; [spais]; spice; SF épice  
stewer; v.; [stju:e]; to stew; SF faire cuire en ragoût  
suc'; n.; [syk]; sugar; SF sucre  
tcheire; n.; [tʃɛir]; spoon; SF cuillière  
tchoeur; n.; [tʃœr]; heart; SF coeur  
tchuire; v.; [tʃɥir]; to cook; SF cuire  
tchuisine; n.; [tʃɥisɥn]; kitchen; SF cuisine  
tigue; n.; [tɪk]; kettle SF bouilloire  
trepe; n.; [trɛp]; animal intestines; SF tripe  
yeas'; n.; [ji:s]; yeast; SF levure chimique

### Cleaning

anbri; n.; [âbri]; wall SF lambris  
balai; n.; [balɛ]; broom; SF same  
balayer; v.; [balɛje]; to sweep; SF same  
blackin'; n.; [blækin]; stove blacking SF brillant à metal  
blanchir; v.; [blaʃir]; to whiten; SF same  
bleu à hardes; n.; [blø ahard]; blueing for clothes; SF bleu  
 (d'empois)  
bord; n.; [bor] or boute [bat]; room; SF pièce  
boye; n.; [bojɪ]; washtub; SF cuvier  
brosse; n.; [bros]; brush; SF same  
cend'; n.; [sãd]; ashes; SF cendre  
cham'; n.; [ʃãm]; bedroom; SF chambre à coucher  
chârier; v.; [ʃarje]; to carry; SF porter

- chesser; v.; [ʃɛse]; to dry; SF secher
- chunée; n.; [ʃyne]; chimney; SF cheminée
- couvarte; n.; [kuvart]; blanket; SF couverture
- couvarture; n.; [kuvartyr]; roof; SF toit
- duster; v.; [dʌstɛ]; to dust SF épousetter
- empois; n.; [ãpwa]; starch; SF same
- erpasser; v.; [ərpase]; to iron; SF repasser
- fer à erpasser; n.; [fɛraərpase]; iron; SF fer à repasser
- fourbir; v.; [furbir]; to scrub; SF frotter
- ginnie; n.; [gɪni]; dust ray; SF chiffon
- grenier; n.; [grɛnje]; ceiling; SF plafond
- griser; v.; [grise]; to polish stove; SF cirer
- hardes de lit; n.; [hardɛli]; bedclothes, sheets; SF drap
- lavette; n.; [lavɛt]; dishcloth; SF same
- lessi; n.; [lesi]; lye; SF lessive
- lingue; n.; [liŋ]; clothesline; SF corde à linge
- parer-hardes; v.; [parehard]; to hang out clothes; SF  
étendre le linge
- planche à laver; n.; [plãʃalave]; scrubbing board; SF same
- place; n.; [plas]; floor; SF plancher
- plat; n.; [pla]; dishpan; SF bassine à laver
- power; n.; [pauɛr]; power, electricity; SF électricité
- prop'; adj.; [prɔp]; clean; SF propre
- sieau; n.; [sijo]; bucket; SF seau
- tabelier; n.; [tabɛljɛ]; apron; SF tablier
- tapisser; v.; [tapɪse]; to wallpaper; SF same
- tiau; n.; [tio]; stovepipe; SF tuyau
- tremper; v.; [trãpe]; to soak; SF same

vaisselle; n.; [vɛsɛl]; dishes; SF same

washer; n.; [wɔʃɛr]; automatic clothes washer; SF machine à  
laver

## Textiles

aidguille; n.; [ɛwiabrɔʃe]; needle; SF aiguille

bague; n.; [bag]; ring; SF same

bartelle; n.; [bartɛl]; suspenders; SF bretelles

bas; n.; [ba]; stocking or sock; SF same but sock is  
chaussette

bijoux; n.; [biʃu]; jewellery; SF same

boutique; n.; [butik]; store; SF same

breillon; n.; [brɛjɔ̃]; short wool from sheep's stomach and  
legs; SF laine courte

broche; n.; [brɔʃ]; knitting; SF tricot

brocher; v.; [brɔʃe]; to knit; SF tricoter

brocherie; n.; [brɔʃri]; knitting bee; SF soirée-tricot

brocheuse; n.; [brɔʃœz]; woman who knits; SF tricoteuse

caillot; n.; [kaʝo]; cap; SF chapeau en laine

callette; n.; [kalɛt]; cap; SF chapeau en laine

canson; n.; [kãsɔ̃]; underwear; SF caleçon

carder; [karde] or peigner [peɲe]; v.; to card or comb  
(wool); SF same

cârré; n.; [kare]; checkered cloth; SF tissu à carreaux

casse; n.; [kas]; bark; SF écorce

chausson; n.; [ʃosɔ̃]; heavy sock; SF chaussette

ch'mise; n.; [ʃmiz]; shirt; SF chemise

ch'veau; n.; [ʃvo]; skein of wool; SF écheveau

- couder; v.; [kude]; to sew; SF coudre
- datelle; n.; [datɛl]; lace; SF dentelle
- drapeau; n.; [drapo]; diaper; SF couche
- écarde; n.; [ekard]; card or comb; SF carde
- écardon; n.; [ekardõ]; roll or carded wool; SF cardée
- écarderie; n.; [ekardri]; carding bee; SF soirée-carder
- fil; n.; [fil]; thread; SF same
- filer; v.; [file]; to spin; SF same
- filerie; n.; [filri]; spinning bee; SF soirée-filer
- forces; n.; [fors]; shearing scissors; SF ciseaux
- fouler; v.; [fule]; to shrink; SF treticir
- fuseau; n.; [fuso]; spindle; SF same
- hardes; n.; [hard]; clothes; SF vêtements
- jupe; n.; [ʒyp]; skirt; SF same
- laine; n.; [lɛn]; wool; SF same
- marchette; n.; [marʃɛt]; pedal; SF pédale (de rouet)
- mat; n.; [mæt]; mat; SF tapis, carquette
- mécanique à brocher; n.; [mɛkanikabroʃɛ]; knitting machine;  
SF machine à tricoter
- mécanique à coudre; n.; [mɛkanikakud]; sewing machine;  
machine à coudre
- métier; n.; [metije]; loom; SF métier à tisser
- mett' des points; v.; [mɛtdɛpwa]; to cast on stitches;  
SF monter des mailles
- mitaines; n.; [mitɛn]; mitten; SF moufle
- moulin; n.; [mulɛ̃]; mill; SF same
- mousse; n.; [mus]; moss; SF same
- orwette; n.; [ɔrwɛt]; spinning wheel; SF rouet
- paletot; n.; [palto]; heavy coat; SF same



- pantalons; n.; [pãtalõ]; trousers; SF same
- passager; v.; [pasaze]; to darn; SF raccomoder
- passe-temps; n.; [pastê]; past-time; SF same
- patron; n.; [patrõ]; pattern; SF same
- pleton; n.; [pletõ]; ball of wool; SF pelote
- point; n.; [pwa]; stitch (in knitting); SF maille
- pou; n.; [pu]; louse; SF same
- racmoder; v.; [rakmõde]; to repair or to mend; SF raccomoder
- rapillon; n.; [rapijõ]; short wool; SF laine courte
- rassembler; v.; [rasãble]; to follow a pattern; SF suivre  
un patron
- rouleaux; [rulo] or roulottes; [rulõt]; roll of carded wool:  
SF cardée
- skivver; n.; [skivvər]; large knitting needle; SF grosse  
aiguille
- souliers de peau; n.; [suljedəpo]; skin shoes, moccasin;  
SF mocassin
- stuff; n.; [stuf]; material; SF tissu
- tailler; v.; [taije]; to cut out; SF couper
- tchu de robe; n.; [tʃudərɔb]; skirt; SF jupe
- tchulottes; n.; [tʃulõt]; pants; SF culottes
- teinder; v.; [tẽde]; to dye; SF teinter
- teindu; v. p.p.; [tẽdy]; dyed; SF teinté
- teinture; n.; [tẽntyɾ]; dye; SF same
- torsir; v.; [tɔrsir]; to decrease or to twist; SF fermer des  
mailles or tordre
- tond'; v.; [tõd]; to shear; SF tondre
- tresser; v.; [trɛse]; to set hair; SF dresser
- tricot; n.; [triko]; sweater; SF same
- tuque; n.; [tyk]; cap; SF chapeau en laine

varge; n.; [varʒ]; yard; SF verge

### Pregnancy and Childbirth

attraper; v.; [atrape]; to conceive; SF concevoir

besson; n.; [bɛsõ]; twin; SF jumeau, jumelle

chasse-femme; n.; [ʒazfɛm]; midwife; SF sage-femme

corde; n.; [kɔrd]; umbilical cord; SF le cordon ombilical

devenir dans le troub'; v.; [dəvnirdãltrub]; to become pregnant (get in trouble); SF devenir enceinte

douleurs; n.; [dulœ:r]; labour pains; SF same

éné; v., p.p.; [ene]; born; SF né

envie; n.; [ãvi]; craving; SF same

et' en famille; v.; [ɛtãfamij]; to be pregnant; SF être enceinte

folleries; n.; [fɔlri]; nonsense; SF same

hospital; n.; [hɔspitl]; hospital; SF hôpital

nurse; n.; [nɔ:rs]; nurse; SF infirmière

nurser; n.; [nɔ:rse]; to breast-feed or nurse; SF allaiter

parder; v.; [parde]; to miscarry; SF avorter

tache; n.; [taʃ]; birthmark; SF tache de naissance

tour de l'âge; n.; [turɔlaz]; menopause; SF ménopause

### Custom

arb' de Noël; n.; [arbdənoɛl]; Christmas tree; SF arbre de Noël

baptême; n.; [baptɛm]; baptism; SF same

baptiser; v.; [baptise]; to baptize; SF same

- Carême; n.; [kərəm]; Lent; SF same
- catain; n.; [katɛ̃]; a doll; SF poupée
- Chandeleur; n.; [ʃɑ̃dlœ:r]; Candlemas; SF same
- chasée; n.; [ʃasɛ]; coffin; SF cerceuil
- cimtchère; n.; [sɪmtʃɛr]; cemetery; SF cimetièr
- conte; n.; [kɔ̃t]; folktale; SF same
- crêpe; n.; [krɛp]; pancake; SF same
- église; n.; [egliz]; church; SF same
- jeûner; v.; [ʒøne]; to fast; SF same
- Jour de l'An; n.; [ʒurdlɑ̃]; New Year's Day; SF same
- Jour des Morts; n.; [ʒurdɛmɔ:r]; Day of the Dead; SF same
- Mardi Gras; n.; [mardigra]; Shrove Tuesday; SF same
- mariage; n.; [mariʒaʒ]; marriage; SF same
- marraine; n.; [marɛn]; godmother; SF same
- mort; n.; [mɔ:r]; death; SF same
- mummer; n.; [mɑmɔ:r]; mummer; SF no equivalent
- mumming; v.; [mɑmɔ:riŋ]; to mummer; SF no equivalent
- Noël; n.; [noɛl]; Christmas; SF same
- Pâques; n.; [pak]; Easter; SF same
- parche; n.; [parʃ]; pole; SF perche
- parrain; n.; [parɛ̃]; godfather; SF same
- pok; n.; [pak]; on Easter Day, a hit on the forehead
- prêt'; n.; [prɛt]; priest; SF prêtre
- roi de la Chandeleur; n.; [rwadla<sup>a</sup>ʃɑ̃dlœ:r]; the man who is  
the king of the Candlemas celebration
- les Rois; n.; [lɛrwa]; Epiphany; SF same
- ruban nouère; n.; [rubɑnwɛr]; black arm band; SF brassard  
de deuil

Toussaint; n.; [tusɛ̃]; All Saints' Day; SF same

Vederdi Saint; n.; [vɛdɛrdisɛ̃]; Good Friday; SF vendredi  
saint

veillée; n.; [vɛje]; an evening gathering or a wake; SF  
same or veillée mortuaire

Vieux Noël; n.; [vjønoɛl]; Old Christmas Day; SF épiphanie

### Outdoor Work

agneau; n.; [aɲo]; lamb; SF same

amârrer; v.; [amare]; to tie; SF attacher, lier

arroser; v.; [arɔze]; to water; SF same

barbis; n.; [barbi]; sheep; SF brebis

caplin; n.; [kaplin]; caplin; SF capelan

cave; n.; [kav]; cellar; SF same

chârrier; v.; [ʃarije]; to carry; SF porter

ch'val; n.; [ʃval]; horse; SF cheval

cochon; n.; [koʃɔ̃]; pig; SF same

donner à manger; v.; [dɔ̃neamɑ̃ʒe]; to feed (animals); SF same

dropper; v.; [drɔpe]; to plant; SF semer

engrais; n.; [ɑ̃grɛ]; fertilizer (manure); SF manure

êt au large; v.; [ɛtolarʒ]; to go fishing or to be fishing;  
SF aller à la pêche, être à la pêche

fender; v.; [fâde]; to split fish; SF fendre

foin; n.; [fwɛ̃]; hay; SF same

fotène; n.; [fotɛn]; well; SF fontaine

goémon; n.; [gwɛmɔ̃]; seaweed; SF same

graine; n.; [grɛn]; seed; SF same

granelle; n.; [granɛl]; small vegetables used for seed;  
SF légume à semence

grange; n.; [grãʒ]; barn; SF same

ledgume; n.; [lɛdzʌm]; vegetable; SF légume

lune; n.; [lyn]; moon; SF same

magasin; n.; [mɛgazɛ̃]; store (for fish); SF same

mouton; n.; [mutõ]; sheep; SF same

pook; n.; [puk]; haystack, pook (in Newfoundland) ; SF  
meule de foin

poule; n.; [pul]; hen; SF same

poulet; n.; [pulɛ]; chicken; SF same

qu'rir; v.; [krir]; to carry or fetch; SF querir

sarber; v.; [sarbe]; to weed; SF sarcler

tabour; n.; [tabur]; porch; SF tambour

tirer; v.; [tire]; to milk; SF traire

trier; v.; [tri<sup>j</sup>e]; to separate large from small (potatoes,  
fish); SF same

tuser; v.; [tuze]; to slaughter; SF tuer, abattre

vache; n.; [vaʃ]; cow; SF same

vigneau; n.; [vigno]; fishflake; SF no equivalent but this  
form found in St. Pierre et Miquelon

## APPENDIX B FOLKTALE

The following is a folktale entitled "Le Montagne Nouère" ("The Black Mountain") told to me by Mr. Emile Benoit in November of 1977. The recording took place in his home in the early evening in the presence of Mr. Benoit, his wife, Rita, his youngest daughter, aged eight, Miss Ruth King and myself.

Mr. Benoit was born in 1913 in Black Duck Brook. One of his sisters, Mrs. Mary Felix, is one of my principal informants. In his early twenties, Mr. Benoit married an Indian woman who bore him several children, some of whom live in Black Duck Brook with families of their own. His wife died at an early age and he later married an English woman who has given him several more children.

Mr. Benoit is a sensitive, intelligent, artistic human being. He is an accomplished singer and violinist, having played in major Canadian cities and on national television. He has a warm, quick sense of humour and delights in entertaining even the smallest of audiences. Part of his repertoire of entertainment is the folktales he knows although he seldom has the occasion to tell them now since television has replaced this traditional entertainment. "Le Montagne Nouère" and other folktales were learned by him from older people in his childhood and it is years since he heard them told by someone else. Yet, his story flows well and his memory is good, which proves his intelligence. He probably adds a little or modifies some parts of the tale as he goes along, according to the

audience's reaction.

For Mr. Benoit, an integral part of his tale is acting out the motions of the characters. He stamps his feet, pounds the table, shouts and changes his voice. In May he told me a tale in which a young man finds a fortune and returns to his home to show the greedy farmer his luck. At this point, Mr. Benoit put his hand in his pocket, withdrew a considerable amount of change and threw it forcibly across the room.

This folktale is included for several reasons. Firstly, it will give the reader a better indication of traditional life and will capture some of the atmosphere of the "veillée". Secondly, it may be of interest to the collector of folktales. He can judge for himself the types and motifs contained herein and thus, in some measure, in French Newfoundland. Thirdly, from this folktale the reader will have a better indication of the French dialect of Black Duck Brook. It has already been seen in numerous quotes but these have been taken out of context. This tale, on the other hand, is a continuous monologue and shows the words in the dialect as they are modified by those around them.

The transcription of this tape was largely done by Miss Ruth King although I listened to it and made minor changes and suggestions. The reader of the transcript should take into consideration the method of orthography used to represent the dialect. As mentioned earlier, the writing corresponds to the way a speaker of Standard French would pronounce the words if he saw them written. The

unusual letter combinations are not typographical errors but sounds in the dialect.

For the reader who cannot read French, this is the story of a young man, a poker player, who boasts that even the devil could not beat him. One evening a gentleman comes to play and wins all the young man's possessions, his father and mother and, ultimately, the young man himself. The devil identifies himself and tells the young man to be at the Black Mountain in a year and a day. He does not know where to find it and encounters troubles and adventure but arrives there on time. The devil gives him three tasks to accomplish: To cut down a forest with a paper axe, to climb a glass pole and carry an egg to the ground without breaking it and to drain a lake with a straw basket. The devil has three daughters, one of whom is a witch, and she completes the tasks for him. They then marry and plan to escape. They leave the mountain on horseback followed by the devil and arrive safely on holy ground in the nick of time.



"Touhours par une bonne fois c'est l'histouère d'la montagne nouère. Un coup par une bonne fois y avait un, un, un jeune homme. I' tait un joueur de poker. Ah, ça jouait, parsonne pouvait l' gagnait. Parsonne, i' veniont à tous les parts du monde. I' jouiont, eh, les cartes, aux cartes avec lui. Nah! Pourraient pas gagner, hein? I' dit comme ça por pas i' gagnait pis c'est ça. Lui, i' dit "Eh, j'suis sûr", i' dit, "comme i' ça s'ra a diab'", i' dit, "qui vient (two words) le demon, i' me gagera pas." Touhours ça était comme ça pour lui. Un coupel de souèrées tout d'un coup tchun vient, un gentil jeune homme qui rent', à chapeau nouère, eh, eh, un beau suit nouère, oh! le bel homme! Ben, i' dit, "Comment que ça va?" "Oh, ça va bien", i' dit. I' dit, "Quoi-c- que vous faisez pour une vie?" "Ah", i' dit, "moi, j'suis un joueur de poker", i' dit. Le diab' i' dit, "J'sus un joueur de poker. J'ai jamais 'té gagné". I' dit "Eh, peux-tu jouer de poker, toi?" "Oh oui", i' dit, "un, un p'tit peu", i' dit. C'est bon. "Asseyions un, asseyions un game." Alright. Et le diab' s'assit à la tab' et pis lui pis là i' commençont. C'est bien. "Promière, hein, allons jouer", i' dit, "pour cent pias'." Bon, i' jouont. Le jeune homme gagne cent pias'. A'right. Ah, avont un aut' game, deux cent pias'. Mis deux cent pias' le jeune homme le diab' mis trois cent. Le jeune homme mis un aut' cent. Trois cent. Le diab' trois cent lui, trois cent, joue encore. Ah bien, le jeune homme ramanse le potte, hâle le potte d'dans. Là. A un aut' coup là. Le jeune homme mis quat' cent, i' pousse quat' cent. Le diab' pousse cinq cent. Ah. Et là i' pousse deux aut'es cent pis i' six cent, cent plus que le diab' avait mis et diab' pousse deux aut'es cent. Là i' pousse encore un aut' cent, i' veut aller pas' le diab', le diab' allait passer lui et so on et so on. A quel temps c'est mis à deux mille pias'. Bon! Là i' coupe les cartes et pis en donne les cartes et tout bien. Le diab' hâle les deux mille pias', i' hâle de tcheques pottes. Là joue encore. Le jeune homme mis deux mille pias', le diab' mis trois mille. Pis i' n'en mis un aut' mille so il avait trois mille et le diab' trois mille. Ben, bon! Joue. Le diab' hâle le jackpot encore mais i' savait pas qu'i' 'tait le diab'. I' croyait que c'tait un, un gentil gentleman et pis, eh, ça 'tait comme ça pis ça 'oue et ça 'oue, ça 'oue 'usqu'à cinq mille pias', dix mille pias', vingt mille pias', 'usqu'à temps qu'i' avait tout sa fortune partie. Il avait p'us. Le diab' i' dit, "As-tu d'aut'?" I' dit, "Non", i' dit, "j'ai p'us arien. La seule affaire que j'ai", i' dit c'est, c'est mon chez nous", i' dit, "mon père là chez nous, mon père et ma mère", i' dit, "c'est tout". "Ben", i' dit, "jouons pour ça". "Mais", i' dit, "oui, bon. Je joue pour ça", i' dit, "c'est ça". I' dit, "Comment-c-que ta la valeur" i' dit, "de son père le, le, de chez vous et de ton père et la mère?" "Oh", i' dit, "à l'entour de dix mille pias'." Bon. Joue. Le diab' hâle ça d'dans. "Ben", i' dit, "c'est tout, j' peux p'us jouer", i' dit. Tu m'as gagné. "Oh",

i' dit, "t'as quoi d'aut', d'aut' à 'ouer, eh, faut quoi dire encore d'aut' chose." I' dit "Quoi que ça pourrait êt'?" "Ben", i' dit, "y a ton père et ta mère." "Oh, mon père et ma mère", i' dit, "je pourrais pas jouer pour mon père et ma mère", i' dit. "Ah, ben, dame, c'est d' quoi!" Pis ça commence iun pas saouère là, i', i' commence à ce pas saouère là d'quoi y avait de quoi de, de tchurieux à tcheque part là...A' right, quand qu'i' dit, "Je crois pas", i' dit, "j'crois on va jouer a'c mon père et ma mère. "Ah! viens-t-en", i' dit, "viens-t-en", i' dit, "t'aras p't-êt' le gagner". "Pis i' gagnait le moi", i' dit, "mais, eh, p't-êt' bien asteure le, la chance", i' dit, "va t'en venir", i' dit. Pis c'est ça. "Bien, c'est ça va, ça va asseger. Ben dame son père et sa mère là avouère entour de cinquante mille pias'. La valeur mis cinquante mille pias', s'il pardait, son père et sa mère, le diab', ben, i' donnait cinquante mille pias' mais si, si le jeune homme pardait, ben, le, le diab' avait le, le père et la mère. Touhous c'est bien, là, ça 'oue. Le diab' ramanse le père et la mère. T'as, i' a p'us arien. Ienque lui. Là, i' dit, "As-tu quoi d'aut'?" Mais été mal chanceux. "Oh oui", i' dit, "I guess", i' dit "j'tais mal chanceux". I' dit, "As-tu quoi d'aut' à jouer pour?" "Non, i' a p'us arien", i' dit, "non, 'uste mon père et ma mère", i' dit, "c'est toute. Le seul qui res' asteure, c'est moi." "Mais tu joue-t-en encore! Joue pour toi!" I' dit, "Quoi-c-que tu crois que ta vie y coûte là? Quoi-c-que comment-c-que tu, une valeur que ça, que ça coûte?" "Oh ça va cent mille pias'." I' dit "'Sais pas si vous pouvez aouère jouer pour moi. Je crois qu'ej m'en vas quitter." "Ah, i' sera pas ici si...abandonné que ça", i' dit, "si tu vas pas, eh, à jouer", i' dit. "C'est bien à finir p't-êt' bien à coup ici tu vas, tu vas gagner", i' dit. Uh, my God, i' a tant coaxé de 'oue tchen v'là parti! Pour cent mille pias'. I' joue, là, le diab' la gagne. Là, le diab' s'est lève. "Ben", i' dit, "je pense", i' dit, " j'sommes abadonné jouer depis que t'as p'us arien à, à jouer. T'as joué pour ton père et ta mère, t'as joué pour toi-même. T'as tout perdu. Comme ça ben, asteure...Là", i' dit, "j'vas te dire", i' dit "qu'ej suis le diab'. C'est moi qu'est le diab'", i' dit. "Pis je te veux", i' dit, "à la montagne nouère." "Mais si où va trouver ça, moi?" "Ben", i' dit, "tu vas t'êt' obligé de l' trouver. Parce si tu dis, si tu la trouve pas ça va ta malheur à toi. Si, dois, tu pouvais trouver une façon de trouver où-c-qu'a la montagne nouère est...p' dame." Et ça, i' s'en va chez lui, arrive chez lui pas d'père ni mère, le père et la mère partis la maison partie. P'us arien de res'. Le diab' avait tout enlevé. Allez! Enlève là là. Ben, là, i' s' pousse. I' se prend marcher. "Ben que me pren' que me pousse asteure. I' s'ra p't-êt' prend' un an et un jour", i' dit, "avant qu'ej peux trouver la montagne nouère. Pis t'as abandonné." Ah découragé...qu'i' 'tait. Touhous c'est bien là i' se pousse. Marche et marche et marche et marche et marche pour

des, des jours et des jours et des mois et pour un couplet de mois qu'i' marchait. I'...i' vivait su' les racines et su' les, les...les branches d'sapin et de 'prusse. Des fois il ara tué un, un souris ou un rat pis l'ara mangé. C'est ça. Fallait qu'i' ah, ah, asseger trouver la montagne nouère. Pis là, marche. Ben il a marché pour, pour deux mois pour sûr. Tout d'un coup il arrive à c'tait temps-là c'est entour de trois ou quat' mills ans d'ça, c'est un bon boute. C'est pas comme asteure des maisons partout le long du chemin. Mais c'tait dans là c'tait tous des forêts d'bois. Pis fallait que tu marches à travars du bois toujours. Ça donne un jour i' dit, 'oit une p'tite clarté ça souerée-là qu'i' 'tait après deux mois à marcher. Pis faim, il avait faim, i' il avait plus que le, le peau que les coller su' les os. I' 'tait p'us maig' que çui donc. Oh, oh pas fitte à r'garder. Touhours il arrive là. Il frappe à la porte. Oh (two words) La vieille, a' ouv' la porte. Oh, une vieille y a alle avait deux mille ans! Deux mille ans qu' elle avait. A' toute pleine de frondes qu'est bassineur et des croutes et des...et les ch'eux dans les yeux pis fait... pis villain. Ben, i' dit, "Grand-mère, grand-mère." Ben, a' dit "Mon cher jeune homme", a' dit, "ailloû-c-que tu vas?" "Ben", i' dit, "grand-mère", i' dit, "j'sus pris. Oh, j'tais un jouer de cartes", i' dit, "j'jouais de poker et pis je gagnais tout le monde pis tout d'un coup ç'a donné", i' dit, "j'ai rencontré le diab'", i' dit, "pis j'ai joué avec et pis i' m'a gagné, i' m'a (one word) i' en mon père et ma mère i' m'ont tout perdu, tout perdu. Comme ça", i' dit, "asteure", i' dit, "j'sus supposé d'êt à la montagne nouère", i' dit, "dans un an et un jour. Pis j'sais pas tu vas le faire pis j'sais pas ailloû-c-que c'est." "Mais", a' dit, "mon cher enfant", a' dit, "j'as pas 'tendu arien d' la montagne nouère, pas moi. Mais", a' dit, "j'ai une soeur", a' dit, "qui res'", a' dit, "comme...à l'entour de...deux cent milles d'ici, p't-êt' bien trois cent milles. P't-êt' bien", a' dit, "ielle pourra 'té bien saouère ailloû-c-qu'elle est, la montagne nouère. Mais moi", a' dit, "j'sais pas." Touhours c'est bien. A' i' donne à manger pis eh, ah, il a couché la souerée-là, prend un bon r'pos. Pis là lendemain i' donne des galettes et toutes sortes de p'tites gâteaux pis un masse à manger. Pis là i' se pousse. Oh, il avait un gros sac su' l' dos, ça pesait comme deux cent liv'es. Pis là c'est ça. Marche et marche et marche et marche et marche. Il a marché pour deux semaines. Deux semaines solid. Pas de mansion arien. Pis là marche encore pis marche pis marche pis marche pis marche et marche et marche. Marche encore deux aut'es semaines. Pas de mansion arien encore arien à ouère. Mais i' dit, "My God, c'est tchorieux", i' dit, "que j'sus, que j'sus bien cent milles à marcher asteure, oh, deux cent milles pour sûr. Pour sûr", i' dit. Ben dame, c'est ça. Ah je, se pousse encore y avait quat' semaines et passer un mois pis ça pousse et tout le temps et pis i' marche et marche et marche et...eh, ç' allait. Et bientôt les viv'es

se commençait à, à venir de court. Tout d'un coup si tu obligeais de faire ah, comme la première, eh, la première fois, eh, i' commence à manger des 'prusses c'est des racines et la vase et de la terre et des p'tits souris et toutes sortes d'affaires qu'i' pouvait croquer, des p'tits gibiers. T'as pas maladroït, i' garde aux chaines de roches là i' paque, i' les envoie la tête pis whoosh, ça tombait là. I' plumait ça pis i' mangeait ça de cru là. C'tait bon, hein? Quand t'as faim, tout grand, tout en grand est bon...Anyhow, c'est bon. I' marche et marche et marche...il a marché les deux cent milles ça...Ben tout d'un coup t'as que (some words) arrivé là la nuit s'il y avait une p'tite clarté encore. "Ah ben", i' dit, "ben, ben, i' faut croire ça c'est sa soeur. C'est sa soeur." Et ça i' se pousse, frappe à la porte. Ah mon saint de la vie, ça c'tait villain! Oh wow! wow! Elle avait une grosse bouche et les babines ça tombe en bas d' son menton. Le nez c'est à peu près comme trois pouces de large, les deux yeux c'taient rentrés dans, dans la tête les, de, la chair en-d'sus les yeux, ça descendait comme trois pouces pareil comme des babines de, de, de, (one word) Ugh! Pas fitte à ergarder. Mais i' l'appelle grand-mère pareil. I' 'tait assez stucké pis, pis ielle si bonne. "Mon pauvre enfant", a' dit, "mais rente", a' dit. "Mon cher garçon, ben, viens", a' dit, "rente." Pis a' dit, "assis-toi", a' dit, "tu dois aouère faim". "Oui", i' dit, "j'ai faim", i' dit. Pis i' dit, i' conte asteure pour sa, sa soeur ah, ah, c'est ielle qui avait i' dit de venir là sa soeur. Pis i' dit quoi-c-qu'i' avait arrivé tout en grand comme il avait dit à sa, sa première soeur. Pis a' dit, "Oui, je la connais", a' dit, "mais y avait deux mille ans qu'elle l'avait pas vue." Deux mille ans, penses-tu! Nous aut'es avons la misère avait avouère vingt ans. Deux mille ans qu'elle avait pas vu. Allez! A' i' dit, i' dit, "Savez-vous le, le, ailloù-c-qu' elle est, la montagne nouère, vous?" "Non", a' dit, "mon enfant j'sais pas. Ton jamais entendu parler de montagne nouère"... "Ben", i' dit, "j'sais pas pour quoi faire, grand-mère, mais je garantie j'ai un tris' de position. Ej crois bien que le diab' va, va m'aouère alright. I' va bouillir les, mes os, fricasser mes os pour l'éternité, ceuses-là dans l'enfer." A' dit, "Perds pas courage", a' dit, "parce j'ai une aut' soeur, j'ai une aut' soeur p'us loin, quat' cent milles d'ici." "Ben", i' dit, "ça un bon boute, quat' cent milles." "Oui", a' dit, "mais ielle, elle est la p'us vieille et p't-êt' bien ielle sara ailloù qu'est la montagne nouère." "Ben, dame", i' dit, "ça souhaiter mais dame, si elle sait pas je sais pas de quoi faire. Je n' sais pas est-ce que je vas. Est-ce a' peut dire, j'sais pas." "Perds pas courage", a' dit, "i' fa' l'aouère p't-êt' bien elle sara." "Et bien, grand-mère", i' dit, "bien dame", i' dit, "c'est ça." A allons coucher la souerée-là pis lende-main matin de--dêjeune pis a' j' donne une saquée encore de, de, de st--, de quoi à manger. Ben, i' 'tait ça, i' n'a grondé, mett' le sac su', su' ses épaules. Ah, ça pesait

comme trois cent liv'es. Et c'est ça, i' se pousse, pousse, marche, marche quat' cent milles à marcher. Asteure-lâ. Oh, c'est pas, c'est pas deux cent milles ça. Quat' cent milles. Ben il avait quat' ou cinq mois de fait pis ça va vite d'une histouère, t'sais? Touhous, touhous il marche, i' marche, i' marche, i' marche. Bientôt y avait p'us arien dans l' sac c'est toute fini, toute mangé. Là i' a commencé à manger les racines encore pis la vase et pis des p'tits souris pis des p'tits gibiers ça du bois attrapé, ça du bois attrapé. I' su' la fin i' dit, i' dit, "plume et plume", i' dit, i' dit, "manger plume et tout". Et les souris i' les avalait tout ronde pas d' nettoyerait parce i' tchin' en vie. Touhous i' était de touhous c'est le tous des temps-lâ. Il a commencé à tout pour finir, pour arriver ailloû-c-que la vieille était. Y a aussi bien dire un an allons dire p't-êt' bien onze mois et vingt-cinq jours, vingt-huit jours de quoi de même. Anyhow, c'est bien, bientôt après des souerées et des jours à marcher il arrive à une p'tite place encore à ha! ha! "Bien", i' dit, "pour croire ça c'est leu' soeur, c'est leu' soeur, ah, ben, c'est ma darnière chance"; i' dit. I' va là, i' frappe à la porte ah, ah beau saint la vie! Ah, quand qu'elle a ouvri il a pas pu dire "Bonsoir, grand-mère." Il a tombé. C'ta' si villain! Ah! Ah! My God! Les deux yeux était rentrant en arrière, y avait la tête y avait pas de yeux à ouère ienque deux p'tits trous nouères et pis des os dame, des poils des (two words) t'aras fait comme six pouces d' long. Pis ça pendait là. Pis la babine-lâ bien ma--mais je peux pas le dire, peux pas le, faut que j'ai un, un morceau de papier pis un crayon pis vous marker là. J'ai vu, moi, la vieille-lâ, oh, a', a' 'tait villaine. Ça fait villain. Mais anyhow, c'est bon, ah ben. "Rent'e, rent'e", pis a' parlait tchurieux oh, ba! ba! ba! Rent'e assieds-toi." Alle a misère à parler, c'est si vieux, deux mille ans, pense-tu, dame. Anyway, "Grand-mère", i' dit, pis i' s' assis pis là i' commence à trembler ah, i' s'en allait comme ça mais comme s'i' 'tait g'lé. "Es-tu gelé?" (several words in old woman's voice) "Non, grand-mère", i' dit, "mais je, j'ai faim", i' dit. "J'sus mort de faim". Touhous a' i' donne à manger pis i' sont plus comme i' faut là. Ben! Là i' conte l'histouère ah, quoi-c-qui arrivait tout en grand et parlait ses soeurs il avait 'té couché là deux souerées, sa première soeur, deuxième soeur pis aviont dit de y à ielle qu'est la troisième soeur. "Ben", a' dit, "oui, si, mais", a' dit, " y a deux mille ans j'ai pas vu", a' dit, "mes soeurs", a' dit. "Ouais", i' dit, "ouais", i' dit, "c'est longtemps", i' dit, "c'est pou', pour des soeurs", i' dit, "ça pour une soeur ", i' dit, "c'est bien longtemps". Ben, c'est bon. A' i' dit, "Eh, vous savez pas, vous, ailloû-c-qu'il est, la montagne nouère, vous?" "Non", a' dit, "j'sais pas ailloû-c-qu'elle est, la montagne nouère...mais", a' dit, "p't-êt' bien j'ai des aig'es ici, eagle, hein? Des aig'es ici", a' dit, "p't-êt' bien ieusses", a' dit, "pourront p't-êt' savouère

ailloû-c-qu'elle est, la montagne nouère. Mais dame, pour une souère", a' dit, "j' peux pas di--j' peux pas t'arien dire pour une souère mais, dame", a' dit, "demain", a' dit, "vas appeler mes aig'es et pis p't-êt' bien iun des eux ara' p't-êt' vu la montagne nouère. C'est malaisé d'dire. Tu seras p't-êt' chanceux", a' dit. I' dit, "Oh, c'est bien." Ah i' a dormi comme un, un bûche ct souerée-lâ. Ah, ça dormait. Eh bien lendemain matin, arrive. Quand que ç'arrive à l'entour de dix ou onze heures, alle appelle ses aig'es. Ah, il avont arrivé, quack, quack, quack pis (makes noises like a bird) i' n'avait, je pense, comme une, une vingtaine. Eh a' dit, "Savez-vous, vous-aut'es, ailloû-c-que la montagne nouère?" Non! Non! Non! Non! Toute non, toute non. Bientôt y en avait iun, à un aut'-lâ i' s'en venait là le vieille, le viette, le vieux tout encore, j' pense qu'i' 'tait bien comme cent ans. S'en venir i', i' (one word) ienque voit deux, deux ou trois coups d'oeil pis i' tombait. Ah, c'est assez vieux...Lâ a' dit, "Toi", a' dit, "Tu sais-tu ailloû-c-qu'elle est, la montagne nouère?" "Oui", i' dit, "j'sais ailloû-c-qu'alle est." "Oh, tu sais ailloû-c-qu'alle est!" Oh! I' 'tait assez content, le jeune homme 'tait assez content et i' qu'i' savait. Allez! "Ailloû-c-qu'alle est? Ailloû-c-qu'alle est, la montagne nouère?" Ben, i' dit ailloû-c-qu'alle est. Ben, c'est ça. A' dit, "Mon cher j' homme", a' dit, "tu le sais, eh, tu vas aouère, tu vas trouver la montagne nouère..." C'est bien. Oh, il a resté lâ pour, eh, deux ou trois semaines-lâ comme ça, ah, touhours (one word) Ça prenait deux jours pour l'aig' aller voler lâ. Ben, i' restait a'c ielle lâ trois semaines. Oh, a' nourrit ça, ça...i' s'a bâti, tu sais, i' s'a mis en shape, en, eh! 'Tention! En masse à manger, en masse de, de, des aig'es et (two words) pis ces oeufs et tout sartes d'affaires pis ça mangeait. Là! Ah, avant que l'an et l'an, l'année et un jour arrive lâ i' se pousse lâ temps, temps ça venait au boute. Touhours asteure i' dit, "Je m'en vas". A' dit, eh, i' dit, "Vas-tu", i' dit, "à son aig' d-- son aig'", a' dit. "Vas-tu apporter asteure jeune homme-lâ à la montagne nouère?" I' dit, "Oui, oui, a'right." "Ben", a' dit, "tchiens", a' dit, "m'en vas te donner une bouteille de med'cene...et pis eh, tu vas embarquer su' le dos de l'aig'...et pis quand que t'aras faim pis l'aig' ara faim, tu couperas un morceau de ta chair, de ta jambe pis tu donneras à l'aig'. Pis, toi, tu peux manger un morceau aussi. Mais oublie pas pren' le med'cene pis froter ceux-lâ ce que t'as coupé, la, la chair...et t'as coupé la chair", i' dit, "pis ça va venir pareil", a' dit, "comme que c'tait." C'est bien. Touhours à l'entour de onze heures, ben, i' se poussaient. Il embarque su' l' dos de l'aig' pis lâ c'est ça, parti. Bon, ça vole, ça vole, bientôt le l'aig' commençait à, i' criait il ava' faim. Oh, i' prend son coôteau pis i' coupe un morceau pis i' donne. I' l'envale ça pis i' se pousse. I' mis se coupe un morceau aussi pis envale aussi. Là, i' prend la med'cene

pis i' frotte! Pis c'est ça. I' dguerit encore. Ah, après une, une vingtaine de milles ou quoi de même l', l'aig' crie encore pour 'valer un morceau. Quand que l'aig' envale pis pour tchin' fort, faut parce qu'i' en allait sans de quoi à manger et le vole avec un homme su' l' dos. Crie d'un coup i' faut t'ava le stomac fort. Ha! Ha! Pas d'danger. Touhours ça était a' right. Après un boute, tchin, il arrivont à la montagne nouère, I suppose. Mis gentil jeune homme là. Là i' dit, "Le diab' reste là-bas", i' dit, i' dit, "dans l' haut dans le, le...la bâtisse là-bas, le castle là-bas." Château qu'il appelont. I' restelà. "Mais asteure c'est tout qu'ej peux faire", i' dit, "Pis tout ce qu'ej peux faire pour toi." "Ben", i' dit, "grand, eh", i' dit à aig', i' dit, " eh, je t'en merci beaucoup", i' dit, "pour toutes tes bonnes volontés et temps, ton temps et tout ça". "A'right (several words)", i' dit. I' dit, eh, "T'as pas besoin t'exciter asteure parce", i' dit, "parce", i' dit, "le, le diab' il a trois filles, trois belles filles", i' dit. "Pis y en a iune", i' dit, "alle est un, si-- un sorcière", i' dit, "a' peut faire n' importe quoi. Pis ça, pas si beau de cette-là pis i' rent'e dans l'idée cette-là. Um. Touhours c'est bien. Oh l'aig' parti back, i' s'en va chez lui là. (several words) i' se montait au château du diab'. Tape à la porte. La vraie façon les i' veut, i' veut dire frapper, hein. Mais on dit tape à la porte. Bon. Allez! Ah! Ah! I' dit, "Bonhour, bonhour", i' dit, "mon jeune homme t'as venu." "Oh", i' dit, "oui, j'as arrivé". "Ah", i' dit, "c'est bon", i' dit, "c'est bien." Ah, i' com-- à manger, on se mange i' fittiont là. Pis y en avait le jeune là, oh, alle 'gardait ses p'tits clins d'oeil de temps en temps pis a' était, a' l'aimait, oh, a' le trouver un gentilhomme, a' l'aimait. C'est bien. Ça marche pis il a couché, parté se coucher. Lendemain matin, ben, i' dit, "Quoi-c t'as faire pour moi?" i' dit. "Oh", i' dit, "j' m'en vas t' donner ta job tout de suite", i' dit. "tout de suite, presque pâré", i' dit. "Ah moi", i' va tout d'un coup dit i' 'tait pâré là i' s'en va dit, "Viens a'c moi." Pis là i' prend la hache, i' mis dans sa main pis là i' s'en va. "J'sus le diab'", i' dit, "'ois-tu ce forêt de bois là là?" Y avait un arpent. Toute du gros bois là, forêt de bois que c'tait. Toute de gros bois. Et i' dit, "Eh", i' dit, "faut que tu, je, tu coupes tout ce forêt de bois-là", i' dit, "pour à souère", i' dit, "aouère cet coupé pour six heures à souère. Pis", i' dit, "Avec ta hache en papier ici?" "Oh", i' dit, "oui, oui, oui." Oh, il a pas dit arien. Oh non, pas arien dit. Eh bien le diab' s'en va à son ouvrage. La fille à midi apporte son dîner. Arrive là i' assis su' un, su' un machine, une p'tite chausse. Pis la tête en bas, tout découragé. I' 'gardait sa hache en papier. Pas moyen de faire grand' chose a'c une hache en papier. "Ben", a' dit, "eh, prend ton dîner." "Ah", i' dit, "je peux pas manger",

i' dit. "Ah", a' dit, "Mange, mange, mange, j'allais en faire ça pour toi, moi". "Ah, tu vas faire ça pour moi", i' dit, "comment", i' dit, "faire de quoi", i' dit, "avec une hache en papier", i' dit. "Tu peux faire grand' chose, moi, j'peux arien faire", i' dit, "quoi-c-que tu vas faire, toi?" A' dit, "Never mind", a' dit, "mange ton dîner". Touhours mange, i' mange. Ielle, a' prend la hache pis whoosh, elle fait là comme ça ici pis tout le bois tombe toute débranché, toute peelé. Là a' jete la hache (one word) lui tchen là. A' dit, "A souère", a' dit, "tu vas venir", a' dit, "pis Papa va te demander ouère si t'as fait ta job, ton ouvrage. Pis ah, i' va dire, tu vas dire, tu vas dire oui. T'es fini. A demain", a' dit, "i' va t'envoyer à, vois-tu le, le, le poteau en vit'?", a' dit, "qui est là s'entour de cent pieds de haut, i' tait." A' dit, "Va t'envoyer en haut-là", a' dit. "Y a un, un, un oeuf de marle dans l' boute là là, une marle qui a un nid pis un oeuf là dans l' nid. Pis i' va t'envoyer pour ce que (one word) stuff là. Pis", a' dit, "tu aras la misère monter ce poteau-là, poteau en vit'. Tu f'ras jamais", i' dit. A dit, "Never mind, never mind, never mind." A' dit "dors à souère comme i' faut". Touhours c'est bien. S'en va à la maison à six heures pis le diab' i' dit, "As-tu fait la job?" "Ouais, tout fini" "Ah", i' dit, "oui, eh, eh", i' dit, "c'est bon. A demain" i' dit, "on ara une aut'. Une aut' job demain", i' dit. "Ouais, une aut'". I' savait, vois-tu par la fille a dit 'tait. I' dit, "Ce sorte de job ça va êt'?" "Never mind", i' dit, "tu va sav' demain." Touhours lendemain et ça il l'emmène encore. "Là", i' dit, "'ois-tu le poteau en vit' ici là?" I' dit, "Oui, faut le 'oir, bien sûr." "Ben", i' dit, "y a un nid là y a un nid de marle", i' dit, "en haut là là. Et pis y a un oeuf dans l' nid. Pis tu qu'ri ce stuff là et porte en bas sans la crâsser." "Jamais, jamais", i' dit, "je montras c't, c't poteau en vit' là..." I' 'gardait su'..." "Oh", i' dit, "c'est ça, si tu peux pas", i' dit, "ma malheur à toi. Malheur à toi", i' dit, "si tu peux pas." "Ouais, ben", i' dit, "je trouv'ras p't-êt' une façon, c'est malaisé de dire." Ah, le diab' parti, s' en va. Oh, i' s' assit au, au pied du poteau pis i' 'garde en l'air de temps en temps. Il asseyait d' monter i', i' pouvait pas. Quand i' mettait ses bras pour monter, i' tombait, i' tombait back su' ses, su' la terre encore. Ah! Y a pas moyen. Là! Bientôt la fille arrive. "Ah", a' dit, "t'as, as-tu vu l'oeuf?" "Hah!" i' rit, "Hah! Ma chère fille", i' dit, "j'as pas ieu le, non, j' peux pas", i' dit. "Ben", a' dit, "j'as apporté un potte-là", a' dit, "tu vas faire un bon feu pis", a' dit, "quand que ç'ara bouillir comme i' faut, l'eau", a' dit, "tu va me prend'", a' dit, "et tu va me mett' dans le boiler de ct potte-là. Pis tu vas me bouillir 'usqu'à temps toute la chair tombe sous mes os..." "Ah, je peux pas faire de quoi de même, une belle fille comme toi, aller faire de de même", i' dit. "Ah, never mind, si tu veux te sauver



ta vie", a' dit, "t'es obligé de faire ça." "Mais oui, mais toi", i' dit, "tu m'en vas te tuer." "Ah non, oh no, tu vas me bouillir", a' dit, "pis 'usqu'à là que la chair tombe tout sous mes, mes os. Pis là tu vas prend' mes, mos os", a' dit, "pis tu vas les coller, les coller su' le poteau en vit' pis tu vas m' monter, tu vas quand que t'es, tu vas monter. Pis prend', tu vas prend' l' oeuf pis mis l'oeuf dans ta bouche", a' dit. "Pis quand tu vas descend', oublie pas des os. Ramanse là à mesure que tu descends." C'est bien. A'right. Monte en haut et prend l'oeuf dans sa bouche pis descend pis ramanse les os. Oui, mais quand je t'arrive en bas il a 'gardé. L'os la petite orteille, "j'ai oublié ça. Ah comment, ah, ça se fait?" i' dit, "gardé mais c'est bien sûr", i' dit, "j' avais tous les os." Pis i' 'garde, i' était, y en a iun qui reste. Mais i' foula' le potte pis quand qu'il a foutu les os dans le potte la fille sort deboute haut d' le potte. "Ben", i' dit, "c'est pas mal," Oh, il a croché tout le tour d'un coup pis là il l'a su. Oh ben, ielle, elle a' venait elle, elle aimait ça, 'ois-tu? Ouais, I guess. Là y a encore une aut' job à faire. C'est bien. Lendemain matin i' dit, oh, le diab' i' dit, "Il a une aut' job demain. Ça va iêt' ta darnière, c'est fini. Si tu p' faire cette-là t'es fini, t'ara p'us, seras p'us bot'eré." Bon, bien, lendemain matin arrive. I' s'en va à...au un lac qu'i' avait là au un grand lac. Pis i' donne un panier pour vider l'lac. I' dit, "Tu vas chesser ct lac-là avec ça ici." I' dit, "Comment je peux chesser un lac", i' dit, "avec un panier", i' dit, "plein de trous?" "Ça fait pas de différence", i' dit. I' dit, "faut que tu chesse ct lac-là." Touhours c'est bien. Là la fille asteure fallait qu'alle apporte son dîner encore mais a' savait quoi-c-qu'alle est, ah, que c'est i' commence su' le diab', le diab' commence à se douter de quoi à tcheque part. "Ah", i' dit, "eh, je m'en vas envoyer iune des aut'es ce coup ici..." C'est bien touhours. Là! I' dit à iune de ses filles, pas le jeune, i' dit, "apportez le dîner au jeune gars là." Pis la jeune si vite a' dit. "Moi, je vas pas!" a' dit, "moi, je m'en vas pas aller!" "Ah", i' dit, "pas si bien parlé", i' dit, "tu vas aller i' porte à manger, porter son dîner." Ah oui, là, ha! ha! Touhours alle est obligée d'aller là, 'ois-tu, si alle a pas dit ça il ara envoyé iune des aut'es. Pis i' dit là i' 'tait fini, fini, asteure. Mais ielle c'est une sorcieuse, hein? "Oh, oh", i' dit, "tu vas pas aller, ben c'est justement, ben tu vas aller, c'est ça." Pis là prend le dîner pis s'en va. Alle arrivait là alle arrivait ailloù-c-qu'i' 'tait. Donne son dîner, a' dit, "mange". Ah pis moitié en pleur' le jeune homme. Non, il ava' asseyé mais i' prenait l'eau pis tombait, ça coulait back encore pis pas de, pouvait pas. A' dit, "Mange ton dîner." C'est bien, mange. A' prend' le panier, a donne un coup de panier comme ça et tchens! le lac sec. Ienque un coup de panier et lac sec. Là a' dit, "C'est ça. Ta job est faite, là. Là asteure"

a' dit, "c'tait ta dernière job ça." Oui, s'i' dit, je me, je m'es trompé là. Si il ara pu faire les trois jobs-là qu'i' donné il ara ieu iune de ses filles en mariage, hein? J'oubliais ça dans l'histouère là c'est un p'tit plus en arrière. So, c'est bien. La job 'tait finie. Il allait au souère à six heures si (one word). "As-tu chesser le lac?" I' dit, "Je le chessais. J'ai travaillé, eh, travaillé même bête", i' dit. "Mais, eh, je le chessais." Eh bien. Touhours cte journée-là il a mis ses trois filles côte à côte pis il a mis un, un linge autour de ses yeux, il a blindfoldé, il a mis, il a mis aveug'. "Là", i' dit, "tu vas chouèsir ta, ta fille. Je t'as promis iune", i' dit, "ben, tu vas l'aouère." Touhours i' dit, i' dit, "Comment", i' dit, "m'en vas la chouèsir?" I' dit, "Tu peux", i' dit, "tu peux la tater", i' dit, "mett' tes mains d'ssus", i' dit, "eh, pis eh, c'tte-là que tu voudrais mais des, c'est cette-là." Ah c'est bien. Bien. Oui, mais le a pensé il a pensé à la p'tite orteille, la p'tite orteille, p'tite orteille. Oh! Pense à lui-même. "Si j' toucherais les pieds, c'est treaté a'right, aussi?" "Oh, c'est pareil", i' dit. "C'est pareil, quand t'arriveras, arrivont", i' dit, "là, à cette-là qu'i' veut, ben, c'est ça." Touhours i' 'tait là qu'i' tatait les orteilles i' n'est taté les orteilles, ben, il arrivait. Oh y a iun partie. "Cette-là", i' dit, "je veux", i' dit. Elle a pas d'orteille, hein? T'as orteille partie. "Cette-là je veux". "Ah ben", i' dit, "c'est ça. C'est ben là prend c'est ça." C'est là il voulait 'ois-tu? Là, et le diab' les marie. Ouais, s'en marie tout en grand jusqu'au c'est ça, on marie. Là i' sont suppos' à rester là asteure là. Lui pis sa fille. I' sont pas suppos' à s'en aller. Supposés à rester là avec le diab'. Mais pas trop misérab' mais a' right. Ouais, en masse à manger pis p'us de poteau en vit' à, à climber ni arien. P'us forêt de bois à bûcher. Touhours c'est bien là. "Ben", i' dit, "j'sus marié", i' dit, "j'allons pas rester ici." A' dit, "Non", a' dit. Mais comment ti conter comment-c-que c'tait 'ois-tu, part' d' chez lui. C'était une belle place pour viv' tout en grand. Ielle, a' savait pas, ielle. Touhours la fille a des idées. Il alliont se pousser dans la nuit. Touhors le diab' avait cinq ou six ch'vals. Mais i' n'avait iun c'tait le sien, ça, un ch'val blanc que c'tait. C'est le ch'al du diab'. Oh ça allait comme la vision. Touhours c'est bien. "Ah, je pense", a' dit, "J'allons quitter demain souère", i' dit, "j'allons quitter." "M'en vas faire trois cakes", a' dit, "trois gateaux et pis, eh, m'en vas mett' ça dans le, dans l'escalier pis quand Maman m'd'mand'ra et, ou Papa d'mand'ra si j'sus là, ben, le cake repondra comme moi", a' dit. "Pis nous-aut'es aller au nous pousser. Aviont le plan d'fait, on est...C'est bon. Ah, quand ça arrive à l'entour de onze heures i' étiont de coucher ce souérée-là...Ben ça je rions pis i' se pousse. Là alle avait les trois cakes pis a' mis un, une marche d'escalier à monter. Touhours quand ça arrive à l'entour i' s'en alliont dans la grange

pour not' ch'val du vieux. là, le ch'val blanc, çui-là qu'alle est comme la vision, eh l'meilleur ch'al qu'il avait. Pis là c'est ça se pousse. La vieille, a' reveille son homme, a' reveille le diab', a' dit, "Eh, 'garde", a' dit, "sais-tu", a' dit, "quand que ça (several words) une doutance", a' dit, "y a de quoi qu'arrivait ici. J'ai une doutance", a' dit qui se m-- qu'i' sont quittés. Ce jeune homme là et pis", ses, sa femme a' dit. "I' sont quittés, i' sont partis." Nah!" Ah (one word) ben à ce speed-là. I' crie. J'sais pas comment-c-qu'i' c'est son vrai nom si c'est Josephine or whatever. Mais, anyhow, allons dire Josephine. I' dit, "Josephine, dors-tu?" A' dit, "Non, Papa." "Ah, 'ois-tu", i' dit, "'ois-tu, alle est là. Dors-toi", i' dit, "dors pour le monde de la vie, dors, quitte-moi tranquelle." Touhous, c'est bien. I' tomba dormir encore, le diab'. (snoring noises) I' ronflait. Non. A' dit, "Reveille encore." A'tait une aveug', kick, kick, kick. "Ah, quoi-c-que t'as don'!, toi, pas me quitter tranquelle? Quitte moi darmir", i' dit. "Non", a' dit, "i' sont partis", a' dit, "j'sus sûr qu'i' sont partis". "Ben, t'as pris folle", i' dit, "cartain i' sont pareils, i' sont pas partis (several words) "Ah, non, tu vas ouère", a' dit. "Tu vas ouère", a' dit si i' ont pas joué un tour. "Josephine, dors-tu, là?" "Non, Papa, je dors pas." "Ah, 'ois-tu ça, 'ois-tu, 'ois-tu? A' repond, c'est ielle! Ah! Dors-toi", i' dit, "(several words) vieille savâche", i' dit, "dors!" Pfs quitte-moi dormir aussi." Pis tomba dormir encore. (snoring noises) Il ronflait ça. Sa, la maison a secoué, le château. L' tomba quasiment su' les blocks. Bientôt a' commence à

KICK ~~kick~~ arrivé. A' dit, "i' sont partis. Ben un coup' de fois (some words) fois i' aront dit, eh, tant pire toi, tant pire toi. Ah", a' dit, "tu vas ouère, tu vas ouère", a' dit. "Nah! Taise-toi, dors!" i' dit. (several words) Il a tombé dormir encore. Ça ronfle, ça ronfle encore. Pis là le vieille, pas utile pigquais (?) encore, eh? Oh il la quasiment taper ce coup-là, oh il la quasiment taper. Ça venu proche qu'i' a pu une clap dans la geule. Dame, i' d'mande encore. "Non, Papa, je dors pas." Allez! "'Ois-tu, 'ois-tu, 'ois-tu, c'est ielle!" Ah! Alright, attends encore pour une demi-heure, p't-êt' bien une heure. Là la vieille encore là pigouait encore. Oh, my gosh, i' saut'ra deboute. I' dit, "Josephine, dors-tu là?" Pas de reponse. Pas de reponse. "Josephine, dors-tu?" Pas de reponse encore. "Là, 'ois-tu, hey, 'ois-tu, je t'ai dit, ah, hah!" Touhous c'est bien...c'est bon mais ieusses i', i' s'en alliont tout le temps là. Ah! Ça se poussait. Pousse! Le ch'al blanc il allait pas assez vite comme iun tout ça su' l' dos pis il 'tiont à deux mais je t' garantie ça décollait, là. Le diab' i' s'a mis ses hardes et pis le v'là parti au haut de grenier pis i' ouvre la porte d' la chamb' pis c'est ça. Pis i' étiont partis bien sûr, pis s'il ara 'couté sa vieille i' les ara 'trappés.

'Ois-tu si le diab' pouvouère, pouvouère comme le ch'val va pas vite. Il faut aller vite. Touhous c'est bien. (several words) S'alright si i' n'ont pas pris mon ch'wal. I' m'en, me donnaient la misère. Oh la misère à leur attraper. Touhous l' v'là parti. Ah (one word) de la grange son ch'wal, ch'wal est parti. Allez! 'Tait obligé à prend' un aut' qui est là, un ch'wal rouge. Il embarque dessus pis là c'tait ça que c'tait ça. (makes noises like a horse) que ça c'tait. Pis i' les ont dit le ch'wal blanc i' i' ben, 'tait tout en (one word) fait tout blanc ben, i' 'tait deux fois p'us blanc qu'i' tait quand i' quittait la grange. T'es tout écumé. Pis lui s'en venait aussi. Pis son ch'wal rouge a tourné tout blanc aussi. Que ça, pis pondait, pis pondait là. Etait il l'a drivé tous, tous souerées là, tout l' lendemain 'usqu'à la beau souère. Pis c'tait un stick. Pis il a repassé la (one word) ieusses non plus. Pis asteure il vouliant aller y a une place qui 'tait à la terre saint, hein? Quand qu'il ariont quitté ailloû-c-que le, le dit prononce la terre sainte, eh? Quand il aré arrivait su' la terre sainte le diab' pouvait pas les toucher là, 'ois-tu? I' pourrait ienque venir là à la lingue. Touhous c'est bon. By de gosh. Quand qu'il avont eh, ça venu proche assez c'est i' étiont là aussi bien, bien vite à la terre sainte. Et pis, eh, il avont a dit comme ça. "Aide-moi débarquer", a' dit, "pis j' m'en vas 'couter", a' dit, "ouère si j'entends pour Papa à s'en venir. "Pour sûr"; a' dit, "i' s'en vient." Touhous c'est bon. A' mis son oreille su' la terre. "Oui", a' dit, "i' s'en vient, i' s'en vient, i' s'en vient pis i' s'en vient vite", a' dit. "I' s'en vient vite", a' dit. Pis là saute de ch'wal pis là a (one word) stick. Et quand qu'il avont arrivé, aussi bien dire à la terre sainte pour êt' sauvés le diab' 'tait à peu près comme cent varges arrière eux. (one sentence) Whew! Touhous quand qu'il avont sauté su' la terre sainte le diab' 'tait (several words) Quand il avont sauté il arrivait au bord de la lingue. Il a crotch'téi son ch'wal blanc par la tchu. Il a resté a'c le tchu mais i' pouvait p'us aller loin, i' dit, i' dit. Il arrive à la terre sainte. Pis là, moi, j'ai pris la tchu du ch'wal, ch'wal blanc pis je me fait deux archets pour jouer au violon, hein? C'est tout."





