

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY:
THREE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN'S WORK
IN NORTH WEST RIVER, LABRADOR

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**CHANGE AND CONTINUITY:
THREE GENERATIONS OF WOMEN'S WORK
IN NORTH WEST RIVER, LABRADOR**

by

Rita Kindl

**A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
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**Department of Anthropology
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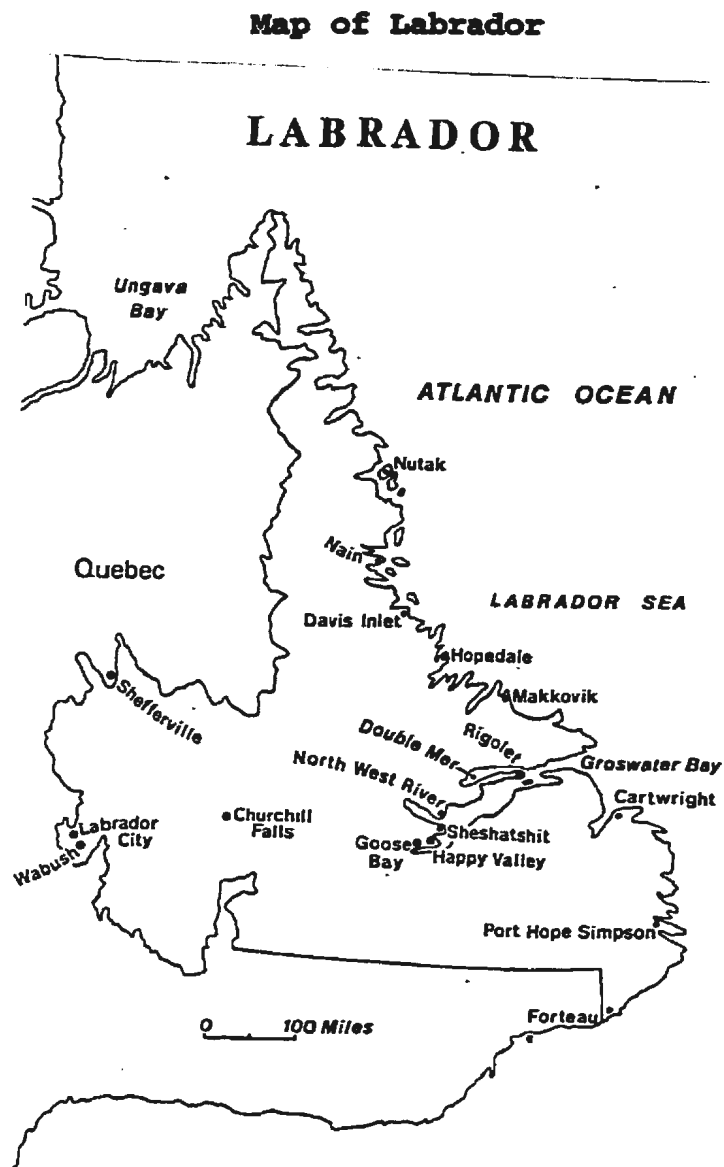
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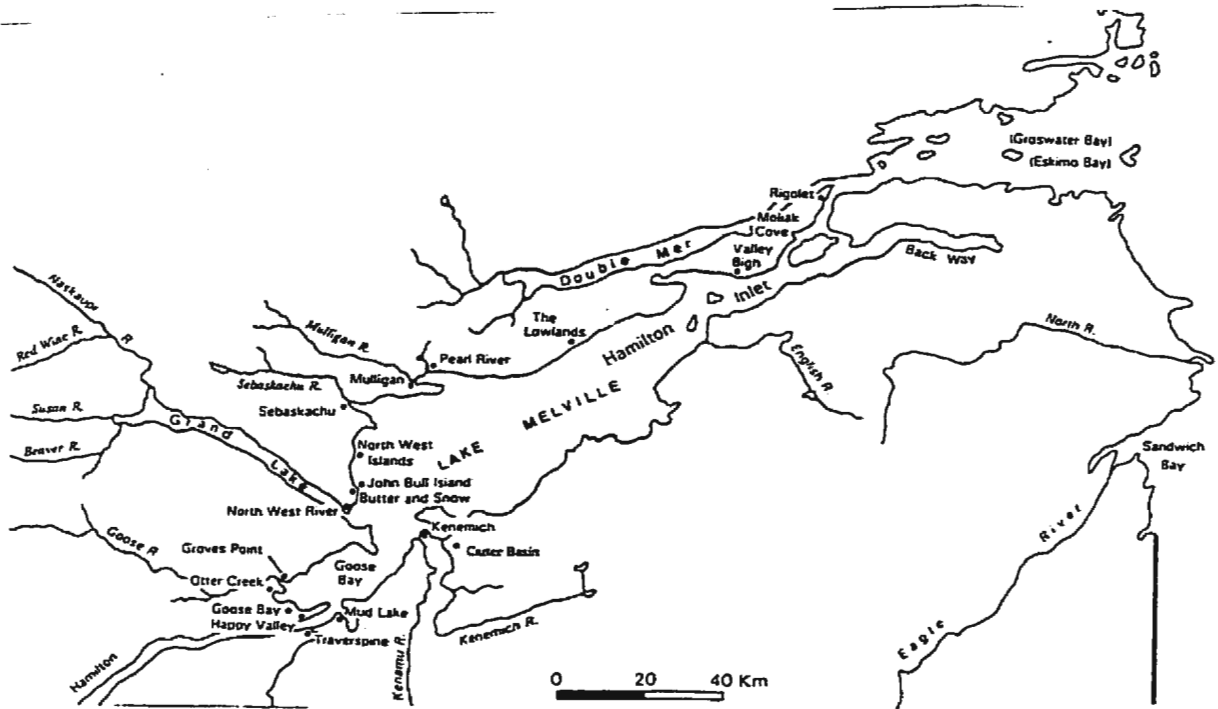
Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the lives of three generations of women in North West River, Labrador. Change and continuity in the work and lives of Settler women in the face of dramatic economic and technological developments is the underlying theme of the thesis. I adopt a broad definition of 'work' so as to include an examination of the following activities of women: wage work, self-provisioning activities, raising children, volunteer work and domestic chores. I argue that while the wage economy and consumerism have changed the manner in which women accomplish their 'work', women's responsibilities remain unchanged. The work ethic of Settlers in North West River and the manner in which it has influenced women's work throughout this century are discussed. The work ethos in North West River as it applies to both men and women has emphasized hard work, endurance and self-reliance. This ethos, while burdening women, also allows women to take pride in their 'work'. I also discuss the influence of the International Grenfell Association over the lives of women in North West River. The International Grenfell Association has offered women wage work, introduced formal volunteer work to the women of North West River and created an elite within the town.



(Battock, Donald [cartographer] in Plaice 1990: xii,
copyright, ISER 1990.)

Map of Lake Melville



(Zimmerly 1991 [1975]:2, copyright ISER, 1991).

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1.0

Chapter One: Introduction

"I always thought of women as the back bone of society...."

Jennifer (in her thirties)

1.1 The thesis argument

During a tape-recorded interview, Jennifer offered her opinion about women's contributions to the town of North West River, Labrador. At the time of the interview, Jennifer was thirty-three years old, single and without a job. Originally from Newfoundland, she had moved to North West River from Happy Valley/Goose Bay in 1979 to work at the Grenfell Mission Hospital. Jennifer said the following about women in the community:

And that's one thing that amazes me constantly about North West River, is how many talented women are in one community... And there is absolutely no woman here who you can say doesn't have a purpose... Yeah in the community... Like I'm told almost every woman here participated in some committee or some event, at some place or time. They are very active women. And they may not always be active in a committee but they've been active at some point, while living here...um...I'd say there's very few women do nothing...

I asked her whether she was referring to a certain group of women in the community, or to all of the women in the community?

No, that is all women, I think all women... the women played a really important role... I guess it doesn't get talked of as much. But they do play a really important role here, I think they do. They sort of... I always thought of women as the back bone of society....

Jennifer suggests that women's roles have not been talked about as much as have men's; she is comparing the public perception of women's work to that held of trapper's work.

In North West River the trapper is a central cultural icon. During field work,¹ I was constantly reminded by townspeople of the importance of the trapper to Settler history, of the respect owed elder trappers, of the romantic glorification of the heydays of trapping. The trapper symbolizes many values that Settlers hold dear: hard work, self-reliance, independence, physical strength and a willingness to share the little he and his family had with others in need. The trapper is one symbol chosen by North West River Settlers to represent their world-view.

The trapper represents one period in the history of Upper Lake Melville Settlers of Labrador. However, the male trapper is only one player in this historical period that includes as well women, children, merchant capitalists (Hudson's Bay Company), and missions (International Grenfell Association). The trapper neither worked alone, nor survived alone; his labours were interlinked with the activities of some or all of these other players.

¹ My main method of research was anthropological fieldwork. I lived in North West River, Labrador for four months from July to November 1993 and for two weeks in June 1994.

While the trapper is publicly celebrated by everyone in North West River, women are spoken of with respect in private conversations. I arrived in North West River during the 250th Anniversary Celebrations of the village's history. The trapper was a key symbol during these celebrations. However, the comments offered by women, like Jennifer, demonstrate how women also are regarded as important contributors to Settler history.

Among other things, the cultural idiom that surrounds the 'trapper' involves a particularly 'Settler' work ethic. This work ethic values hard physical labour and responsibly providing for one's household, which can include wage labour, hunting caribou, baking breads, and making jams. In other words, the work ethic values both paid employment and self-provisioning activities, in which both men and women participate. A common topic of conversation, among the women and men I interviewed, became the many 'work' activities which filled their days. The fact that 'work' was a recurring topic of conversation led me to conclude that there exists a strong ethic of work in North West River. Those who can prove themselves hard working (at their paid jobs, their household chores, their self-provisioning activities or their volunteer activities) are awarded with respect and are regarded as being adults.

While the local work ethic does refer to the activities of both women and men, men's activities take prominence. During public conversations, presently practised self-provisioning activities - namely hunting, fishing and trapping - are likened to the past activities of trappers. While also economically important and certainly pleasurable, self-provisioning activities become symbols that differentiate townspeople from other rural Canadians and tie townspeople to their past. While the tie to the past becomes ethnically important,² it romanticizes continuity. The cultural notion of 'work' in North West River is affected both by cultural continuity and economic change. In this thesis I will examine how continuity and change are exhibited in the cultural notion of 'work'.

My aim in this thesis is to examine the cultural notion of 'work' from the perspective of women and from data I gathered about their paid and unpaid work. In the case of North West River, ideas about 'work' are often tied to culturally symbolic activities like trapping, which is a male activity. I will turn to women to demonstrate that women are equal participants in the cultural definition of 'work'. Women's 'work' in North West River provides a good example of

² See Plaice (1990) for a discussion of the relationship between trapping activities and ethnic identity.

continuity and change in the lives of women. In this thesis I will outline the continuities and the changes in women's work in North West River.

Continuity persists in the unchanging nature of women's obligations. Throughout the generations, women's wage labour and unpaid household labour have been a part of a woman's responsibility to her family. Women and men who choose to remain and raise families in North West River, also choose to continue to adhere to a cultural definition of 'work' that values unpaid labour, like self-provisioning activities, and the self-reliance of households. Thus women expect to earn a wage from paid employment to increase the material well being of their household. At the same time, women expect to provide their family with the unpaid domestic labour necessary for their maintenance and well-being. The cultural value placed on self-reliance and hard work keeps women working.

How a household is run today differs from households in the past, because young women, who often have children, expect to be employed outside the home. This has led to differing attitudes and aspirations concerning 'work' expressed from one generation to the next. This difference has changed how women lead their daily lives and set their day-to-day priorities. Thus work practices and the work ethic exhibit both change and continuity.

1.2 A brief history and description of North West River³

In 1993, when I did my primary fieldwork, North West River was a small community of approximately 530 people. It lies on the northeastern shore of Lake Melville, across the channel from Sheshatshit, an Innu settlement of 839 (Statistics Canada 1993: 9, Table 1). North West River is inhabited by Settlers, Newfoundlanders, British individuals and a few Inuit families. Living in town are also a mixture of individuals from Canada, the United States, the Philippines and the West Indies. Twenty-five miles southwest is Happy Valley/Goose Bay, which consists of the town of Happy Valley and the military air base of Goose Bay. Happy Valley/Goose Bay is now the service and administrative centre for the area. A few miles further east of Happy Valley lies the village of Mud Lake, which is accessible only by water. Reverend Ann Corbet, the United Church Minister in North West River, informed me that Mud Lake totalled sixty-eight individuals in 1993. All four of these communities are on the shores of Lake Melville, which is part of Hamilton Inlet, a large fjord bisecting Labrador.

Historically, the location of North West River allowed

³ Complete accounts of this history are available in the published works of Zimmerly (1991, first edition 1975) and Plaice (1990).

for a varied livelihood. Access to the Atlantic Ocean through Hamilton Inlet to Groswater Bay provided early inhabitants with fish and seal. The inland rivers that flow into Lake Melville/Hamilton Inlet were waterways providing access to fur-bearing animals and wild game. The shores were covered with berry patches. The climate consists of long, severe winters followed by short, but intense, dry, hot summers. The long cold winters meant that frozen waterways could be travelled by foot or dog team, while hot summers offered the potential of growing root vegetables.

In 1500 A.D., at the time of early European contact with Labrador, Thule Inuit inhabited the coast and Naskapi-Montagnais the interior of Labrador.⁴ Early European contact with Labrador centred around the fishery. By 1500 A.D. the Basques were harvesting fish and sea mammals off the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador (Plaice 1990: 14). Fishing fleets from southwestern England and northern France were fishing the coastal waters of Newfoundland and Labrador as of the 16th century (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 35). As Zimmerly writes, northern coastal Labrador was not investigated except by the French:

⁴ Present day Innu living in Sheshashit are the first, second and third generation descendants of nomadic First Nations people named Naskapi-Montagnais by earlier anthropologists (see Leacock 1981).

From 1700 to 1763, it was mainly the French who plied these northern waters in search of whales, seal and cod and trade with the Indians and Eskimos (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 35).

Permanent European settlement of Labrador did not begin until English merchants, who had already established themselves along the coast of Newfoundland, moved further to Labrador in the late 18th Century.⁵ For individual Europeans, settlement in the New World became an attractive alternative during the eighteenth century when changes in the agricultural system, economic depression and industrialization were rapidly changing the English countryside (Plaice 1990: 17). The threat of labouring on war ships during the Napoleonic wars kept men who fished the coast of Labrador from returning to Britain (Plaice 1990: 17).

Early settlers in Labrador were hired men of fishing and fur-trading companies. Plaice explains that men were hired for one winter at a time. Of Captain George Cartwright's fishing and fur-trading company post in Sandwich Bay, Labrador, she writes:

Men employed to spend the winter in Labrador were not just fishing crews. Merchants who opened new establishments needed men to maintain them -

⁵ The right to fish off the coast and settle Newfoundland and Labrador was granted to Britain with the signing of several treaties in the eighteenth century: Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Treaty of Versailles in 1763 and the Treaty of Paris in 1783 (Plaice 1990: 14).

builders, carpenters, bricklayers, sawyers, blacksmiths, coopers, masons and the like, as well as boatbuilders and fishermen (1990: 18).

Men were also hired as furriers; they extended the company's traplines. Cartwright also brought a limited number of European women to work as maids, housekeepers and cooks (Plaice 1990: 18). European men who chose to settle permanently in Labrador established households with European and native, mostly Inuit, women. A liaison with a native woman was to the man's advantage since Inuit women had indigenous hunting, cooking, curing and sewing skills necessary for survival in Labrador.⁶

Merchant companies established themselves in Hamilton Inlet as of 1800.⁷ Settlement began in earnest in the North West River area with the arrival of fur trading companies, notably the Hudson's Bay Company's post which was established in 1836. The Hudson's Bay Company hired their officers from

⁶ See "Many Tender Ties" Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 by Sylvia Van Kirk for an account of a similar fur trade society in western Canada, which was also born of the marriages of native women and European men. Van Kirk relates the contribution of women, both native and Metis, to the fur trade. She also discusses the existence of a unique society which grew from the fur trading companies and from the marriages between fur traders and native women.

⁷ Plaice lists two: Bird who established a fishing station in Kenemu in 1800 and Slade, a merchant already established in Newfoundland as early as the 1780s, who sent fishing crews to Groswater Bay (1990:16).

London. These literate men managed the posts. Workers or servants, in contrast, were hired predominantly from the Orkney Islands (this was particularly the case for North West River) (ibid: 21-22).⁸ Workers hired by the Hudson's Bay Company were labourers and tradesman and included the following: boatbuilders, carpenters, sawyers, coopers and other woodworkers and stonemasons (ibid: 22). Workers were also expected to hunt, fish and tend the post's gardens and livestock (ibid).⁹ In addition, these workers trapped: "newly released employees who had chosen to stay in the region became the Company's fur suppliers" (ibid). This summary describes the 'work' of Settlers for the next one hundred years. The male trappers, who settled in the area and raised families with Native women and their descendants, these are the trappers who were celebrated by North West River townspeople during the 250th Anniversary Celebrations that I mention on page three.

First-hand accounts of the Settler life-style were written by first and second generation female Settlers, Lydia

⁸ See Plaice (1990: 21) for a description of the differences in wages and treatment of gentlemen versus servants. This hierarchical structure was to effect social relations in North West River into the twentieth century.

⁹ The post at North West River under the management of Donald Smith (1848-1868) contained vegetable gardens and livestock, such as cattle, horses and chickens (Plaice 1990: 42).

Campbell and her daughter, Margaret Baikie.¹⁰ In their memoirs, Lydia Campbell and Margaret Baikie describe the seasonal cycles of trapping, hunting, fishing and berry picking.¹¹ Until the twentieth century and the arrival of the Grenfell Mission, Settler households practised seasonal transhumance. Settler families owned two or three small but permanent homes to which they would travel over the course of a year. Each home was built to take advantage of the wild game available at that location at a particular time of year.

Summers were spent at the mouth of Hamilton Inlet fishing. Fish were dried for sale to the Hudson's Bay Company and for household consumption during the winter. Families began the move to the inland shores of Lake Melville in autumn. Along the way, they stopped to hunt duck and pick berries. Margaret Baikie writes:

¹⁰ Lydia Campbell's "Sketches of Labrador Life" were first published in a St. John's daily newspaper, the *Evening Herald* between December and February of 1894 and 1895 (Plaice 1990: 13). They were later published in booklet form by *Them Days*. Margaret Baikie's memoirs were also published by *Them Days*, her memoirs cover the years between 1846 and 1918.

¹¹ Most Settlers in North West River can trace descendance back to Ambrose Brooks, Lydia's father. In the 1790s, he arrived from Dorset, England and settled in Labrador to escape pressgangs. He married an Inuk woman. She bore three daughters, and two (Lydia and Hannah) survived into adulthood, "married twice and produced families with each marriage" (Plaice 1990: 53).

We left for our winter home... There were two other boats in company with us. One was my uncle's boat and the other was the Goudies... They would all anchor in Rigolet to take their winter provisions [with the Hudson's Bay Company]... When all was ready and we had a good fair wind, all would start. All the boats would anchor at St. John's Island. Sometimes we would stay there for three weeks... The boys would make a good fire and the girls would be cooking and making bread, cakes and jam and cooking ducks. There were three families having dinner around the fire, all laughing and talking.... When dinner was over, Mother and Aunt would take their kettles and bags and go berry picking upon the hills and the boys would go hunting for ducks. The next day it would be our turn to go berry picking... The berries were very plenty; black, red and blue for the winter. Sometimes we would get as much as a barrel full (22-23).

Here, Margaret Baikie is describing the time of the year when her natal family would leave the coastal summer fishery, which was also a gathering and socializing time, for their isolated winter homes. She describes how, along the way, they would stop to pick berries for the winter supplies and to hunt duck. Lydia Campbell, Margaret's mother, describes their arrival at the winter home:

so pretty it looks in the fall when we come home from our summer quarters, above 70 miles from here... then is the scramble among the young ones who will see the first turnips and potatoes, and sure enough all around the house is green with turnip tops...

Then we're home to our winter house for ten months or more, but we are home among ducks, partridges, trout, rabbits, berries, traps for snaring foxes, martens, wolverines, mountain cats, muskrats, minks; and most of all them kind of things that I have caught in my lifetime (1980: 2-3).

Hunting, trapping, berry picking, and the cultivation of some root vegetables provided the sustenance for Lydia Campbell's family. Margaret Baikie writes that when winter came her father would leave their home to set traps up in the hills. According to Margaret, her father did not know much about setting traps and it was Lydia who taught him to set traps.¹² The furs that they caught were sold to the Hudson's Bay Company. While her father would also leave home to hunt deer, her mother Lydia set traps close to home, fished for trout on the frozen lake, and shot deer when they passed close to the house. Sustaining a family and maintaining a home demanded the labour of men, women and children.

The seasonal cycle of livelihood required trapping and fishing for the Hudson's Bay Company, alongside hunting, fishing and berrying activities for the family's sustenance. The pattern of life as described by Lydia Campbell and Margaret Baikie remained largely unchanged until the mid-twentieth century. While various changes began to occur gradually in the early twentieth century, trapping remained the mainstay of the local economy until 1941. Unlike other northern Canadian fur trading posts who depended on the

¹² Margaret's father was Lydia's second husband, who arrived as a tradesman from the Orkney Islands to work as a cooper for the Hudson's Bay Company.

labour of aboriginal populations, the Hudson's Bay Company post at North West River was largely dependent on Settlers for trapping.

Between 1900 and 1941 trappers had to travel farther inland than they had previously.¹³ As the Settler population of Lake Melville had increased, the better facilities in North West River and Mud Lake attracted families to the area. And, this increase in the population forced men to travel farther north and west along the rivers, deeper inland, to set traplines (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 172). Trappers were leaving their families in early to mid-September and not returning until Christmas or January. Then they would leave once again in February or March. The spring brought other activities, such as: sealing, fishing, and duck hunting. Once the waterways were free of ice, there was the return to the coastal fishery.¹⁴

The twentieth century brought with it economic diversification, improved amenities and the growth of village

¹³ Zimmerly labels this period "The Fur Trade Climax", see 1991 [1975]: 151-198.

¹⁴ For a description of the annual trapping cycle at the time see Zimmerly (1991 [1975]: 174-182). A narrative and romantic account is available in Harold G. Paddon's book Green Woods and Blue Waters (1989). To read about the experience of this era from a woman's point of view read Elizabeth Goudie's memoirs (as edited by Zimmerly) Woman of Labrador (1983, first published 1973).

life. The International Grenfell Association (I.G.A.) brought about many of these changes. The I.G.A. originated from The Royal National Mission to the Deep Sea Fisherman a charitable society in Britain, that administered to the medical and spiritual needs of North Sea fishermen. In 1892, The Royal National Mission to the Deep Sea Fisherman extended their service to the coast of Labrador and Northern Newfoundland. The young physician Wilfred T. Grenfell was on board a medical ship working for The Mission, and struck by the destitute poverty he saw, he established his own missionary society: The Grenfell Mission.

The goal of the Grenfell Mission was to administer to the spiritual and medical needs of the fishermen and their families as well as the Settler population of Labrador and Northern Newfoundland.¹⁵ Hospitals were established along the coast of Labrador at Battle Harbour and Indian Harbour. A hospital built at St. Anthony, Newfoundland became the mission's headquarters. However, the Mission tended to more than the medical and spiritual needs of the local population.

¹⁵ Rompkey's Grenfell of Labrador, A Biography (1991) offers an examination of the life of Sir Wilfred T. Grenfell and his Mission, The International Grenfell Association. Another account of the International Grenfell Association is provided by G.W. Thomas From Sled to Satellite: My Years with the Grenfell Mission (1987). For an account of the Grenfell Mission in North West River see W.A. Paddon (1989).

Zimmerly lists the various programmes initiated and run by the Mission:

the Mission also started co-operative stores and lumber mills, a mortuary, craft programs, an orphanage, portable libraries, numerous nursing homes and stations and even experimented with a herd of 300 domesticated reindeer imported from lapland complete with Lapp herders (1991 [1975]: 159).

With the help of Dr. Harry Paddon,¹⁶ Grenfell established a year-round cottage hospital at Mud Lake in 1912 (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 160).

In 1916 the year-round hospital was moved to North West River, it became the Mission's central service station for Northern Labrador. Facilities in North West River grew, attracting Settlers who had previously settled along the shores of Lake Melville. By 1926, a bigger and newer hospital had been built along with a boarding school. Between 1930 and 1979, the International Grenfell Association expanded its services in North West River to include the following: a bigger hospital; an air ambulance service; residences for doctors, nurses, and other staff; elementary and secondary schools (for children from both North West River and the Northern Coast); student dormitories; an orphanage and an

¹⁶ Another physician from England who had also worked with The Royal National Mission to the Deep Sea Fisherman (Rompkey 1991: 172).

infant's home. The Industrial Department initiated and organized craft production among local women. Donations of second-hand clothing from North America were used to trade with locals for berries and wild game which were used to feed hospital patients. Elizabeth¹⁷, a nurse from England who had worked with I.G.A. from 1961 to 1964, described how the International Grenfell Association also planted vegetable gardens, kept livestock that included: hens, cows, and pigs (see also McGee 1961).

While professional staff were hired from England, the United States and Canada, the I.G.A. hired locals and Newfoundlanders as labourers, cooks, laundry workers and maids. Therefore, local men could supplement their earnings from trapping by taking a job in the summer with the Grenfell Mission. Local women, however, were hired on a regular basis by the Mission. In addition, a few local men and women were fortunate to receive financial aid from the I.G.A. to further their education. Through I.G.A. patronage, a few local men became managers and administrators and some women received nursing degrees. While hiring practices meant that most local residents could count on some form of employment with the Mission, these practices established a hierarchy between

¹⁷ Elizabeth is a pseudonym.

staff and locals. At the top of the hierarchy was the resident doctor, Dr. Paddon. He oversaw almost every aspect of village life, including the management of the hospital, the construction of new schools, the hiring of local school teachers, the construction of roads, and the development of a community council. He was not only a doctor but also the chief justice officer.

The missionary zeal of the staff resulted in more than the establishment of medical and educational facilities. They helped to define village life. Grenfell staff organized community social events. For example, they introduced elaborate Christmas celebrations complete with a Santa Claus and a Christmas tree. The wife of the resident doctor initiated volunteer organizations. Local married women joined these community volunteer groups in order to provide charity to local families, organize fairs and keep the hospital and schools clean.

In 1949, when Newfoundland joined Canadian Confederation, the newly formed provincial government offered funds to support the expansion of community services. Thus, community roads were built in town. Government funds were available to the International Grenfell Association for the construction of schools and for nurses' and teachers' salaries (all expenses that had previously been borne by the

Grenfell Association) (Paddon 1989: 196). Joining Confederation also meant that some individuals had access to social assistance in the form of baby bonuses, old age pension cheques, and unemployment insurance benefits. A newfound wealth was experienced in North West River.

By the mid-1970s, the Grenfell Mission began to cede much of its control over education and health to local and provincial boards. Coastal Inuit communities built their own high schools and it was therefore no longer necessary for Inuit children to attend school in North West River (Thomas 1987: 102). The resident doctor for thirty years, Dr. Tony Paddon (the son of the first North West River doctor Dr. Harry Paddon) retired in 1977. By the early 1980s, the International Grenfell Mission had given over control of the hospitals to the Grenfell Regional Health Services, a provincial organization administering a regional health care system (Rompkey 1991: 301 & Thomas 1987: 110). The Grenfell Hospital was no longer a strong cultural force, but it remained North West River's major employer. However, in 1983, the North West River hospital was closed and as a result at least ninety jobs were lost (Plaice 1990: 41). In 1993, the community was serviced by a small part-time nursing station in town and the Melville Hospital in Happy Valley/Goose Bay.

In the twentieth century employment was not restricted

to the Grenfell Mission. As early as the turn of the century the lumber industry hired local men as cutters. A lumber mill operated in Mud Lake between 1901 and 1904. Adventurers hired local men as guides through the wilderness.¹⁸ Beginning in 1941 with the construction of the American Air Base in Goose Bay, regular waged labour was available to the local population. Although the Second World War ended only four years after the base's construction, the site continued to expand. Employment was available on base and at radar stations established along the coast of Labrador.

Between the early 1960s and the early 1970s North West River housed the headquarters of BRINEX (the British Newfoundland Explorations Company). BRINEX, a subsidiary of BRINCO (British Newfoundland Company) took on the reconnaissance of the province. BRINEX hired local trappers as prospectors and guides. Women, men and teenagers were hired as cooks in their camps. Women sewed tents for their campsites. Local men with university training were hired in management or research.

Aside from the local employment opportunities, there

¹⁸ Among the most famous is the failed attempt in 1903 to reach Ungava Bay by water made by Leonidas Hubbard and Dillon Wallace, and, the successful but separate attempts made in 1905 by Leonidas' widow, Mina, in competition against Dillon Wallace (see Hubbard 1908 and Wallace 1915).

were opportunities in Central Labrador. The construction of the hydro-electric dam and power station at Churchill Falls led to the hiring of local men as skilled labourers. These employment opportunities provided a few local men jobs at a higher rate of pay than they were used to having. A few families from North West River moved to Central Labrador, took advantage of the good rate of pay and planned to return to North West River, where they perceived the quality of life to be better.

1.3 Fieldwork and methodology

I chose anthropological fieldwork as my method of research. I spent four months in North West River from July to November of 1993 and returned for two weeks in June of 1994. Fieldwork included participant observation, as well as formal and informal interviews. Living in the community for four months meant that I witnessed daily life, understood how changes in the seasons affected daily life and developed an understanding of social dynamics in the community. I kept a fieldwork journal of my daily activities, interviews and conversations. Informal interviews involved my dropping by people's homes for a visit during the course of which we discussed issues relevant to my thesis. Formal interviews involved making appointments and collecting information in

note books during the interview or on audio tape. Oral consent to use information for the thesis was received for both formal and informal interviews. With a map numbering every household in town, I compiled background information on the population: age and sex of household inhabitants, kinship relationships to each other, as well as the place of origin, marital status, occupation and place of work of each individual.

As an anthropologist undertaking participant observation I lived with a family; attended town events; observed town council meetings and the meetings of other organizations; attended United Church and Pentecostal services on Sunday; attended dances, parties, barbecues, baby showers and a quilt night with a group of friends; frequently walked through town; enjoyed the sun on the beach; chatted at the post office and simply visited people for a cup of tea.

I was fortunate in that I boarded with a family. The household, filled with children, was always brimming with activity. The family was welcoming and warm; I felt at home at once. I helped out with a few daily chores, washing the evening load of dishes and occasionally preparing Sunday dinner. There were many friends and relatives passing through the house. Watching the comings and goings of people and listening to daily conversations helped me understand what

life was like in North West River.

I interviewed a total of thirty-two women and three men. Twice, I was fortunate to have been able to interview a husband and wife together.¹⁹ There was a core group of nine women whom I interviewed several times to collect their life histories. I met with each of these nine women at least twice for several hours at a time. I visited three older women among the nine on a regular basis, dropping by their house for twenty minutes to an hour every other week. I interviewed virtually only women, because my interest was in researching the lives of women and their contribution to North West River history. The lives and the work of men has been collected and published by visiting social scientists and journalists, as well as local authors (see Zimmerly 1991 [1975]; Plaice 1990; Merrick 1994 [1942]; Paddon, H.G. 1989; Paddon, W.A. 1989).

Interviews were loosely structured around a set of broad questions which I asked most women (eg., How has your life differed from your mother's?). These questions triggered

¹⁹ In these two cases, the husbands happened to be home while I was interviewing. I took advantage of the fact that these husbands appeared interested in the subject of our conversations and interviewed each of the couples jointly. Noticing that some women were less verbose around their husbands, I deliberately sought to interview individual women alone. There was only one woman who specifically requested to be interviewed when her husband was not at home.

a variety of responses from informants from which I could then guide the interview. Letting the interview flow as a conversation, without a strict guideline of questions, meant that women could emphasize any aspect of their lives that they wished. Initial interviews were conducted with well-reputed craft producers of all ages.²⁰ Most townspeople are proud of the skill of local craft producers and craft producers are glad to display their work.²¹ My first interviews began with a series of questions concerning craft production (eg., How long have you been producing crafts? What kind? Do you sell them or give them away? How did you learn?). Then interviews drifted away from crafts towards other aspects of these women's lives (eg., employment, raising a family, education, marriage and volunteer work). While conducting research, I came to understand that craft production was only one aspect of these women's lives, and that wage labour and raising families were as or more important to them.

Based on this finding, subsequent interview questions centred on the variety of responsibilities of each woman (at

²⁰ In my initial thesis proposal, I planned to examine craft production in the lives of women in North West River.

²¹ The actual crafts produced not only display the skill of the producers, but have also become symbols of a past ways of life. For both reasons, townspeople are proud of them.

home, at work, in the community). We discussed how domestic chores were shared with husbands. How did the women's activities and responsibilities differ from those of their mothers' or their grandmothers'? What community volunteer work had they participated in? Interviews began with descriptions of household chores (eg., whether these were shared with a husband) and of raising children and then moved on to the topics of marriage, leisure, friendship, personal goals and aspirations.

I found women were receptive to my research. They often politely inquired after my research. Very few women refused to grant me an interview. It was my impression that the few who did, seemed to have done so out of shyness or lack of time. Generally, women offered a lot of their time. Among the older women, I had the impression that it was a motherly warmth and a strong sense of hospitality toward outsiders that led them to help me with the project. Younger women were driven by a curiosity to know more about the research. Very often older women shared with me their wisdom and advice. In contrast, the younger women and I compared our experiences and laughed over them a few times.

Before leaving for fieldwork I diligently read booklets and information guides on ethical behaviour for the social scientist. Once in the field, I found myself questioning how,

during friendly conversations and intimate interviews, was I to delineate when I was being a friend or a friendly acquaintance from being a researcher? There was something to be learned from most conversations I had, from the daily routine of the family I lived with and from taped interviews. As much as possible I let people know when the information they were giving me was useful to my thesis. I also tried to distinguish friendly visits from taped interviews. Obviously all my experiences in North West River helped shape my impression of the town and of women's lives. But I wish to be respectful of my informants and will use direct quotations of theirs only when heard during interviews. Pseudonyms are used throughout the thesis and I hope that the details of people's lives are written in such a way that the individuals will not be readily identifiable.

1.4 How the thesis is organized

This thesis is a discussion of women's work in North West River in the twentieth century. I have divided the women interviewed into three generations: those born between 1909 and 1933 are generation one; those born between 1934 and 1953 are generation two; and the birth dates of women in generation three fall between 1954 and 1975. Each generation spans between nineteen to twenty-four years. The dates were

chosen because each generation has lived and established a marital household within one of the three distinguishing eras in North West River. The three eras being (in order): 1.) the heyday of trapping (1900-1941), 2.) the growth of the mission station (1916-1972), and 3.) the decline the mission station and the rise of an age of consumerism (1968-1983).

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two reviews the relevant anthropological literature on women and work. Chapter three turns specifically to North West River, describing the local cultural definition of 'work', as well as offering a catalogue of work activities performed by members of both genders. Chapters four through eight concentrate on different aspects of women's 'work' in North West River through reference to the life histories of six main informants. Chapter four discusses self-provisioning activities in North West River. The life histories of Doreen, a first generation woman and Annie, a woman of the third generation, illustrate the degree to which self-provisioning is practised and the changes in self-provisioning from one generation to the next. Chapter five highlights the lives of two first generation women, Anna and Jean. In their life histories, they discuss their wage work experiences with the International Grenfell Association. Their work histories illustrate the existence of

socio-economic class differences in North West River and the existence of a specific work culture within the Grenfell Mission. Chapter six discusses volunteer work in North West River. The influence of the Grenfell Mission and its part in formally organizing volunteer associations is discussed, as well as the degree to which women in North West River have adopted volunteer work. Chapter seven examines women's domestic labour; in it the life story of Nancy is used as an illustration of how women continue to accept responsibility for household chores. This chapter discusses the sharing of household tasks between husbands and wives in third generation households. Young husbands and wives appear to be sharing household chores, however, when women take responsibility for the completion of household tasks, it is women who are burdened by family responsibilities. Chapter eight examines changes in raising children in North West River. This chapter examines differences in discipline and punishment from one generation to the next and a decrease in the work expectations placed on children. Chapter nine concludes the thesis by reviewing women's 'work' in the twentieth century in North West River. The concluding chapter also explores continuity in women's lives, which exists alongside the generational differences which are particular to young and old women in North West River.

2.0

Chapter Two:

Literature Review:

Approaches to the Study of Work and Women's Work

2.1 'Work': "Employment is simply one form of work"

Pahl (1988: 11)

To better understand the lives of women in Newfoundland and Labrador, this thesis explores change and continuity in women's work in North West River, Labrador in this century. The 'work' of women has supported their households, helped raise their families and contributed to village life. As stated in the opening quotation from Pahl (1988: 11), I understand 'work' to include more than formal economic activity. By relegating 'work' to paid labour, I would be excluding much of women's activities, both productive and reproductive. A fundamental argument of this thesis is that women, through their 'work' activities, contribute economically to their households. Therefore women's 'work' should not be ignored (see Waring 1988).

I understand 'work' to be a socially constructed category (see Wadel 1979), the definition of which varies between cultures and societies as well as within a culture or society. One kind of activity can be called 'work' in one situation and not labelled 'work' in another, depending on the context, who performs the activity and for whom, as well as what value is given to the activity and its product

(Wallman 1979: 1-22). However, a general definition of 'work' that applies to many activities cross-culturally is the following:

work is the expenditure of human energy, to accomplish ends, with some sacrifice of comfort and leisure (Wallman 1979: 4).

Wallman's basic definition, therefore, does not limit 'work' to paid employment.

In North West River, 'work' is a meaningful aspect of the lives of women and men, both young and old. There are 'work' activities, such as trapping and craft production, which aside from providing products of practical use, are symbolically meaningful for men and women in the community. While women and their 'work' are not forgotten in North West River, they certainly have not been publicly celebrated as were the 'work' activities of men. In Chapter One, section 1.2 "A brief history and description of North West River" I have pointed out the extent to which trapping and providing for a family depended on the work of both women and men. Yet, in public memory trapping is glorified as a man's occupation. This appears to exclude women from the symbolic definition of 'work'. I will demonstrate in this thesis that women are participants in the local definition of the work ethic. This thesis is also about the 'work' activities of women. I believe there is a need to catalogue these activities and to acknowledge women's contribution to their families and to

their community.

2.2 A symbolic approach to the definition of 'work'

What is a symbolic approach? A symbolic approach in anthropology is an attempt "to establish the layered multiple networks of meaning carried by words, acts, conceptions, and other symbolic forms" (Marcus & Fischer 1986: 28-9). The following research by Cohen (1979), Davis (1985), and Alonso (1992) are described for their symbolic approach to 'work'. These symbolic approaches to 'work' are part of a growing body of research¹. One of the purposes of the research on 'work' is to understand "how categories of work and identity are reciprocally constituted" (Calagione & Nugent 1992: 4). Calagione and Nugent explore:

how the apprehension of personal and historical consciousness shapes the contexts of work, and how work itself shapes consciousness (1992:4).

I argue that 'work' carries layers of multiple meanings for townspeople in North West River. One of which is the symbolic association of certain activities, like trapping, with the town's history and ethnic identity. However, trapping is a

¹ The research on 'work' that I am referring to includes books edited by: Pahl On Work: Historical, Comparative, and Theoretical Approaches (1988), by Wallman The Social Anthropology of Work (1979), and by Calagione et al., Worker's Expressions Beyond Accommodation and Resistance (1992).

male activity, which apparently leaves women out of this symbolic definition of 'work'.

A symbolic approach to 'work' as developed by Cohen in his written account of crofters in Whalsay on the Shetland islands is as follows:²

here I report an ethnographic case which suggests the need for a good deal of elasticity in our concept of work which would allow it to go further beyond the realms of economy, occupation and subsistence to accommodate also symbolic social processes through which ethos and identity are maintained (Cohen 1979: 249).

Cohen examines crofting as an economic activity with symbolic association for the community's members (1985: 103). As such, crofting becomes a symbol with which community members link the past and the present. For the people of Whalsay, crofting re-asserts the cultural integrity of their community in the face of the community's apparent subversion by forces of change (Cohen 1985 103-6).

The cultural importance of being called "hard working" among crofters on the Island of Whalsay as described by Cohen (1979) approximates the ideals of men and women in North West River. Cohen begins by emphasizing the plurality of activities Whalsay Islanders participate in: "Whalsay households customarily pursued multiple economic activities

² Cohen has been studying the community of Whalsay continuously since 1974.

which could not have been adequately described by the gross category 'work'" (1979: 250). Wage work provides for a family, but self-provisioning activities of various kinds are engaged in as well. Cohen points out that self-provisioning activities are not thrown together under the label of 'work'. Value is placed in the kinds of activity pursued and in the variety of skills each activity requires (1979: 250). Thus "the accuracy of their designation is an important matter" (1979: 250). He explains:

The ideological values of such skilled versatility and self-sufficiency are still expressed in calling somebody "a hard worker", but this is an evaluation of a person's character and is not restricted to any particular activity, nor to judgements about a person's material achievements: it expresses proximity to a symbolic ideal rather than an actual record of effort (1979: 250).

In North West River, women and men wish to present themselves as hard working. It represents to them a symbolic ideal, earned by presenting oneself as always hard at work, be it at a paid job, at hunting, house repair, child rearing, house cleaning or volunteer work. The ideal is achieved by maintaining a high level of activity, by not letting oneself appear tired and by discussing the many tasks yet to be accomplished. This ideal exists for women as well as men in North West River.

With a similar approach in an article entitled "Occupational Community and Fishermen's Wives in a

Newfoundland Fishing Village" (1985), Davis describes the symbolic role of women within the community's fishery. Davis' research is based on field work conducted from October 1977 to December 1978 (with short visits in 1979 and 1980) in an outport along the south coast of Newfoundland, renamed Grey Rock Harbour. Davis examines women of a certain age group from a specific era of the community's recent history. These are fishermen's wives, without a "traditional" productive role in the fishery,³ who have created an emotionally supportive role for themselves: "In a way it is the women's worry that symbolically keeps his [their husband's] boat afloat" (1985: 11).

Davis demonstrates that women have an important role in the "occupational identity and ideology" (Davis 1985: 11) of the community, which is that of the fishery, the single largest employer of men in the outport: "fishing pervades the material and symbolic realms of Harbour life" (1985: 9). Davis argues that in Grey Rock Harbour the fishery is both of practical and symbolic importance to community members. Women, through their role as worriers, through their volunteer activities, and through their practical household

³ Women from other Newfoundland outports had commonly been members of the shore crew. They cured the fish. Women also grew vegetables from gardens and produced sweaters from the wool of sheep the family owned (see Antler 1977; Murray 1979; Porter 1993).

activities, have a significant role in the fishery.

Alonso (1992) examines definitions of 'work' in a Northern Mexican community based on research conducted during 1983-84 and July/August 1986. The local definitions of 'work' contrast perceptions of Mexican and American concepts of 'work'. Alonso compares men's attitudes towards men's 'work' with women's attitudes towards their own 'work'. The result is an examination of how men's and women's social selves are constructed through the social value given to their 'work' activities. Alonso writes of women that:

Being a *madre de familia* is a source of social esteem and personal satisfaction in Namiquipa where the domestic sphere is a key social, political, and economic unit (1992: 182).

The time-consuming household activities that women are responsible for, the social events which allow women to display themselves in socially appropriate ways and the network of kin that are both a means of support and a way to circulate information, gossip and criticism, all have a part to play in the building of a woman's "social esteem and personal satisfaction" in Namiquipa, Mexico (Alonso 1992: 175). These culturally specific means of building a woman's esteem and her sources of satisfaction are lost when women move to the United States.⁴ They may gain occasional jobs and

⁴ Men migrate to the United States in order to find employment (Alonso 1992: 167). However, few women of

modern appliances. In the United States, however, women's culturally valued productive activities and opportunities for social interaction are fewer, "their work has lost the value and significance it had in Mexico" (1992: 174). These women feel they are no longer able to contribute to their household in a practical and culturally valued way. These thoughts are expressed by these women in emotional terms; one woman speaks of "sinking into a stupor" (Alonso 1992: 173).

How does a similar symbolic approach to 'work' apply to women's 'work' in North West River? Like the island community of Whalsay, North West River has undergone rapid and dramatic changes. As members of the community of Whalsay have created a symbolically meaningful 'work' activity of crofting, so have the townspeople of North West River of trapping. Davis' argument that women play a symbolically important role in the fishery can also apply to women in North West River, whose participation in volunteer groups that celebrate Settler history and culture such as, the 250th Committee and the Labrador Heritage Society, maintains the historical narrative of the trapper and of the town's history. In addition, the

Namiquipa move to United States unless to be with their husbands or adult female relatives. These moves are rarely permanent; most men return to Namiquipa to return to their agricultural work. Therefore, Alonso (1992) argues that the men's American wages are used to support their agricultural work in Mexico.

women of North West River also share similarities with women of Namiquipa in that the culturally elaborated role of mother is important to women's identity and is part of their social contribution to North West River society.

2.2.1 The trapper as a cultural icon in North West River

The Native Game by Plaice (1990) inspired me to examine women's work in North West River. In this book, Plaice examines the nature of ethnicity in North West River. For six months from the fall of 1983 to the winter of 1984, Plaice conducted anthropological field work in North West River, to better understand the use of ethnic identities by Settlers. Plaice suggests "that ethnicity becomes a resource to be manipulated" (1990: 123) and that one's ethnic identity cannot exist separately from other identities (ibid). She explores how Settlers define their ethnicity in contrast to that of the Innu. Historically Settlers practised trapping differently from the Innu; thus trapping became an activity through which Settlers could define themselves separately from the Innu. Settler life-style, which included family homesteads and trapping, distinguish Settlers from both Europeans and First Nations people.

What is of interest to this thesis is the discussion of the "evolution of the social character of 'trapper' from the

economic activity of trapping" (1990: 121). Plaice writes that the ingredients of the social character of trapper are drawn from the past experiences of the Settlers who pursued trapping as a career (1990: 121). She distinguishes between men from the past who trapped full-time, and men in the late twentieth century who trap when they can take time off from their wage jobs. Plaice argues that the 'trapper' "no longer exists as an economic role" (1990: 121), rather it is a social character created through the reminiscences of older trappers. By adopting the social character of the 'trapper', younger men create a connection between themselves and the "traditional" lifestyle of trapping. Thus trapping becomes a 'work' activity that carries symbolic significance.

Trapping, as practised in 1993, is an entirely different endeavour than it was during "the fur trade climax".⁵ The younger generations can use snowmobiles, radios, and even aircraft which changes the level of skill, the time, and the monetary expense involved (Plaice 1990: 72). Trapping has become a recreational past-time rather than a means of earning a living and supporting a family (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 215). In 1993, when I was in North West River, I knew of no one who was earning a living from trapping. Unlike

⁵ Zimmerly ([1975] 1991) dates the "fur trade climax" from 1901 to 1941.

hunting, that in 1993 remains an economically vital household activity, trapping in 1993 is practised only incidentally. The value of trapping lies more in its cultural than its monetary worth.

While Plaice describes how the 'trapper' had become an important cultural symbol, my field work experience confirmed that in 1993 the 'trapper' continues to be an important cultural symbol. When I arrived in July of 1993, the town was celebrating its 250th anniversary. North West River was celebrating the history of Settlers and of the fur trade. The symbol chosen to represent North West River was that of the trapper.⁶ A large billboard announcing the 250th Anniversary Celebrations (1743 - 1993) taking place from July 14th to July 25th, greeted everyone crossing the bridge into the town. To one side of the billboard a giant thermometer with incremental divisions marked off from \$1 000 to \$15 000, declared that \$6 000 had been raised to fund the raising of a

⁶ I do not know who specifically chose to honour the trapper during the 250th Anniversary Celebrations, if any one person did. In The Native Game, Plaice offers a clue in stating that "the elite has become involved in political activities which entail the manipulation of Settler ethnic identity. As local politicians, the elite are trying to mobilize Settlers as 'Labradorians' in order to gain access, to Federal Government sympathies" (1990:89). Earlier on in her work she gives these elite the social character of 'outsider' (1990: 60-1). Perhaps it is these local politicians, be they 'outsiders' or members of the local Settler elite, who chose to use the 'trapper' as a central cultural symbol.

statue of the trapper. The billboard was painted in the colours of the Labrador flag: spruce green, bright blue and white. It depicted in white a lone trapper, wearing snowshoes and carrying his provisions on his back. He is walking on a frozen white lake, behind him are the dark green trees of the forest and above him is the azure blue sky. The billboard and the trapper's monument are only two examples of the many ways in which the 'trapper' has been raised to the status of hero.

What of the trapper's wife and children?⁷ Surely, the history of trapping has as much to do with the trapper, as with his wife and children? While the trapper was alone in the woods, his wife was on her own, raising their children and maintaining their home. The description of the social character of the 'trapper' by Plaice (1990) and the townspeople's portrayal of the 'trapper' as a hero inspired me to research the apparently forgotten lives of the Labrador Settler women and their daughters.⁸

⁷ For a discussion of the importance of women in the fur trade see Many Tender Ties Women in Fur-Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870 by Sylvia Van Kirk (1983).

⁸ The fact that this thesis focuses on women's activities and Plaice's study focused on men's activities represents the most significant difference between these two studies of North West River. Otherwise, time provided differences. At the time of Plaice's field work, the Grenfell Hospital had only just closed and the bridge had only just opened. The dramatic changes these two events were to have on village life were only beginning to be felt. By 1993, when I was conducting field work, these two events had already had a

2.3 'Work' and self-reliance

Self-reliance as a cultural ideal connected to 'work' is prevalent in Newfoundland and Labrador. Porter mentions an "ideology of rugged self-sufficiency" (1993: 1) as a significant 'work' ethic in Newfoundland. In the extreme seasonal climatic changes and geographical isolation in which Settlers lived, Settlers had to be self-reliant to survive. What does self-reliance mean? In an article entitled, "Women in Labrador: A Personal Viewpoint" Doris Saunders, a Labrador Settler living in Happy Valley, writes of her childhood: "We are all capable of surviving alone if we have to" (1982: 88). This she attributes to the education of boys and girls: "thanks to the fact that in our family there were no 'girls' and 'boys' jobs from what I remember..." (1982: 88). In other words, self-reliance means that both men and women have the skills to survive alone if need be. In North West River the townspeople I knew depicted Settlers from the past as stoically self-reliant. Indeed, to be self-reliant in 1993, means to carry on in a "tradition" of the past. After spending four months in town I understood that self-reliance implies being able to provide for one's self and for one's family.

permanent effect on village life as described in chapter one, section 1.2 "A brief history and description of North West River".

Research on various forms of 'work' activities in Newfoundland cites self-reliance (or self-sufficiency) as a cultural ideal. Based on a pilot study completed in 1985, on the work of women in Grand Bank, Newfoundland, Porter writes that women, whose husbands were temporarily absent or deceased, did not call on the help of other male relatives: "Women coping on their own were expected to be self sufficient" (1988: 551). Self-reliance therefore also implies an ethic of personal endurance.

In his ethnography about the chronically unemployed in Newfoundland, subtitled "The struggle for Self-esteem in the Face of Chronic Unemployment",⁹ Wadel writes that 'work' allows one to be self-reliant:

It is through his work, in the form of a job or self-employment, that a man earns his living and it is by earning his living that a man claims reciprocity in relation to society and independence in relation to his peers¹⁰ (1989 [1973]: 108).

Therefore a definition of self-reliance should include the ability to reciprocate materially and emotionally with family, friends and neighbours, as well as the ability to

⁹ Over a twelve month period in 1967, 1968 and 1969, Wadel conducted research in a number of small rural communities in northeastern Newfoundland (1989 [1973]: preface).

¹⁰ Italics are my own emphasis.

provide for oneself and not to be dependent on the help of others.

Writing about "Unpaid Work and Household Reproduction", Felt, Murphy and Sinclair (1995) state that "on the Great Northern Peninsula, to provide for one's self and, when necessary, for others brings generalized respect" (1995: 102). While Wadel is specifically relating paid work to an ideal of self-reliance, Felt, Murphy and Sinclair are referring to self-provisioning activities (ibid). In general the cultural ideal of self-reliance is connected to the ability to provide for and care for one's self and one's family.

Self-reliance is a theme throughout this thesis, because this ideal continues to hold cultural value in North West River. Also of interest to this thesis is the cultural notion held in North West River that self-reliance can be achieved through paid employment, as well as through self-provisioning activities. A person achieves self-reliance through 'work' activities that provide for his or her family.

2.3.1 Self-provisioning activities

The prevalence in Newfoundland and Labrador of self-provisioning activities alongside income from paid employment, unemployment insurance, social assistance and

other sources of government remittances calls into question the definition of 'work' as being equivalent to paid employment in this province. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have had to depend on what Wadel (1989 [1973]: 6) calls "occupational pluralism"; in other words, people combining several economic activities to provide for their families. Thus paid employment is only one means of providing for one's family and only one form of 'work'.

For Settlers in the North West River area of Labrador, "occupational pluralism" required a round of seasonal trapping, hunting and fishing activities. During the twentieth century, seasonal paid employment with the International Grenfell Association or with the Goose Bay Air Base joined the seasonal round of activities. Finally, by 1950 transfer payments provided another source of income for North West River families: social assistance, unemployment insurance benefits, child benefits, and old-age pensions. This thesis examines the relationship between self-provisioning activities and the cultural ideal of self-reliance.

The cultural and economic functions of self-provisioning activities are examined by Omohundro (1995) and Felt, Murphy and Sinclair (1995) for the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland. In two separate chapters of a book

entitled Living on the Edge (edited by Lawrence Felt & Peter Sinclair), Felt, Murphy and Sinclair (1995) and Omohundro (1995) discuss the variety of forms that self-provisioning takes and the reasons that people have for practising these activities. These studies have assisted my own analysis in providing an understanding of how the practice of subsistence activities has changed from one generation to the next in this part of the province, and in developing an understanding of the cultural meaning given to self-provisioning activities.

2.4 The sexual division of labour

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the "traditional" sexual division of domestic labour is often characterized by mutuality (or complementarity) (Porter 1993: 92 & Murray 1979: 144) and by extreme gender segregation (Sinclair & Felt 1992: 58). Murray provides a detailed example of such a division of labour in More Than 50%: Woman's Life in a Newfoundland Outport, 1900-1950. Murray returned to her natal outport, Elliston, Trinity Bay, to collect information on the 'work' activities of women between 1900 and 1950. In her book, she describes women's household responsibilities; the chores they had as girls; education, marriage and childbirth; women's contribution to the fishery and productive work in

the home; and women's activities in the community.

In the range of domestic labour and self-provisioning activities, Elliston men took on chores that demanded heavy physical labour: cutting wood, hunting, and house construction. Murray describes women's share of household 'work':

In addition to helping with making a living, and bearing and rearing children, a woman was responsible for running the house. The extent and nature of her household duties was determined to a great degree by the house she lived in (Murray 1979: 99).

Women were also in charge of gardening and weeding; the shearing of sheep; the carding of wool and the knitting of garments. The Settler women of North West River of the early twentieth century, with less material wealth than those of Trinity Bay, had to work hard, producing by hand their families' necessities. Like Murray's work, my research wishes to acknowledge women's contribution in North West River. However, unlike Murray, I focus as much on how women discuss their 'work', as the particular details about women's actual 'work' activities which is her main focus.

A few recent studies have questioned whether any flexibility has developed in the late twentieth century within the sexual division of domestic labour to make room for the increasing number of married women in the labour force. For example, Davis' research (dating back to 1977/78)

suggests that flexibility does exist on the southwest coast of Newfoundland (1983). Davis concludes that the "rigid division of labour which once characterized the traditional life is rapidly ceasing to exist" (1983: 26). According to Davis, the fact that both men and women are working at the fish plant (1983: 26) and "the ever-increasing presence of the father in the home" (1983: 24) has resulted in a less rigid division of labour.

Meanwhile, two different studies on this topic add to Davis' findings. These studies include Porter's (1993) research from 1981 on the southern shore of the island, and her later research dating from 1988-1990 in three different communities: Grand Falls, Catalina and South East Bight. Porter's research highlights how women view their 'work'. According to Porter, women do not separate their paid from their unpaid activities. These are all part of their responsibility to their marital households (1993: 146). A recurring argument from Porter is that "women's non-economic obligations constitute a major constraint over their participation in the formal economy..." (ibid. 146). Porter finds that women's unpaid domestic labour and care work responsibilities restrict their ability to find well-paid, personally satisfying and permanent employment.

A third study is that of Sinclair and Felt's (conducted

in 1988) of the Great Northern Peninsula (1992). This study examines how husbands and wives share a wide range of activities required to maintain a household. The authors conclude:

while men undertake a modest number of out-door provisioning activities and provide some assistance with children... women continue to do most of the domestic tasks even when employed outside the home, and their work outside the home leaves them with much less income than their husbands (1992: 68-9).

These three studies are used as points of comparison for the data collected for this thesis in North West River in 1993.

With respect to the general topic of domestic labour, Luxton (1980 & 1990) and Hochschild (1989) discuss the division of household tasks from an industrialized urban context, which does not apply completely to North West River. As in other small villages of Newfoundland and Labrador, the problem of what to include as domestic labour when referring to North West River is complex. Domestic tasks can include cooking and cleaning as well as hunting and fishing, grocery shopping, baking bread and preserving jam. In an article entitled "Separate worlds: gender and domestic labour in an isolated fishing region" Sinclair & Felt extended the range of domestic tasks to include:

the construction of the home itself and such activities as hunting, gathering berries and making jam,... (1992: 57).

The reason being that these activities are especially important in self-provisioning in the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland (1992: 57) and are therefore part of serving and caring for a family in the region. I mention Sinclair & Felt's approach to domestic labour to make a point concerning the differences between northern rural and southern urban households in Canada.

Self-provisioning activities are also part of the domestic round of activities in North West River. However, this statement must be qualified by taking note of differences from one generation to the next. Older generations were dependent on self-provisioning activities to a greater extent than younger generations, who rely on the purchase of consumer products. This is a reflection of changes in the economy. Economic changes have altered the degree to which third generation women list craft production as one of their household responsibilities. Making crafts, like trapping for men, has become a pleasurable leisure activity which can also provide some extra income for the household.¹¹

¹¹ The history of craft production in North West River is an interesting study in and of itself. Early in the twentieth century the production of clothing for household members was a necessary skill taught to every girl. By the 1930s, the I.G.A. was buying local Settler women's hand-made clothing and commissioning items with specific decorative motifs for sale in Europe and North America, thus creating "craft"

2.5 Women's volunteer 'work'

During this century, women's volunteer associations have been prevalent throughout Newfoundland and Labrador (Cullum 1993; Davis 1979; Murray 1979; Porter 1993). As a form of unpaid labour, women's volunteer activities have contributed significantly to community life across Newfoundland and Labrador. In this thesis I discuss how in the early part of this century, women's formal volunteer associations were introduced to women in North West River by the staff of the International Grenfell Association. This brings to light two aspects of women's volunteer groups in North West River. I argue that the staff of the I.G.A. involved in organizing volunteer groups created new expectations of 'work' for women.

Cullum's (1993 & 1995) research examines volunteer organizations in pre-Confederation Newfoundland. She makes two arguments salient to this thesis. First, that the women's organizations were classist in their approach. Second, Cullum shows that by combining the services of two competing women's societies, the women were able "to achieve skill development,

production (see Lynch 1985). These "craft" items became the traditional Settler handicrafts sold in 1993 by local women. Although heavily influenced by the I.G.A., craft production has become a means through which women display their individual skill and express their Settler identity or their attachment to local ethnicity and history.

handicraft production and cash sale to benefit themselves and their families" (1995: 108). These outport women had in fact appropriated these organizations for themselves.

The description of recent women's volunteer groups in Newfoundland enlighten my own analysis of women's groups in North West River. Porter's research was conducted along the southern shore of Newfoundland in 1981 (1993). From fieldwork conducted between October 1977 and December 1978 in an outport re-named Grey Rock Harbour, Davis (1979) discusses the variety and the function of female associations. While Davis and Porter offer contrasting analyses of the function of women's organizations, together their perspectives enlighten the data on North West River women's volunteer associations.

The research of Porter and Davis reveals characteristics that are common to women's volunteer organizations in Newfoundland. First, while women's volunteer associations organize social events for the whole community, they are at the same time providing the individual members with a social outlet. Volunteer groups offer a meeting place for women. Davis writes: "anytime a woman leaves her house she fancies it a social occasion. One "plays" or recreates by getting away from the household" (1979: 18). The women of Grey Rock Harbour, like the women on the southern shore,

organize social events: weddings, showers, birthday parties for pre-schoolers, dances, craft sales, and bingo nights. By meeting with other women to organize such events, these women are creating a social space for themselves.

Secondly, women's volunteer associations look after their community. According to Porter (1993), a sense of duty towards their community and enjoying the company of other women inspires the women of the southern shore of Newfoundland to join community groups. In North West River the women's group organized garbage removal. In the case of women from Calvert along the southern shore, the Women's Institute applied for government grants to repair their centre, build a park and a playground (Porter 1993: 102). The Anglican Church Women's Association in Grey Rock Harbour regularly cleaned the church and the parish hall (Davis 1983a: 108). According to Davis, these groups provide a symbolic function to the community:

Through the voluntary association structure, it is women rather than men, who represent the community and celebrate and honour the fishery (1985: 9).

The women's associations and the activities they organize represent links with the community's valued traditions of the past (ibid: 9). Likewise in North West River, in 1993 volunteer groups organized events to celebrate the history of trapping and honour local trappers.

Where the work of Porter differs from Davis is on a discussion of the "political" influence of women's voluntary organizations. According to Porter, a third characteristic of women's volunteer associations is that they have "considerable political potential" (1993: 102). While conducting research, Porter attended the 1981 Annual South Avalon District Meeting of the Women's Institute (1993: 99). From this meeting, Porter devises a theory of the "political culture" of women. Through their organizations, these women have a communication network with women from surrounding outports in the area. They have organizational skills used to rally together women for issues that revolve around charitable good works, community and family celebrations, fundraising events, preservation of traditional handicrafts and communal projects (1993: 102).

The women of the southern shore take on manageable events, interests and problems within their communities. Their success is due partly to the fact that they are not attempting to change wider political institutions and stronger economic forces:

They do not use their power in open conflict with the state, or with capital... they have turned their backs on politics as they understand it, and have built instead a "political culture" which remains powerful in controlling the culturally meaningful parts of the environment of its members

providing that the economic and wider political reality in which it is embedded is unthreatened (1993: 111).

The women on the southern shore stated that they were not interested in "politics", they viewed their activities as not political (Porter 1993: 110-1). Yet, Porter argues that these women have created strong grass-roots organizations that affect their local communities.

In contrast, Davis emphasizes the recreational aspect of women's associations in Grey Rock Harbour. She defines these groups as "expressive-recreational and service-oriented in function" (1979: 22). She does not deny that these groups

are instrumental in establishing a sense of community, supporting local institutions, serving various psychological functions and they may latently function in informal village political processes (1979: 19).

But, she argues, these functions are secondary to the recreational outlet these groups offer to women in the community. The physical, social and political isolation of the community distances women and their associations from attempting to make "political" changes (1979: 22). I argue that the influence of the I.G.A. diminished the social and political isolation of North West River. The I.G.A. offered to a few individual women and men the opportunity of developing leadership skills and of understanding the

relationship of North West River to the larger socio-political entity. These few women and men became local leaders in North West River who knew how to campaign for their needs to higher political offices. Thus, I argue that women's associations in North West River have been both political and recreational.

2.6 Economic change and women's 'work' activities

This thesis is a discussion of how economic change and cultural continuity have affected women's 'work'. North West River is an example of a community having undergone rapid economic and technological changes over the past fifty years. Studies of women's 'work' and economic changes in Newfoundland and in coastal Portugal which have instructed my thesis research include Antler (1977); Cole (1991); Davis (1979, 1983, 1985); McCay (1995) and Porter (1993). These studies have explored the following issues: A.) Changes in the form of women's material contribution to their households; from hand-made products for household use to an income brought in to the household from paid employment. B.) Changes in the nature of domestic labour and the division of labour. C.) Whether women's role in the household and their relationship to the household and its members has changed. D.) Changes in women's identities.

Porter (1993) provides a general description of how women's work in the fishery has changed with the industrialization of the fishery:

From the 1950s, the sun-dried lightly salted cod trade declined as frozen fish processing plants began to be established round the island until now the frozen fish products are dominant... Instead of going to the family stages and flakes for processing, fish now go directly from the boats to the fish-plants. These plants employ a substantially female workforce, and any involvement the women have in the fishery is now as individual wage labourers in these local fish plants (Porter 1993: 83).¹²

With the added introduction of transfer payments from the federal government since 1949, a wage economy now dominates.

With Newfoundland joining Confederation in 1949, industrialization, and the increased availability of consumer products, in the latter half of the twentieth century women no longer had to produce as many household items by hand. Antler (1977) discusses the proletarianization of the labour force and women's gradual entry in the labour force in Newfoundland. In "Women's Work in Newfoundland Fishing Families" (1977), Antler examines how the industrialization of the fishery in Newfoundland has affected women. Antler's research calculates the dollar value of women's labour in household production prior to Confederation, demonstrating

¹² McCay (1995: 147-8) provides another general description of historical changes in women's work since the industrialization of the fishery.

that women made a significant material contribution to the household. In the twentieth century, "women's labours simply were transferred from the flakes to the fish plants at the minimum wage" (Antler 1977: 111). Antler's research asks how the process of proletarianization has affected the conditions of women's productive 'work' for the family and women's other family responsibilities? With industrialization women have to work as hard, under conditions that they can no longer control, to earn enough to pay for their increasing expenses (which includes the child care and transportation necessary in order to leave home to work). According to Antler, women fish plant workers have joined an exploited workforce (1977: 111). Capitalism and industrialization have not improved their lot.

In "Fish Guts, Hair Nets and Unemployment Stamps: Women and Work in Co-operative Fish Plants" (1995) McCay's research¹³ on women who work at co-operative fish plants on Fogo Island, Newfoundland provides another example of the difficulties inherent in wage work for women in Newfoundland. At the centre of McCay's argument lies Fogo Islanders' dependence on unemployment insurance benefits. Unemployment

¹³ McCay conducted research on Fogo Island between 1972 and 1984. Between 1972 and 1974 the author spent two years on the island, and from 1975 to 1984 she has returned annually for one to four weeks at a time (McCay 1995: 161, footnote #1).

insurance compensation offered a needed income during the slack times of the year, when there is no fishing, no fish to process and otherwise no income. McCay points out that "making ten stamps was as difficult as the bygone woman's task of making high quality saltfish" (1995: 150). In other words, industrialization has not eased women's working lives, simply altered the difficulties a woman has to deal with. According to McCay most women were not able to get enough work at the fish plant to earn their stamps, and when they were employed they have to deal with paying babysitters (everyone expects to be paid, even grandmothers), with unpredictable work schedules and with the demands of house work (1995: 151).

McCay (1995) also provides evidence that adds a positive dimension to wage work for women in Newfoundland. In the first half of this century, the "traditional" salt fish fishery gathered women together to cure the fishermen's catches. In the 1970s, the effects of consumerism and capitalism on Fogo Island isolated women in individual nuclear households to raise children and clean house. Since 1980, women on Fogo Island have returned to process fish catches as paid employees of the fish plant. McCay writes that one advantage of fish plant work for women was being able to work in the company of other adults (1995: 149).

Davis' research on the southwest coast of Newfoundland corroborates McCay's findings (1985; 1983). While younger women in Grey Rock Harbour complained of the working conditions and the rate of pay, most of the women employed at the fish plant (who happen to be middle-aged) spoke positively of working at the fish plant, mentioning "the camaraderie among women..., the importance of being part of the fishery, and even the aesthetic" quality of the fish (1983: 27; 1985: 6-7).

Whether the availability of consumer goods has lightened women's workload at home is discussed by Cowan in More Work For Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave (1983) and by Vanek (1974) in an article entitled "Time spent in house work: market work, homework and the family" (1974). Both authors conclude that the tasks were made less physically laborious, and the number of tasks women have to accomplish in the home have decreased. Since domestic chores may be considered lighter because of the advances in technology, women are now left alone (without the help of their children, for instance) to accomplish their housework. Therefore, consumerism and technological advances in household appliances have not freed women from domestic labour because domestic labour is still considered their sole responsibility.

Porter's publication entitled Place and Persistence in the Lives of Newfoundland Women (1993) is particularly relevant to this thesis. In Place and Persistence Porter's goal is to examine "the different ways in which family structures gender, and the ways in which women's economic contribution is then mediated through the family" (1993: 8). By using research examples from across the island of Newfoundland, Porter examines topics such as: generational differences, coping with economic changes, as well as balancing the 'work' of paid employment, family care, and volunteer work. Porter concludes that capitalism and industrialization have not changed women's role in the household and their relationship to the household and its members. The women in Porter's research provide examples of women's lives with which to compare with women in North West River. Porter examined topics and themes similar to those discussed in this thesis. Porter's work also demonstrates the differences in the lives of women across Newfoundland, since her research studied the lives of women from various locations throughout the island of Newfoundland.

Women of the Praia (1991) by Sally Cole discusses two generations of Portuguese women and their work.¹⁴ She

¹⁴ Cole's research is based on field work in Vila Chã, between May 1984 and June 1985 with a return during the summer of 1988 (1991: preface).

discovers that as women's work has changed, so have gender ideologies (preface, p., xiv). Like the women in this study, women of Vila Chã (a fishing village in northeastern Portugal) have become wage workers, consumers of market goods and managers of household incomes. Cole found a change in women's identification with the home and their domestic role. Older women identified themselves with their work as maritime subsistence and commodity producers. Younger women wish to identify themselves as "*donas de casa*" or housewives. Thus economic change has wrought a change in women's identity. Can the same be said for women of North West River?

2.6.1 Re-creating "traditions" of the past

I argue that townspeople assert their ties with a past way of life as a means of coping with rapid and extreme changes. They create an image of the past and re-create "traditions" for the present.¹⁵ Thus this thesis discusses self-provisioning activities as a "tradition" that asserts people's ties to their past.¹⁶ Cultural continuity exists in these culturally valued "traditions" which people uphold. The

¹⁵ This idea persists throughout the literature on Newfoundland and Labrador, see: Davis (1985 & 1995), Felt, Murphy & Sinclair (1995) & Plaice (1990).

¹⁶ See also Felt, Murphy & Sinclair (1995) and Omohundro (1995).

value placed in these cultural "traditions" by the younger generations is a means of expressing respect for the older generations' values, perhaps lessening the generation gap.

The values of older generations versus those of the younger community members is discussed in the research of Davis (1983 & 1985). The older and younger generations are characterized by Davis' informants according to whether they were born before or after the construction of a gravel road facilitating transportation to and from the isolated village of Grey Rock Harbour (1983: 23). Those born before the construction of the bridge are said to uphold "traditional" values. Those born after the bridge are becoming assimilated into "mass, middle class Canadian society" (1985: 12). Similar characterizations exist in North West River, such as "traditional" versus modern, old versus young, before and after the construction of Goose Bay Airport, or, before and after the construction of the bridge between North West River and Sheshatshit, or, before and after the closure of the Grenfell Hospital in North West River. Davis' analysis of the past and present and the generation gap in Grey Rock Harbour offers some insights for North West River.

Porter (1993) examined generational differences between young and old women of Grand Bank, and, young and old women of Aquaforte along the southern shore in Newfoundland. In

spite of the changes affecting outport life, women from Grand Bank, Newfoundland emphasize the continuity inherent in women's work from one generation to the next.

Porter (1993) offers a counter example which emphasizes a generation gap between older and younger women. In discussing the lives of younger and older women from Aquaforte, Porter contrasts younger women's suburban and materialistic aspirations against older women's attachment to the fishing lifestyle. At the time of Porter's fieldwork in 1981, the older women were still engaged in the fishery. For instance they collected and distributed information on their husbands' and neighbour's catches. They still maintained "traditional" household duties: "baked bread two or three times a week, used traditional recipes and ingredients, knitted, kept hens, grew potatoes and cabbage and went berry picking and troutling" (1993: 88). The younger women, "in dress, manners, assumptions and ambitions were indistinguishable from millions of North American women" (1993: 90). They had completed their high school education, then gone to trade schools and were accepting office jobs in St. John's or Ferryland or Fermeuse. They enjoyed an urban life-style, spent their weekends on the southern shore going to bars and dances looking for a husband. They expected to marry, have two children and live in a modern bungalow with

all the modern conveniences.

The lives of women in Aquaforte are also relevant to women of North West River. There, too, modern life includes wage labour and consumer material goods and is in stark contrast with 'Them Days', when "it was hard work, they were poor and there were no luxuries" (Porter 1993: 88). Most younger women in North West River lead lives that appear to be radically different from those of their mothers and grandmothers. They are employed full-time, use all modern conveniences and have fewer children.

As the past is inextricably tied to an image of the fisherman in Aquaforte, so too are 'Them Days' personified in the trapper. Because men can continue to hunt and trap in North West River, men can link their identity to the past. Perhaps like the younger women in Aquaforte, young women in North West River may have lost that sense of continuity. Yet, like the women in Grand Bank, who maintain the importance of their role in the household, women in North West River hold onto a sense of continuity in spite of the generational differences. This sense of continuity alongside generational differences is further explored throughout this thesis.

2.7 Life histories: studying women on their own terms

"To study women on their own terms" (Clark 1988: 261)

means to examine women's active participation in the events of their daily lives within a wider social and economic context. It includes using life histories to describe their situation in life. It implies that women are actively engaging in the world around them from within a distinctly female sphere of activity. This female sphere of activity carries with it distinctly female values.

Life histories are commonly used to describe the daily exigencies placed on women and to evoke women's own perspectives on their lives. The use of life histories have been adopted, among others, by Clark (1988); Cole (1991); Myerhoff (1978); and Porter (1993). Life histories are an important part of this thesis. The use of life histories can elicit details about women's lives that can be hidden by superficial assumptions about 'the way things were'. So, for example, when women state "I have not worked!", the details of their lives reveal that they have taken on a tremendous amount of 'work', both paid and unpaid, both outside the home and inside the home. Life histories also allow women to express their own opinions and concerns about their lives, their communities, the past as compared to the present. I will next discuss the work of one researcher who "[studies] women on their own terms". I will mention this publication briefly to provide a further example of how to "study women

on their own terms".

Cole (1991) writes about women in a northern Portuguese fishing community. She describes her approach as one that "would view women as historically constituted subjects" (Cole 1991: 148). Her theoretical aim is to examine the relationship between women's work and the social construction of gender (1991: preface). She uses women's narratives to assist her in her task (Cole 1991: 148). Cole's research provides an ethnographic example relevant to my research in North West River. It discusses generational differences in 'work' patterns of women and presents an ethnographic example of women who define themselves as *trabalhadreira*, hard-working women (Cole 1991: 80).

2.8 Women's work: providing and caring for family and community

Essentially this thesis records the 'work' activities of three generations of women in North West River, Labrador. The subject matter of the following chapters includes a discussion of the following: self-provisioning activities; paid employment and unpaid volunteer work with the International Grenfell Association; the division of domestic labour; and raising children. Economic change and its effects

on women's lives and their 'work' become an underlying theme of the thesis. The aim of this work is to uncover the local definition of 'work' and to understand women's place within that definition.

'Work' in North West River, Labrador

"I don't think anybody who lives in Labrador would doubt they work, it's as simple as that...you have to work in order to survive here...Either you're working at your own house and getting your own food, or, looking after your children, or, this kind of thing, but nobody survives without work..."

Jennifer (in her thirties)

3.1 Initial impressions:

I will juxtapose my two strongest initial impressions of North West River, because they contrast each other so starkly. When I first arrived I was struck by the immensity of the physical landscape. The forest, sky and water bore an overwhelming presence. At the same time, I was surprised to find in this isolated northern rural setting evidence of all the comforts of late twentieth century consumerism.

I flew to Labrador from St. John's, Newfoundland. Arriving at Goose Bay Airport in the late afternoon I took a cab to North West River. The taxi ride lasted forty-five minutes, along a paved road. Within fifteen minutes of the airport, material signs of humans were diminished by the boreal forest, the hills, the Mealy Mountains, lakes and rivers.

Having left Goose Bay we passed two roads: a paved road to the docks from where Marine Atlantic ferries arrive and leave again, and a gravel road to Churchill Falls. More

trees, curves in the road and hills, and we passed down-hill ski lifts on Snow Goose Mountain, then a Labrador Flag painted directly on the rock face of a cliff high above the road. The taxi driver pointed out Gosling Lake, where cabins are used for summer camps. We passed a statue of the Virgin Mary on the road. She stands on a wood base, dressed in white and blue, beside her are laid commemorative flowers. The taxi driver thought the Innu had put her there, but could not tell me why. I later learned that this diminutive figure of the Virgin Mary standing on the road side surrounded by leafless burnt out trees, is a reminder of the forest-fire that threatened Sheshatshit and North West River in 1985. We crossed a wooden bridge over the Goose River. The road to North West River seems endless at this point, the landscape is over-ruled by pine, spruce and willow. The only change in the road is a slight ascent, then it curves left. The trees thin and a sign announces Sheshatshit, but the settlement is nowhere to be seen, only an extension of the paved road off to the right. We crossed the bridge completed in 1980, and a little hand-painted sign welcomed me to North West River. I saw dirt roads, little houses scattered amid the trees and the shoreline with speed boats, canoes and motor boats anchored off shore. I was in shock. What was I going to do in a community so small? How could I fill my time?

That evening I walked around town and discovered that

the town is not so small. There are three churches: The United Church (built in 1930), The Moravian Church (circa 1960) and The Calvary Pentecostal (constructed in 1983). I passed Lake Melville school, the Northern Store (formerly of the Hudson's Bay Company), Arctic Cat gas station, two restaurant/diners (Duckies' and Grandma's), and a branch of the Labrador Community College. Houses are well cared for, with manicured lawns, fences, and flower or vegetable gardens. One pick-up truck and a car are parked in most of the driveways, along with snowmobiles and often a boat in the side yards. That first day, I wrote in my journal: "This is not a poor community. Money may not flow, for example Al is doing his own renovations, but the houses are nicely kept and people own several vehicles."

North West River is dominated by the landscape, by the limitless expanse of trees, with Lake Melville and the Mealy Mountains to the east and south, and Grand Lake and its system of rivers to the northwest. The landscape also dominates the cultural construction of history and of ethnic identity, both of which are based on the story of trapping. A story of heroic men, braving the elements alone, returning to their families bearing furs for trade. At the same time this community is not isolated from the material standards of the late twentieth century. Cable television is avidly watched.

Cars are used on a daily basis to get to Happy Valley/Goose Bay for jobs, to shop, to see a movie, to eat out or to visit relatives and friends.

Both of these realities, the dominance of the physical landscape which evokes the history of trapping in the area and the evidence of townspeople's participation in consumerism, require a work ethic predicated on the value of working hard. But they require different types of 'work' activities and offer different material rewards. The social rewards are similar, people are regarded highly for working hard. The social value placed on different work activities is constructed around an individual's ability to prove him/herself responsible, self-reliant and capable of strenuous labour.

3.2 Defining 'work' in North West River

'Work' is defined variously in North West River. It is most often defined as paid employment. When asked what 'work' they do, women I interviewed assumed that I meant 'wage work'. Here is a common reaction to my question "What work have you done?" Jean scowled and said "I have not worked. In my generation work meant being paid." Then she corrected herself, "It meant being employed, having an employer".

Jean was defining herself as a wife and mother who did

not 'work' yet her work history reveals that she had worked as a nurse (see her work history chart in Appendix A). This first generation woman had trained for four years as a nurse in a London, England hospital during the second world war. Afterwards she worked for the International Grenfell Association as a nurse and midwife in St. Anthony, Harrington Harbour and North West River. She was employed until she married. Once married, she took care of her four children, managed the household and participated in community volunteer labour.

In daily conversation 'work' can mean any number of activities aside from wage work. These could be physically laborious tasks or activities demanding heavy time requirements. This can include self-provisioning activities and domestic labour. At the beginning of this chapter, Jennifer is quoted as saying that "nobody survives without work". The work activities she lists include building a house, growing or hunting food, and raising children. Her portrayal of working in Labrador is a romanticized picture of being self-reliant and living off the land.

Just over thirty when I spoke to her, Jennifer had depended on paid employment to support herself since she was nineteen years old. She worked for the International Grenfell Association hospital in North West River from 1979

until it closed in 1983 and then took on one contract position after another, until she was forced to depend on unemployment insurance benefits and welfare. Yet, she holds on to an image of living in Labrador that is defined by self-provisioning activities. She bought her own house; made renovations with the help of friends; is given caribou meat by friends (she was single in 1993, without a boyfriend, husband or son to hunt for her); and buys wood and chops it herself to heat her house. She depends on wage labour, social assistance, self-provisioning activities, and the help of friends.

The dependence on unemployment insurance benefits or social assistance have introduced a third component to the work ethic in North West River. Some townspeople expressed a general feeling of annoyance that there are people who do not work as hard now that they can depend on social assistance. I was told that some people are satisfied with a ten week job to make them eligible for unemployment insurance. As Jennifer pointed out to me, at times an individual is better off living on welfare, when for instance the department of social services will pay for medical expenses (i.e., prescription drugs) than to take a job at minimum wage and be unable to afford most expenses. Social assistance, however, undermines the work ethic only in certain circumstances. When

unemployment insurance benefits alongside wages earned enable men to purchase the tools required to hunt and repair the house, then they are still hard at work providing for their household. They are still providing for the household according to local cultural values.

Returning for a moment to my initial impressions of North West River as dominated both culturally and geographically by the physical landscape and caught in the late twentieth century culture of consumerism. People's wage jobs allow them to maintain a comfortable material standard of living. Their self-provisioning activities allow them to give additional meaning to their life-styles in a way that is culturally valued. 'Work' that is culturally attached to the physical landscape and is dependent upon natural resources is a result of the harsh realities of the physical landscape and climate of Labrador. This 'work' is symbolically tied to past ways of living, eg., the trapping life-style of early Settlers. It is 'work' that ethnically identifies North West River Settlers, distinguishes them from other Canadians, from the Innu and from the Inuit (see Plaice 1990). Paid employment does not carry the social value of trapping. Wage work is a means of survival. People 'work' to get paid, they 'work' to qualify for their unemployment insurance benefits. They 'work' to pay for basic necessities or to accumulate the

material comforts available.¹

3.3 The seasonal cycle of 'work' activities

The seasons mark definite changes in household activities in North West River. Self-provisioning activities, wage labour and the pace of family life vary with the seasons. Summer is a time for recreation with children off from school for two months. The beach is open and children swim daily. Teenagers gather for volleyball games at the beach or baseball games on the Airstrip or just to hang out. The annual beach festival takes place in late July and draws in townspeople from North West River, Sheshatshit, Happy Valley/Goose Bay and Mud Lake. The festivals, teen and children summer recreation programs demand the time of volunteers and provide a few paid jobs.

It is also a hectic time, when many skilled seasonal labourers return to their jobs. This includes wildlife officers, construction workers and road workers. In 1993 the town council received money for a make-work project that involved some construction in town. A few men were hired so they could gain ten weeks work and qualify to earn

¹ Felt, Murphy & Sinclair (1995) suggest that on the Northern Peninsula household income pays for the goods necessary (eg., snowmobiles, cars, tools, guns) for hunting, household renovation and other examples of home-based production.

unemployment benefits in the winter. In late August and early September of 1993 townspeople took vacations. Some families drove to Churchill Falls and central Labrador or Quebec for their vacations; others took the ferry to Newfoundland and beyond.

As September comes around the hectic pace quickens. Most seasonal jobs have not yet ended. There are gardens to harvest, with staple crops of potatoes, beets and carrots. Men prepare for their hunting trips for caribou, moose, partridge and goose. The success of hunting trips are a daily conversation topic. Who went? Where did they go hunting? What did they come back with? The skill of the individual hunter is commented on, as well as his hunting style, his technique for bleeding and bringing home the animal.² Berry picking is also a topic of conversation. Which berries are ripe? When is the best time for picking? How new-comers and younger people are too impatient and pick before the berries are at their best. The location of good patches is information never given away. Jam-making begins. Older women speak of canning and boiling their vegetables and meat, a chore which younger women dispense with. When snow covers the ground and the gravel roads (late October in 1993), snowmobiles become the

² For a similar discussion of hunting see Murphy (1990) "Maternal Politics: Women's Strategies in a Rural Development Association".

main means of transportation within town. Children are taken for joy rides. Parents express concern over whether their child wears a helmet. With the first heavy snowfall, people await the freeze up of lakes. As soon as strong ice forms on the lake, people make trips on snowmobile to their cabins. Families plan weekend excursions and men prepare for a few days of hunting at the cabin.

I left in November and could not experience winter, but I was told that it is the slowest time of the year. The cold and snow in January prevents people from spending much time out-of-doors. The majority of men are at home, their seasonal jobs having ended in late fall. People look forward to spring (late March and April) when the ground is snow-covered, making snowmobile travel still possible, and the sun is invitingly warm. Families look forward to the first trip taken during Easter holidays to their cabins after the long winter. The spring seal hunt, duck hunting and ice-fishing begin. When the temperature warms, the snow melts and ice breaks up, people wait expectantly for the time when boats can be safely taken out on the water.

3.4 Paid employment

Most people in town are employed, including a surprising number of mothers with young children. With the

help of three informants, I recorded that in 1993 there were 500 people living in town in 181 households: 173 adult men, 182 adult women and 145 children between the ages of one and eighteen.³ One third of the adults in town are retired. Children make up approximately another third of the total population in town. Most men are employed as seasonal labourers, principally heavy equipment operators and construction workers. I do not have exact numbers of how many men are seasonally employed, since their status as employed or unemployed varies with the time of year (Some seasonal workers were employed during the summer and autumn, others were employed during the winter.) From a total of 106 employed men in the summer of 1993, fifty-two worked in Happy Valley/Goose Bay, while thirty-five men worked in North West River and one man worked in Sheshatshit. The major employers were Department of National Defence at the Canadian Air Force Base in Goose Bay, the Department of Wildlife, Newfoundland Power, the Forestry Management Centre in North West River and Grenfell Regional Health Services. Some men worked for the

³ I was provided with a map of the town that had every house numbered and the adult inhabitants listed according to house number. With the map in hand, I sat down with three informants and asked their help in filling in information on the inhabitants of the town. I compiled information on origin of the population, household composition, number of children attending school and how many people were employed and where they worked. (My informants could not always give me exact information on their fellow townsfolk.)

Labrador Inuit Health Commission that runs an alcohol and drug rehabilitation centre in town, the Northern store, and as labourers on projects for the town council. There were a handful of men self-employed in North West River. This included two men who owned and ran two garages in town, a cabinet-maker, a silversmith, the owner of a video and convenience store and the owner of a taxi service. There were approximately five other men in town who earn a living in management or administrative positions in Happy Valley/Goose Bay. There were forty-three retired men and seven men were attending school full-time (which includes, upgrading high school and attending university or college).

The most distinctive characteristic of women's employment is that women have year-round jobs in the service sector. In 1993, the number of working women was ninety-six; that is, just over half the adult women in town and just ten fewer than the number of working men. More women worked in North West River itself, a total of fifty-four, than in Happy Valley/Goose Bay, a total of thirty-five. Three women worked in Sheshatshit. Mothers with young children choose, whenever possible, to work in North West River so they can be close to their children. Children attended Lake Melville School in North West River and mothers wanted to find jobs in town in case of an emergency at school when their children will

require their care. The majority of women work in the service sector as clerks, nurses, receptionists, secretaries, and homecare workers for the invalid. Seventeen women work for Grenfell Regional Health Services. These women hold positions as nurses, nurse's aides, laundry workers or secretarial office workers. Four women are employed at the Paddon Home for Seniors. The main employers of women in North West River include the Labrador Inuit Health Commission, the Grenfell Regional Health Services, the Northern Store and the two restaurants. Of the women not working in 1993, thirty-nine were retired, sixteen were full-time students and four were caring for their infants or young children.

In North West River, there are certain jobs that are considered appropriate for members of only one of the two genders. Men find work as labourers and women as office workers, nurses and home care workers. For the most part men's work is heavy physical labour requiring men to be outside. Whether trapping, doing chores for the house or earning wages, men tend to work outdoors. Women are employed in positions that resemble domestic tasks.

3.5 Work histories of individual women and men

The work history charts of sixteen women and five men are collected in Appendix A. They represent the employment

histories of these twenty-one individuals, whose age ranged from eighty-four to twenty-six in 1993. The charts also describe other work activities: childhood chores, schooling, domestic chores, self-provisioning activities, and volunteer work. A few of the charts refer to local historical events, such as the arrival of the cable car and residential telephone service. The charts are useful in that they display in an easy to read format commonalities in women's employment histories; for instance, every woman interviewed had been employed at some stage in her life. In addition, the charts display generational differences; for e.g.,: at what point in a woman's life cycle is she employed? When does she quit her job and concentrate her efforts on raising a family and/or on community volunteer work? How are domestic chores shared between spouses? To what extent are self-provisioning activities common?

3.5.1 Employment

The work history charts focus on women's employment more so than any other issue. During fieldwork, I became interested in the history of women's employment in North West River, as it became clear that women of all generations had been part of the wage labour force. The work history charts display two certain facts. One, women of all generations have

at some point in their lives been employed. Two, women's participation in the workforce has been defined by a gender-segregated labour market, so that most women have been and are still predominantly employed in positions that extend their domestic skills to the workforce.

For generation one (1909-1933) there were very few job opportunities available. A woman could find employment with the Grenfell Mission, the Hudson's Bay Company, or with local families needing an extra female hand to manage the household. The adult skills required and taught to these first generation girls were passed down from mother to daughter and were centred on domestic labour, home-based production and the raising of children. In this respect women in my sample of the second generation (1934-1953) are difficult to compare to women of Generation I, because many were born and educated outside of North West River. Yet, women like Linda, Elizabeth, Clare and Vicky represent a fairly significant proportion of the female population of the second generation.⁴ In general, women of the second generation took advantage of better educational and employment opportunities. As in the case of Linda (who was

⁴ After 1960 the I.G.A. was able to hire more professional staff, many of them women who remained, married and settled in the community. They became active members of the community, who took on the community's heritage as their own.

born in Labrador), she was an excellent student and was privileged by Grenfell patronage.⁵ Women like Julia and Pearl also took advantage of educational and employment opportunities available, but because they were from small communities in Labrador and on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, they had less choice to begin with. For Generation III (1954-1975), local educational and employment opportunities had expanded.⁶ A college diploma became the norm and women received formal training in secretarial and office work, working with children (early childhood education, recreational services), cooking, and craft production.⁷ I would add that despite this formal training, this list places women in jobs similar to those held by their mothers and grandmothers.

The work history charts also display generational differences concerning when in a woman's life she is

⁵ There are women of the first generation who were also so fortunate. Among them are Regina and Agnes, who studied to become nurses.

⁶ The expansion of the job market for women is a phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century. Post-World War Two 'female' jobs (eg., service sector and office work) increased due to the changing economy (Margolis 1995: 64-5). In the Lake Melville area, this expansion occurred with the expansion of the Mission station and with the economic diversification of the 1970s.

⁷ Porter's (1993) research on women in Aquaforte displays a similar trend among younger women. They have college training and take clerical positions in St. John's.

employed. Women of all ages have worked for wages between the time they finished school and when they bore children⁸. Older women quit their jobs as soon as they married. Once married, their responsibilities were focused on household management and raising children. The youngest generation of women, who were still raising young children in 1993, had taken maternity leaves varying from six months to two years. In their life history narratives, they are preoccupied with balancing wage work and child care responsibilities. As the life history narratives will illustrate, women of different generations all identified themselves with their responsibilities as mothers; however, for younger women, job opportunities and career choices were topics of conversation that for older women did not exist.⁹

3.5.2 Self-provisioning activities

There is evidence that self-provisioning activities remain a vital ingredient in the lives of many

⁸ For a description of women's paid employment in St. John's between the two world wars see Forestell (1995: 76-92). Forestell's study indicates that women were most commonly employed between leaving school and getting married; however, older married women did engage in paid labour, often inside their own homes.

⁹ The fact that older women did not talk of careers as did younger women could indicate a general identification with their role as mothers, or, an indication that as older women concerns of employment seemed to be far behind them.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Newfoundland households commonly provide for themselves from job market wages, income from social assistance and self-provisioning activities. Inhabitants on the Northern Peninsula, like the townspeople of North West River, construct their own houses; add their own renovations; repair their cars, boats and snowmobiles; hunt meat; grow vegetables; pick berries; as well as sew and knit clothes (see Felt, Murphy & Sinclair 1995; Sinclair & Felt 1992). There exists in Newfoundland as well a cultural rhetoric placing value on self-sufficiency and self-reliance, validating self-provisioning activities as 'work' (see Felt, Murphy & Sinclair 1995; Porter 1993; Omohundro 1993).

The work history charts of Grace, Doreen, Arthur, Annie and Cindy refer often to self-provisioning activities. Their households were and are dependent on home-based production. Grace and Doreen are first generation women, whose husbands trapped and were employed in the summer. Arthur is of the first generation and he is one of the few men who continued to trap full-time well into the 1980s. Most men who reached adulthood in the 1950s and 1960s left trapping behind, choosing to train themselves as engineers, electricians and mechanics. These men took advantage of job opportunities with Goose Bay Air Base, Brinco and the Churchill Falls Company.

Annie and Cindy are young women, whose households

depend on a mixture of self-provisioning activities, employment wages and unemployment insurance benefits. Annie and Cindy and their spouses enjoy self-provisioning activities and are partially dependent on them because of their low level of education¹⁰ and the few job opportunities available to them. It is interesting to note that both Annie and Cindy were raised by their grandparents who depended on trapping to provide for their households. Their childhood thus influenced their life-style choices in adulthood.

While almost all of the examples in Appendix A list hunting, berry picking, gardening, as well as making clothes and crafts, I do not know the actual financial contribution of these activities. Among the youngest generation of men and women, the extent to which households are dependent on self-provisioning activities varies with educational level, job opportunities and wages earned, and a commitment to the life-style. For instance, Annie and Alan fill their freezers with wild meat and heat their house by wood furnace. Annie prefers the taste of caribou meat to beef and Alan enjoys getting out into the woods, to track down and shoot a moose. Meredith and John, who have better salaries and full-time permanent jobs, depend much more on their own wages to supply their

¹⁰ They and their husbands have completed high school, only Cindy has a college diploma.

household. In the fall of 1993 John had gone caribou hunting for a week with his "buddies". He successfully shot two. John had never been caribou hunting before. He said that if he did not go now when he was in his early thirties, he would never go. Although for John and Meredith self-provisioning activities appeared not to be a significant financial contribution to their household, it seemed that for John hunting caribou was a sign that he had reached male adulthood.

3.5.3 Domestic labour

Much has been written about women, employment and changes in domestic labour (see Luxton 1984 & 1990; Hochschild 1989; Cowan 1983 and Lamphere 1993; Sinclair & Felt 1992; Porter 1993). Evidence from the literature points out that women remain primarily responsible for domestic labour even when they are employed full-time (Sinclair & Felt 1992; Hochschild 1989). While they can and do solicit help from their spouses, the extent to which men "help out" is determined by what their husbands like doing, do not mind doing and dislike doing (Luxton 1990). The extent to which men and women share the domestic chores is based on learned expectations about the roles of women and men at home, the degree to which women's wages contribute significantly to the

household, the exigencies of working full-time (eg., shift work), the availability of day care arrangements (Lamphere et al., 1993: 185), and daily situational demands.

As I have already stated in chapter two, the sexual division of labour in North West River is well-defined. Women of the first generation did not question their domestic responsibilities, nor did they talk about expecting assistance from their husbands. For older women, the running of a household required labour that was both physically demanding and time consuming. Women of the second generation, who married after 1950, found domestic chores eased by the availability of electricity from household generators and appliances like the wringer-washer. Their life history narratives do discuss the sharing of domestic chores between husband and wife, unlike older women who describe how laborious chores were. Meanwhile for women of the third generation, who are trying to balance wage work, child care and household chores the negotiation of flexibility was an issue for them. The work history charts show that three couples: Nancy and Michael, Vicky and Arthur, Garth and Elaine have at some point in their marriage shared domestic chores. In general, however, domestic labour and child care are considered to be a woman's responsibility. This remains unchanged from one generation to the next. The degree of help

a woman gets from her husband depends on his likes and dislikes, the urgency of the situation, and their working schedules.

3.5.4 Volunteer work

While volunteer work has been dominated by women in North West River, it is also true that certain volunteer groups or positions were defined as either male or female. This was the case from the first half of the twentieth century until the late 1960s. Two cases in point are the Women's Community Club initiated by Jean Timmins in 1955 and the Local Roads Committee as organized by her husband Dr. David Timmins in the early 1950s.

With the construction of a newly built Grenfell Mission Hospital in 1955, a Community Women's Club was established. Jean Timmins acted as president of the Club for a number of years and most married women in town participated. The Club functioned as a charitable organization; they raised money and held bake sales. Servicing the needs of the Grenfell Mission Hospital was the primary purpose of this community group. The Club raised funds to purchase necessary equipment and pay for the care of patients. Once a year the members of the Club cleaned the hospital. When the hospital was able to hire an assistant cook and to hire more people as their

cleaning and laundry staff, the Community Club's services were no longer necessary. Jean disbanded the Club in the mid-1960s. The members of the Community Club went on to form other local volunteer groups: the United Church Women and the Parent-Teacher's Association. The elder members of these groups have now formed the senior's group, Helping Hands.

The Community Club is in stark contrast to the Local Roads Committee, headed by Dr. Timmins with an all-male committee. Initially organized in the 1950s for the construction of roads in town, the Local Roads Committee was replaced by the Community Council in the 1960s, then in 1968 by the Local Improvement District of North West River, and finally in 1973 by the Town Council. These committees, aside from having all male members, looked after what were to become municipal services (sewage and water, telephone service and electricity). They were not charitable organizations. They did demand that members perform some physical outdoor work. They can be labelled "formal political organizations".¹¹ Although the town council has remained dominated by men,¹² women have been councillors since the

¹¹ This label has been inspired by Porter's chapter entitled "'The tangly bunch': The political culture of Southern Shore women", in which she contrasts men's formal political organizations against women's informal political culture (1993: 98-114).

¹² With the exception of the 1983 by-election when four out of

1970s.

The main characteristic of women's versus men's volunteer work is illustrated by these two organizations, the Community Club and the Local Roads Committee. As volunteers, women took their domestic skills to the community at large. Their volunteer work offered necessary labour to the hospital and services to the community. Women diversified community life by organizing and catering social occasions: weddings, dances, and sports day events. Thus women also provided themselves with an excuse to meet other women socially, to break up their routine and to get out of the house. The volunteer activities of women in North West River resembles that of other women in Newfoundland and Labrador (see Christiansen-Ruffman 1995; Davis 1979; Porter 1993). While the women's groups included all married women in town, men's groups were exclusive. Usually less than a dozen men were specifically chosen for the voluntary positions.¹³ The men's groups were to administer specific services to the town within a prescribed format.

Finally both of these organizations were initiated by

six councillors were women, including the first woman mayor in all of Labrador.

¹³ Members of the Local Roads Committee were selected by the resident Grenfell Mission doctor and then appointed by a Minister of the provincial government. By 1970, the town residents were electing the members of the Town Council.

the most prominent members of the local Grenfell staff, the doctor and his wife introduced formal volunteer organizations as a way of working toward the improvement of the community. Volunteering for the social good is a value still invoked by first generation women. For instance, Julia (in her sixties) stated that the community work was something she did to help to see that things were done.

Since the 1950s and 1960s volunteer work has changed in two ways: the variety of volunteer organizations has increased, and fewer women of the youngest generation are involved. Nevertheless, the expectation to participate in volunteer groups persists. First generation women joined a community group when they married. Third generation women take up volunteer work when and if it suits them. They have become involved in a variety of organizations: town council, organizing community events (the Annual Beach Festival, the Celebrations of 250 Years of History), Women of the Land (a branch of the Labrador Native Women's Association), the Labrador Heritage Society, the North West River Public Library, the United Church Board. Except for the Native Women's Association, none of the groups are exclusively female in membership, although many are dominated by women. The function of the groups vary. Some groups re-create a representation of the past and celebrate its heroes, the

trappers. Others continue the work of the older community-wide groups: they organize an annual festival, or, as in the case of the public library, offer community services.

3.6 Generational differences in how women discuss 'work'

Finally, this chapter will compare differences in how women of different generations discuss 'work'. The value of working hard has been passed down from one generation to the next. Nevertheless, women of the first and third generation in particular also contrasted sharply in how they spoke about 'work'. When discussing their work, first generation women are re-affirming their values; third generation women are trying to cope with everything that they have to do.

Older women described their lives, both past and present, as requiring incessant work. They described themselves as busy, with rarely a moment to sit down. Women of the first generation, who have worked hard since childhood, cannot conceive of having nothing to do. Undeniably, women of the first generation have had a fatiguing and time-consuming workload at home and in the work place during their lifetime. In 1993, they described themselves as remaining constantly busy. As young mothers they had been busy at the time and, unwilling or unable to slow their efforts down, they insisted that they had remained

just as busy. Their 'busy-ness' is partly a habit and partly a moral code, in which not to have anything to do is likened to laziness.

Anna, who was in her eighties in 1993, spoke with pride of having worked hard and of having maintained a workload and schedule about which she assumes younger women would complain.¹⁴ A first generation woman named Hannah often remarked how busy she was, adding that she could not understand people who said that they were bored. The elders are thus re-affirming their values as they witness changes that they do not approve of in the younger generation, such as the purchase of many consumer items.

The value of hard work was passed on to the second and third generation. This value was expressed to me in several ways. Annie pointed out with pride how everything she and Alan own, they have worked for themselves. Alan built their large house. Although it began as a bungalow, as they could afford to and as Alan had time, renovations and additions were made. Now it is a three storey, three bathroom house. They have paid for it themselves, without a mortgage. By telling me about their house and other aspects of their

¹⁴ The research of Cole in a northeastern coastal village of Portugal offers an ethnographic example of women who define themselves as *trabalhadeira*, hard-working women (Cole 1991: 80).

lives, Annie is depicting she and her husband as being hard working and self-reliant. For instance, she also proudly claimed to have never depended upon a babysitter. With four children of their own and numerous foster children to care for, Annie and Alan and their own older children have looked after the smaller children. Annie is proud of having offered her children, through her and Alan's own hard work, a materially comfortable standard of living.

I noticed changes in how third generation women discussed paid employment compared to first generation women's account of wage work. Third generation women identified themselves more readily with their wage jobs, while first generation women portrayed themselves primarily as mothers. Third generation women, like Meredith and Elaine,¹⁵ want jobs that offer them self-fulfilment or a better sense of their self-worth. Meredith used the words "personal fulfilment" to describe her need to work outside the home. "In this small town, where nothing happens..." she said, she needs a job to get out and do something. Elaine described feeling a sense of self-worth when earning a wage and joining the labour force. The following excerpts from an interview with Elaine delivers more information on her expectations concerning employment and family. I asked Elaine

¹⁵ See Appenix A for a full account of their lives.

whether she thought that wage work or family were more important to the lives of women in North West River? For Elaine, although employment provides her with self-esteem, she maintained that her job could not supersede her family responsibilities:

Around here... Well I still say family is definitely more important. But I mean, I will be honest and say I have gotten myself wrapped up in my work had to look back and say...where is your priority?

Elaine stated very clearly that in North West River a woman's family has priority over her job, and, she admitted that she had had to remind herself of this. She continued:

Because.... it always took me a long time to get... feeling secure about myself in my job. So once I got that security I always did tend to wrap myself in it. And the same as when I went to school, because I wanted it so much. I felt that was the only way for me to feel good about myself.

Elaine linked her success at her paid job to her own sense of self-worth. She conceded that staying at home to care for the children had not been enough...

Like I... I wasn't content just staying at home. Like I said after I got out of school it took me eight months to get a job and I felt totally useless during that period of time. Even though I had my family and I still had my business. But it wasn't... I said I took this course, because I wanted to get an education and be able to get a job. So even though I was still busy with the business and with my children and the house, I still felt a big empty spot. You know like I still had to... because I did that course I had to

get a job that connected me to that course to say that I could do it.

She revealed "so even though I was still busy with the business and with my children and the house, I still felt a big empty spot." For Elaine a sense of her individual self-worth is derived from her ability to find a job and to perform well at it. She did not want to find any job, but one that her college education had trained her for. Elaine wanted to earn a sense of self-worth outside of her family life. Most women would state that their first priority is to their families, yet, some women expressed other expectations. They expected to support the household with an income from a paying job and they also expected to receive satisfaction from their jobs.

Am I justified in suggesting that older women see themselves mainly as mothers and younger women see themselves both as mothers and as employees? The examples provided above seem to contradict this suggestion. Women, like Anna, who is in her eighties, and Elaine, who is in her late twenties, both expressed a strong identification with their paid jobs. However, there is a significant difference in what they chose to emphasize about their jobs. While Anna was proud of having worked hard and of not having complained, Elaine wanted to prove that she could personally excel at her job. Other third generation women, like Meredith, talked of wanting jobs that

intellectually challenged and stimulated them. If younger women emphasized their employment experiences and their future job aspirations, it is because their paid jobs dominated their lives. For older women their paid jobs were a part of their past. The difference in life cycle stage from one generation to the next partly explains the greater emphasis on employment among younger women. Nevertheless they all made a point of talking to me of the importance of their family responsibilities.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has defined 'work' in North West River and described the kinds of work activities women and men engage in. Certain activities are specifically labelled 'work', and others carry characteristics of 'work' without being labelled as such. Employment is 'work', simply by being paid for services rendered. It takes place at a specified location within specifically determined hours and is done for someone, an employer (Wallman 1979: 1-22).

In North West River, as in other areas of Newfoundland and Labrador, one can be hard-at-work at hunting, car repair, house renovation, gardening, craft production, sewing clothes, baking and household chores. To be seen 'working' at these activities brings generalized respect. They are

legitimately seen as 'work' activities because they enable one to provide for one's family outside of the labour market.

Child care and volunteer work are two responsibilities which lie outside the label of 'work'. At times, women admitted that both were demanding, insisting that caring for children or carrying dishes to be used and then washed for a town event is hard work. Yet, volunteering in the community is seen both as a way to socialize and as a responsibility toward the community. In the narratives of older women, raising children was a responsibility they took on without question, a duty to be performed. Younger women's narratives expressed a reluctance to equate a job with raising children. They felt that their jobs were keeping them from spending more time with their kids.

My initial impressions of North West River contrasted the physical landscape against twentieth century consumerism. This initial contrast parallels a second contrast between self-provisioning activities and wage work. This chapter demonstrates that self-provisioning activities and wage work are part of the same household strategy to provide for and raise a family. The local economy offers few full-time, year-round, permanent employment positions. Government remittances can supplement a wage to offer a comfortable standard of living. The culturally valued standard of living includes not

simply household consumer goods, but also the tools and vehicles necessary for home-based production. Also the members of households like Annie and Al's, Doreen and Richard's or Vicky and Arthur's, provide for themselves from a variety of sources: wages, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions and self-provisioning activities. Women's paid employment outside the home is part of an overall household strategy.¹⁶

There are some themes emerging within this chapter which will be further explored in the following chapters. Generational differences are a theme. Work activities do differ between the oldest generation of women and the youngest. As a result, women's attitudes towards their 'work' differs. Younger women expressed priorities and concerns that are new to older women. These differences will be further explored in chapters four to and eight which concentrate on the life history narratives of women.

¹⁶ This phrase is inspired by the work of Porter (1993).

4.0 Chapter Four:

Self-Provisioning as an Expression of Self-Reliance

4.1 Introduction

Self-reliance is an important concept and an essential part of the local cultural notion of 'work' in North West River. Based on fieldwork in North West River I define this as a concept that evokes autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency. It speaks of the ability to provide for oneself and one's family by the sweat of one's own brow. It requires that individuals be skilled in a variety of areas to then handle the difficulties and challenges that life throws at them. It is required of people who live in climatically harsh conditions, where technology is minimal. It was required of early Settlers.

Local townspeople imbue early Settlers with self-reliance. They point to areas in their present lives where they still practice self-reliance: building their own house, keeping a garden, repairing their cars, baking their own bread, making their own preserves, and hunting their own meat. Townspeople recognize that wage labour and unemployment insurance are in contradiction with the ideal of self-reliance. In this regard some express envy towards the heydays of trapping. They romanticize that era, the self-reliance of families and the autonomy of men and women.

This chapter discusses the notion of self-reliance by comparing the lives of two women: Doreen and Annie. Doreen was born in 1925 and is thus a member of the first generation of women interviewed. Annie is a third generation woman; she was born in 1957. They are both from North West River, received the minimum education expected of women of their era (a few years of primary school in Doreen's case and a high school diploma for Annie) and both preferred to remain at home with their children, rather than work outside the home for pay. They were both raised in trapping households. Both their marital households have been partially dependent on self-provisioning activities as well as wage labour. They provide an example of how self-provisioning activities remain important in North West River, but are used differently from one generation to the next. They are an example of the expression of self-reliance in the lives of women and men of North West River.

4.2 The life of Doreen (born circa 1925)

Doreen's life was filled with hard physical labour. Since the time she was a girl, she had chores to do to contribute to the running of the household. Compared with the younger generations of women today in North West River, she lived a materially poor life with few opportunities. She had

to make do with what was at hand. Her childhood experiences taught her to value self-sufficiency and hard work (in the sense of physical labour and constant activity). As an adult, Doreen's standard of living improved. She enjoyed the benefits of living in a village. She volunteered her labour toward the maintenance of the hospital, the raising of funds for the church and the availability of after-school activities for her children. In 1993, her level of activity had slowed down. She continues to participate in the senior's association and regularly rides the senior's bus to Happy Valley/Goose Bay.

I met Doreen at a pancake breakfast held during the first week of my arrival as part of the 250th Anniversary Celebrations of the history of North West River. She was introduced to me as a well-respected craftswoman. Doreen works moose hide, making moccasins and boots for sale at the craft shop in town. When I met her in the summer of 1993, Doreen, in her sixties, was a widow living alone. At our first meeting, Doreen was quiet and reserved. She appeared to be physically active and she is not over-weight, a common problem among younger women in the town. When I asked if I could come by for a visit, she agreed.

Throughout the four months of field work, I regularly paid visits to Doreen. I would phone first or drop by

unannounced and she always invited me in, unless she was not feeling well. During our first interview, I took notes and she appeared rigid and tense throughout. She answered my questions, while gazing at the soap opera on television but glanced from time to time at my notes. During later visits, I left my note-taking for later, but explained that the information she gave me was useful for my thesis and that I would not use her real name when referring to details about her life. Gradually our sessions came to resemble visits; Doreen switched off the television when I arrived. We chatted about memories of her childhood, married life and life in the community. I asked her specific questions about where she was born and how she first earned money, or, asked her general questions such as: "What were you thinking about at the age of twenty-five?" During our conversations, Doreen remembered readily and answered my questions directly without adding much detail; she is not a story teller. She also asked me questions about my life circumstances and offered me supportive comments. I was able to gather detailed information concerning her life as well as solicit her opinion on families and village life today versus yesterday. She enjoyed recalling the past and was disgruntled with community life today. She complained that people of the younger generation lack respect for hard work, do not

participate in community voluntary services, drink too much and are avid consumers.

In 1993, Doreen lived alone in her trailer-house. Her house is tidy, simply decorated, clean, and orderly. The main room -- which consists of a living-dining area divided by a counter from the kitchen -- is furnished with a sofa covered in pillows and a handmade quilt, a television, a rocking chair and a coffee table. There are appliances dating back to the 1960s and early 1970s. The walls and tables are decorated with framed photographs of her children, grandchildren, husband, mother, and sister.

Doreen was born in the 1920s at the head of Grand Lake. Her father, Frank, delivered her and fired a shot to call on her Aunt Mavis their only neighbour, to clean and dress her. She grew up with ten brothers and sisters. Doreen's childhood family wintered in a small home on the shores of Grand Lake. In the summer they moved to Snook's Cove close to Rigolet, returning by the fall to North West Islands, then back for another winter on Grand Lake. They would travel by dog team in winter and boat when the water was clear of ice. Doreen's family always moved alongside her Uncle Albert and Aunt Mavis' family, so that the women and children were not isolated when the men were trapping.¹ Doreen said that she

¹ For an account of the isolation women endured while their

liked moving with the seasons, because it meant seeing new things all of the time. Her father had a trapline that extended north of Grand Lake. He left from Monday to Saturday, to trap. The furs trapped earned them credit with the Hudson's Bay Company from which they bought flour, butter, milk, tea, baking powder, pork and salt beef. Sometimes they would buy a case of dried apples or raisins, cotton or linen for a dress. They picked berries on the North West Islands and sold them to the Grenfell Mission for scarves and mittens that her mother would unravel, using the wool to knit other clothing.

A description of the two families and their homesteads at Snook's Cove and Grand Lake was published in Elliott Merrick's Northern Nurse. Merrick narrates the experiences of Kate Austen, a Grenfell nurse.² Kate Austen met the families while she was working for the Mission in the 1920s. Doreen's childhood summer home at Snook's Cove is described thus:

Flimsy and weatherbeaten and full of chinks
their homes were too, since these were only

husbands were away trapping, see Elizabeth Goudie's autobiography Woman of Labrador. Another depiction of the isolation of families is found in Northern Nurse, written from the perspective of a nurse who worked with the Grenfell Mission during the 1920s and 1930s.

² Elliott Merrick and Kate Austen met in North West River during the 1920s when they were both working for the Grenfell Mission. In 1931 they married and returned to the United States.

"summer houses." First thing in the spring they came down here in their little boats for the duck and goose hunting, the sealing, and then the codfishing (Merrick 1994 [1942]: 93)

Doreen's uncle confirms to Nurse Austen that the families would not spend a winter at Snook's Cove. Rather they wintered at the mouth of Susan's Brook on Grand Lake, where he boasts that "the rabbits is so thick they lean up against the door to get warm, crowds of 'em. All we got to do is open up and let 'em fall in" (Merrick 1994 [1942]: 93). Upon arriving at Susan's Brook to visit the two families, Nurse Austen decided there must have been some truth in the uncle's boasting: "in the porch, skinned and hung up, were twenty frozen rabbits, and fifteen frozen partridges, a fine supply of meat - a supply no home in North West River could boast" (Merrick 1994 [1942]: 224-5).

Kate Austen contemplates on the reason why the families settled so far away from town out in the bush:

She [Doreen's Aunt] preferred living half way out in the bush so that her husband could trap closer to home and get home more often (Merrick 1994 [1942]: 225).

Thus Merrick, through Austen, is raising one of the issues of the day for Settlers: whether to live on the shores of Grand Lake far from any neighbours, where the game was plentiful, or, to live in the village where amenities, such as a hospital and schools, were available.

When Doreen was thirteen years old, her family settled permanently on the North West Islands³ because her grandmother was sick and could not travel. When Doreen was a small girl, her mother called her in at eight o'clock, then read to Doreen from the Bible before bed. She remembers her father giving her the strap; she figures she must have been a bad little girl. She recalled one of her birthdays when her mother told her she could do whatever she wanted for the day. Doreen wanted to sleep with the boys in the kitchen on feather beds. But when bedtime came, her father refused to allow her and gave her a good licking with the razor strap.⁴ She cried a lot. She explained to me that she had not been as sore as she had been disappointed.

I asked Doreen if she helped around the house with chores as a girl. She said she had to do everything. She remembers scrubbing the wood floor, until it was so clean that visitors could have eaten off it. She had to pick berries, "keep" trap lines and fish. She did the washing and cooking. The boys had to chop wood. She said that there were chores boys did not do, but that she did everything except

³ In 1993 North West Islands was a one hour and a half speed-boat ride away from North West River.

⁴ A razor strap was a strap of leather of about a foot in length attached to a razor used for chaving men's beards. The strap was used to sharpen the razor. As Doreen points out, the strap was also used to punish children.

chop wood. Doreen went to school from the time she was ten until she was thirteen years old. Every year, an itinerant teacher stayed at the North West Islands for two weeks to a month to teach Doreen, her siblings and any children from neighbouring families.

Her brothers started trapping and hunting at the age of thirteen. When they could, they would find employment with the Grenfell Mission during the summer. Her sisters were earning a wage by the time they were eleven years old. One sister worked for the Grenfell Mission. At thirteen (in 1938), Doreen began working as a house keeper for a family at Mulligan. She had to keep house, cook, clean, scrub floors, clean oil lamps, fetch water, do the laundry, and iron clothes for a family of two sons and a father. She was paid four dollars per month, which she gave to her parents. Aside from one month spent doing laundry for the Grenfell Mission, this is the only wage labour she knew until she married.

In her mid-twenties, Doreen married Richard, a local trapper. They had known each other for two or three years. For the first year of their marriage, she and her husband lived in Sebaskachu (a tiny settlement on the shores of Lake Melville). When their daughter Mary Anne was born, they decided to move to North West River where there was a hospital and a school. A few years later their second child,

a son George, was born. Doreen wanted to have four or six children but only had two. She explained that she stayed at home to care for the children. She told me that years ago, women expected to stay at home with the kids, but that now they don't always do it. She believes it is better when they do stay home. To provide me with an example, Doreen described the situation of her daughter and daughter-in-law. Mary Anne stayed at home with her own children until they began school, but George's wife was employed outside the home and hired a babysitter to look after the children. Doreen finds that her son and daughter-in-law's children are "wild". She feels that they have been left free to roam around.

I asked her if her children helped her at home, when they were young. She replied "Not much" and explained that they attended the Grenfell Mission's Yale School⁵ in North West River. They were busy with hockey games and plays. She thinks they are more of a help to her now. Mary Anne started working at the age of fourteen or fifteen; she was hired after school and in the summer at the Grenfell Hospital. Mary Anne used the money she earned to pay for her school books. After completing high school, both children attended Memorial University of Newfoundland. Presently, they are both married

⁵ The Yale School was financed through Yale University's Grenfell Association branch (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 162).

with four children each, are employed, and live in Happy Valley/Goose Bay. Doreen's children and grandchildren visit her on weekends for family dinners.

To support their household, Richard trapped during the fall and winter. In September, Doreen and Richard would spend every weekend "down at their cabin" in Sebaskachu. They returned to North West River during the week to sell their rabbit furs and pick up some supplies. During the summer months he found employment with the Grenfell Mission as a shift worker. For thirteen years, he operated the cable car.⁶ He earned \$79 a month from the Mission. With that money they would buy flour, sugar and tea from the Hudson's Bay Company. Otherwise Richard brought home wild meat to feed the family, trout to feed the dogs and furs for trade with the Hudson's Bay Company. "Back then," Doreen told me, they "could live from that and kids did not expect so many brand new things." Doreen sewed for extra money, usually making moccasins and boots from moose hide. She sold some of these to the Grenfell Mission craft shop and some to tourists and foreign employees of the base. Doreen produced her crafts at home, although when the children were small, she had little time for crafts.

⁶ Between 1961 and 1981 the cable car carried people back and forth across the river from North West River to the other side where the Innu settlement of Sheshatshit is and where the road to Goose Bay began (or ended) ("The Cable Car" Them Days 1984).

Since moving to North West River, Doreen has attended church regularly. Doreen was a volunteer in the Women's Community Club. Every year, she and three other women took a day to clean the hospital. She volunteered when Richard had a day off. The four women would sew, mend sheets, scrub floors and ceilings, do whatever else necessary to clean the hospital. She also joined the United Church Women. The United Church Women met once a month at the parsonage and enjoyed lunch and tea together. They knitted and sewed for church sales. "People got together then," said Doreen, "now you can't get anyone to help anymore." Doreen complained to me that people don't help each other out as they used to.

Her husband built their first house from logs and their second is a trailer renovated as a house. They bought the second because they wanted a bigger house for the children. The trailer is a prefabricated house. It was moved from Churchill Falls to Goose Bay by truck and then by boat to North West River. Doreen told me that she misses their log house. It was heated by a wood stove. "It was so warm," she said. The trailer is heated with electric base board heaters. After moving into the trailer, Richard began feeling ill. Richard always felt fine at the cabin, Doreen told me, but once back in town at their house he felt worse. Richard died of cancer in the 1980s.

When I knew her in 1993, Doreen rode on the senior's van to Happy Valley/Goose Bay once a week. She spent the day shopping and eating out with a friend. She participated in the monthly suppers organized for seniors by the senior's group called "Helping Hands". She figured that about thirty to forty seniors, both men and women, attend the suppers. All the food is prepared beforehand; every woman is expected to bring a dish. In 1993, Doreen continued to sew for the craft shop but her level of activity had decreased, because her eye-sight was failing. However, she made a pair of moosehide moccasin slippers. They are lined with duffel, decorated with rabbit fur and each one has a rose embroidered on it. She asked \$35 for the pair. The money she earns from the sale of crafts pays for the material and gives her a small profit. The money earned from this pair of moccasins paid for the nails she bought to insulate her house properly. She complained often that the house was cold. She had purchased the material, hired two local handymen to do the carpentry work and received a federally funded grant to pay for the labour.

In the fall of 1993, Doreen was looking forward to spending some time at the cabin her husband had built in Sebaskachu. One of her brothers usually gives her a ride by boat when he is going to the same area. In 1992, she had

spent a week by herself at the cabin. She hunted for partridges, set snares for rabbits and set a net for catching smelts. She can feed herself for two nights with a rabbit. She was looking forward to enjoying some "real" heat at the cabin. It has one wood stove and she finds it "right warm". She reminisced with pleasure about hearing the birds in spring, saying that the jays and the squirrels keep her company. At night when it is quiet, she likes to watch the evening star set behind the hills.

I mentioned that a young woman Annie (generation III) had told me that she gets scared when she has to stay at the cabin without her husband, because there are no streetlights and she is frightened of bears. Doreen said that she is not scared of being alone at the cabin. "There is nothing to be afraid of," she said. Doreen has a shotgun. If she thinks she may meet a bear while using the toilet in the morning, she takes a pan and a spoon and bangs them together before she goes to the outhouse. Doreen did complain that Sebaskachu is too crowded now. There are more cabins than there used to be. Doreen complained of a group of boys who get together at one cabin, drink all night and carry on too loudly.

4.2.1 Discussion of Doreen's life

'Work' has been a constant in Doreen's life. As a child, she helped with household chores. As a young unmarried woman, she earned wages as a housekeeper. She was also employed for a month as a laundry worker with the International Grenfell Association. Once married, she earned cash from the sale of moccasins and boots that she made. When possible, she adapted her domestic skills to earn money as a housekeeper and as a crafts producer. That she turned to some form of wage labour whenever possible to contribute to the support of her natal and marital households is a characteristic of women of North West River of all generations.

In examining Doreen's life we have come across two definitions of work for members of the first generation. 'Work' can be paid employment as well as strenuous labour. Thus even when Doreen did not 'work' outside the home at a wage job, she did 'work' hard at keeping house. 'Work' for women like Doreen and others of their generation is also a way of life. Their childhood experiences of growing up in households dependent on trapping and self-provisioning demanded constant labour from all household members. Nina, who was twenty-six years old in 1993, defined 'work' with respect to members of the first generation: "People worked

hard," she said, "but it was good. People worked a hard good life." Nina remembers learning from her grandparents, contemporaries of Doreen, that "if you work hard, you will live a long life." For the older generation of men and women 'work' is valued in and of itself.

For Doreen, once married, 'work' meant raising children and managing a household. Doreen and many other women of the first generation adamantly stated that a woman's responsibility is to be at home to look after their kids. When she married Richard, Doreen quit her paid job as a housekeeper for other families. First generation women like Doreen proudly told me that they never depended on babysitters; they took care of their children themselves. According to Doreen, the lack of a mother's attention explains behavioural problems that children have. Nonetheless, the necessity of earning a wage meant that some first generation women returned to wage employment once their children were in school. Thus they fulfilled two expectations, providing an income for the household and being at home with their young children.

Until the mid-1960s woman's domestic work demanded the full-time labour of one adult. I asked Doreen if looking after a house and kids was work? She said "It sure was! It was hard work!" She listed what she had to do: clean house,

scrub floors, look after kids, cook for the family and prepare meals for dogs too. Doreen's domestic labour provided many necessities for the family. She sewed winter boots and moccasins. When Richard brought home hunted game, she cleaned the animals and prepared meals from them. Laundry would have taken Doreen a full day's labour. Doreen does not dwell on the practical side of her role in the household, yet, it is a source of pride for her. She knows that it was hard work.

The transition from seasonal transhumance to settled village life was an experience lived by all women between the ages of fifty and eighty-four whom I interviewed. Like Doreen, most of these women settled in North West River upon marriage. The hospital, the school, wage labour and the proximity of neighbours attracted young families. Settled village life offered Doreen and other women of the first generation a new form of labour and another social outlet, volunteer work. This new form of labour is more fully discussed in chapter six.

Village life did not involve a complete break from past life styles. Doreen's husband Richard continued to trap during the fall and winter, supplementing his trapping income with wage labour in the summer. Richard and Doreen fed their family the wild game and fish they hunted and trapped from their cabin in Sebaskachu. Therefore, they had not completely

abandoned the life style they had known as children. They supported their household from Richard's trapping income, wage labour income, self-provisioning activities, and the sale of Doreen's crafts.

The extent of self-reliance in Doreen's life comes across in how Doreen and Richard maintained and provided for their marital household. They did not rely solely on income earned from wage labour, they relied as much as possible on their own labour. As a mother, Doreen was at home full-time raising her children, seeing to her domestic chores (that included making winter boots for her husband's trapping expeditions and cooking dog food for his sled-dogs) and providing the household with some extra cash from the sale of the craft items she produced. When Doreen and Richard were raising a family in the 1950s and in the 1960s, wages were lower, there were fewer consumer products to purchase, and people were content with less.

4.3 The Life of Annie (born circa 1955)

Annie's house is filled with children. Both she and her husband Alan work hard and expect to be employed throughout their life-times, but neither of them are highly educated. They have a relatively high standard of living which is supported in part by their incomes and in part by Alan

hunting meat and Annie baking enough bread for their family. Alan also built their home. At least one area of their house is always under renovation. The list of the modern appliances they own is long: four deep freezers for bread, wild game and frozen groceries; a washer and dryer (although laundry is hung out to dry whenever possible); a microwave and a dishwasher (that is never used because Annie says that washing by hand results in a better job); two televisions, a VCR, and a video recorder; and a personal computer. Outside the house are several sheds, a wood pile for heating the house, and a small garden. They own various vehicles: a car, a pick-up truck, a speed boat, and several skidoos. Finally, they tend a vegetable garden that is located on subdivided community plots of land. When faced with the challenge of earning an income and being a mother, Annie chose to be self-employed so she would not be far from her children.

When I knew Annie and Alan, they were raising a cheerful and affectionate family. Between their four children, two to four foster children, boarders, visiting neighbours, friends and relatives, their house was always filled with people and activity. Annie enjoyed introducing me to life in North West River. She kept me abreast of gossip in town and explained who was who. She introduced me to a variety of Labrador meals that included wild game, local

jams, homemade bread and she passed on recipes. Apart from pride in her town and way of life, I believe she was consciously teaching me about Settler culture. Annie identifies herself as a Settler. Her grandfather was one of the most renowned trappers in the village's history.

Annie openly told me that she born out of wedlock in the 1950s and that she was raised by her grandparents.⁷ Her grandfather trapped and her grandmother cared for many children: her own, her grandchildren, and a few native children. In addition, her grandmother also sewed tents for BRINEX campsites and her grandfather prospected for BRINEX.⁸ Annie's childhood resembled that of individuals of Doreen's generation because her grandparents organized their household around the values of the trapping generation. For instance, her grandmother continued to cook on a woodstove, even when electricity became available in town. Annie remembers her grandfather as being stern, authoritarian and often harsh; her grandmother as kind-hearted and quiet. They expected obedience and hard work from their children and

⁷ For Annie's generation it was common for illegitimate children to be raised by their grandparents. In 1993, it is more common for the mother to raise her illegitimate children on her own with the aid of income from social assistance.

⁸ During the 1950s and the 1960s, BRINEX or British Newfoundland Explorations Company took on reconnaissance of the province for minerals and precious stones (Watts, personal communication, 1993).

grandchildren. She was expected to perform numerous chores. At a young age, she washed dishes without running water. It was Annie's job to cook for the family when her grandmother was ill. She was expected to remit part of her pay from the part-time jobs she held as a teenager.

The day Annie turned thirteen (in the 1970s), she applied for work at the Grenfell Mission Hospital. She was looking forward to earning her own money. The money she earned reduced the expenses on her grandparents' household. She worked after school, on weekends and during the evenings. She found work with both the Grenfell Hospital and the Hudson's Bay Store. She remembers that jobs were so plentiful that if someone disliked her supervisor at the hospital she could quit and find a job the next day at the Hudson's Bay Company Store. A week later she might leave the store and return to the hospital. At the age of seventeen, Annie finished high school, married Alan and left home.

Alan was born in the early 1950s on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland. He was raised in a fishing family and was working on the fishing stages by the age of thirteen, where he remembers being taught the value of working hard. Like Annie, he is proud of having worked since he was a boy. As an adult, he moved to Labrador in search of work in construction. His parents and siblings soon followed.

When Annie and Alan were first married, they lived briefly in Labrador City, where Annie had their first child, a son. Then they moved back to North West River, so that Alan could take a course in welding at the college in Happy Valley. They have lived in North West River ever since. When they returned, Annie worked with the Grenfell Association, first in laundry, then as a cook. She left her son with her mother-in-law. Alan built their house with the help of a few friends. They are proud of their house which began as a small bungalow. Today it is a three storey house, with three bathrooms and nine bedrooms. They are proud of the fact that the house is their own and that they did not have to take out a mortgage to finance its construction. Since moving to North West River, Annie has been employed as a laundry worker, a cook, a housekeeper for an invalid woman, an Avon lady, and a secretary/bookkeeper for local organization.

Over a decade prior to our meeting, Alan converted to Pentecostalism. His life changed when he was "saved". He quit drinking and smoking and took more interest in his family. Alan and I often talked of family and religious values. He zealously described his own religious beliefs. I appreciated the fact that we could discuss religion without his insisting on my own conversion. His being "saved" was followed by the conversion of Annie and their children. He admits that before

he was "saved", he had not taken interest in his family. Alan's belief in Pentecostalism changed their marriage and family life. Prior to his conversion, Alan earned money, worked on the house and did as he liked.⁹

Between 1980 and 1990, Annie and Alan had three more children and became foster parents. Since becoming foster parents, they have housed seventy-five children in their house. They provide a temporary home for children who are waiting for permanent foster homes. In 1993, a ten year old foster boy with cerebral palsy was living with them permanently. They took in two children from Happy Valley/Goose Bay for four months. And they housed an Innu girl for a month that fall until Social Services found her an Innu home.

In 1993, Alan worked in construction. Annie ran a day care in her home and took in boarders. Annie is always home, looking after children whose mothers are working, foster children and her own children. She looks after the house: cleaning, doing laundry, preparing three meals a day, baking twelve to eighteen loaves of bread a week, tidying up, driving children to doctors' appointments, shopping for

⁹ See Maternal Politics: Women's Strategies in a Rural Development Association by K. Murphy (1990) for a discussion of Newfoundland women living under Pentecostalism. One of her points is that women agree to the restrictive practices of the faith in favour of improving their family life.

groceries and other necessities. She does the banking and budgeting; Alan hands over his cheques to her.

Alan works hard as a carpenter. His work has taken him all over Labrador, although he and Annie prefer when he is able to work in Happy Valley/Goose Bay or better yet in North West River. In winter when work in construction is unavailable, Alan takes courses in his trade. He relies on his unemployment benefits during the winter months. He renovates the house regularly. He also repairs their vehicles. They have a vegetable garden and grow their yearly supply of potatoes. Alan hunts providing the family with moose, caribou and partridges. Annie is able to add beaver meat, seal meat, and more caribou. She buys seal meat from local hunters, receives beaver meat as a gift from a relative or trades favours for meat with members of her extended family. She makes all of the preserves and bakes all the bread eaten by the family and sells some bread to neighbours. In addition, she used to sell decorated cakes for birthdays, until *Grandma's Bakery* opened. Annie feeds many people on a tight budget. Alan attends several Pentecostal services and meetings a week and served a term on town council. When he has the time, he provides Annie with relief from the children, by taking the boys hunting, taking a few kids for a spin in the truck, or babysitting for a few hours when Annie

must leave the house.

While it might seem that Annie could be overburdened by caring for a house full of boarders and children, the impression Annie gives is that she is emulating an ideal of motherhood she strongly believes in. Annie often affectionately recalls her own grandmother. She was always home for her own children, grandchildren and any others that needed a home. This grandmother represents the ideals that Annie values and is attempting to re-create under new conditions. Annie spends much of her day in the house. She explained that this is a choice she has made. Annie believes that mothers need to be home for their children, especially during the first five years. She says that it is during those years that everything is formed for the child. She blames her eldest child's rebelliousness on her "neglect" when he was small; she worked shifts at the hospital and had to leave him with her mother-in-law. Annie also thinks that it is important for children to come home for a hot lunch on school days, to know that their mother is home in case of an emergency and for her to know the whereabouts of her children throughout the day. She also makes sure that Alan comes home to a warm meal. Annie believes that all of this is better managed if she is at home.

Annie manages the household. One time, on her "day off"

when she was forced to prepare supper for the whole family (including boarders and foster children) Annie reprimanded everyone. She said that if it was not for her, she was sure that the family would fall apart. She believes this and is proud of her role. When asked to list her responsibilities, Annie replied that she had to listen and be patient. These are not task oriented, rather they are the general responsibilities of someone orchestrating the comings and goings of a large household that includes many children and boarders. Annie does not differentiate between wage work, child care, and domestic labour; for her they are all part of the whole that a mother must attend to.

4.3.1 Discussion of Annie's life

Annie and Alan's household is full of children, of food and of material goods. Their house appears simultaneously chaotic and organized. They live comfortably, but not lavishly. They both place value in an ethic of hard work and self-reliance. Their self-provisioning activities allow Annie and Alan to offer their family a better quality of life and to prove themselves hard working and self-reliant in the tradition of earlier generations of Settlers.

The most significant difference between their household and that of Doreen's and Richard's is the younger couple's

perception of necessities. Since the early 1950s, when Doreen and Richard were first married, the number of consumer items people consider necessary have multiplied. Thus, individual households are far more dependent on the cash economy, on income from employment and government remittances. Annie and Alan own many more appliances than did Doreen and Richard. To pay for these necessities both Annie and Alan have been employed and have seasonally depended on Alan's unemployment insurance benefits. However, both Annie and Alan argue that by building their own house, hunting their own meat and baking their own bread, they are able to offer their children a house and food that is superior to what they can buy.

Like most women of her generation, Annie has been employed since she was a high school student. She also has taken a variety of jobs in an effort to best combine the care of her children with the need to earn money for the family. Her employment opportunities are limited because she only has a high school education. Rather than working at low paying jobs outside the home, Annie's strategy is to be self-employed. She can be her own boss and determine the conditions of her work. In such a way she can bring in an income and be a mother at home for her children.

Annie takes pride in her role as mother and as household manager. She assertively stated that she knew the

whereabouts of her children during the day. She is glad to offer her children and husband a warm meal in the middle of the day and to be home in the afternoon when the children return from school. She also proudly told me that she has never called on a babysitter to take care of her children. That she has offered many children (her own sons and daughter, neighbouring and foster children) a comfortable home is a source of great satisfaction for her. At times she expressed frustration at not having the freedom to leave the house when she chooses. She also admitted that she would like to find employment outside of the house, but was waiting for the youngest to start school.

Annie portrays herself as a hard worker. She says that she has always been working, describing to me how she started her first paid job at the age of thirteen. Once married, she continued to earn an income, the birth of her children did not stop her from working for pay. While Annie defines 'work' as paid employment, she also sees paid employment as one among many means of providing for a family. According to Annie, by earning an income and providing as much as they can with their own labour, she and her husband have been able to afford a comfortable standard of living and can claim to be hard working and self-reliant.

4.4 Self-provisioning activities, self-reliance and the past

Two recent articles, one by Felt, Murphy & Sinclair (1995) and the other by Omohundro (1995) each emphasizes the cultural importance of home production activities on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland. Felt, Murphy & Sinclair write:

The residents cope by building and repairing their own homes, making clothes, and using the resources of their local environment for food and fuel. Yet the informal sector is more extensive than it need be, if getting by were the only motivation for participation. We have seen that household income, for example, does not determine involvement, which appears to be culturally as well as structurally conditioned. That is, many activities are undertaken because they are socially valued (1995: 101).

In the past, self-provisioning activities were a necessity. For example in the case of Doreen and Richard, who had lower wages and fewer consumer products available to them, self-provisioning activities were a necessary means of providing for their family. Felt, Murphy & Sinclair argue that on the Great Northern Peninsula in the late twentieth century self-provisioning activities are not simply done out of necessity. In 1993, Annie and Alan take on self-provisioning activities partly to lessen their costs and partly out of pleasure; these activities connect them to an era now past.

Omohundro makes a similar point. He begins by stating

that Newfoundlanders have historically depended on self-provisioning activities to help overcome their meagre incomes from the fishery. In the 1990s, Newfoundlanders are conscious of the link between home production and their past:

In the face of continuing uncertainty and regional disparity, rural Newfoundlanders are preserving certain aspects of home production as one of the features of their old strategy which supported them by its resilience and diversity. Beyond their sometimes modest practical value, gardening and other traditions of home production have retained cultural significance, a fact that is revealed by analyzing the households that practice them. Rather than being the poor and needy, the home producers are the flag bearers of rural community culture. They are the proud and family-oriented household self-actualizers who resist being passive recipients of government handouts by taking more complete advantage of their environment (1995: 126-7).¹⁰

In the past, the economic marginality of life in Newfoundland and Labrador forced people to depend partially on home production. In the late twentieth century, however, home production is done by choice. Households like Annie and Alan's are no longer simply concerned with feeding and clothing their children. They want to afford modern conveniences, good food and a comfortable house without spending more money than they have. Hunting and cooking caribou, building the house, picking berries, making home-

¹⁰ In describing these "proud and family-oriented household self-actualizers," Omohundro is perhaps describing a middle-class which resides in outports throughout Newfoundland.

made jam, and growing your own potatoes all provide for the household and maintain a comfortable standard of living in a culturally valued way. However, Annie and Alan do rely on unemployment insurance earnings for part of the year, as do many households in North West River. The resistance referred to by Omohundro is, in the case of North West River, an assertion that while Unemployment Insurance benefits are cashed, individuals continue to provide for their families in any way possible. They continue to work hard at self-provisioning activities. They do not sit around waiting for their next government cheque.¹¹

Describing life in the Newfoundland outport Aquaforte, in the early 1980s, Porter writes: "The combination of cash and subsistence ensured, for most of them, a reasonable standard of living, with comfortable houses, TVs and cars" (1993: 87). Porter asserts that people in Aquaforte used a combination of income from wage labour and from unemployment insurance, plus home production to provide for themselves:

What distinguished the current set of adaptations is the way in which they have negotiated a space between capital, state and subsistence that ensures both a much improved material standard of living and a degree of autonomy (Porter 1993: 87).

¹¹ This was a sentiment expressed by many people in North West River in criticism of those who relied on unemployment insurance benefits or welfare and neither looked for work, nor practised home production.

The "degree of autonomy" allows men, who hunt and build their own houses, to portray themselves as self-reliant, in the likeness of the men, who in the past supported their families from fishing or trapping.

According to Porter, in the fishing community of Aquaforte the use of Unemployment Insurance Compensation, for part of the year when fishing is unavailable, does not detract a man from the status of fisherman. Rather, "they, and everyone else, saw it as an advantage to have time to 'go to the woods', 'to be free', 'to be your own man'" (1993: 87). In North West River, unemployment insurance can make self-provisioning activities affordable and thus people can live the "Labrador life style".

In 1993 the households participating in self-provisioning activities in North West River were making a public statement about the value of providing for oneself and for one's family and of helping one's neighbours in need. These activities express the value of self-reliance. As Felt, Murphy & Sinclair write: "On the Great Northern Peninsula, to provide for one's self and when necessary, for others brings generalized respect" (1995: 102). Therefore self-provisioning activities provide a positive work activity against which individuals partially dependent on social assistance and unemployment insurance can portray themselves as self-

reliant, as capable of providing for themselves and their families in locally appropriate ways. For example, Alan relied on unemployment insurance for part of the year, while providing for his family by hunting meat, tending the garden and renovating the house. He also helped an elderly trapper by harvesting the man's potatoes and inviting him to share in the meat Alan had hunted.

The cultural value of home production was expressed and reiterated by Annie and Alan. They were proud of having built and paid for their own home. They have not relied on a mortgage to do so. This has meant that they are financially more independent than others who do not own their own home. Alan talked of enjoying the "Labrador lifestyle". He enjoyed getting out in the woods, waking in the early morning and enjoying the autumn air while hunting for game. He was determined to remain in North West River to take advantage of the lifestyle. Annie talked often of the benefits of eating wild game, picking berries and growing vegetables. The benefits were more than economic; the taste and quality of the food is superior to that of store bought vegetables and meats. These activities were likened to those of trappers and their wives, who depended on these activities to provide for a household and raise children. By linking self-provisioning activities with the past, they are given cultural value.

Omohundro links self-provisioning activities to an ideology of localism:

Home production activity was not only an economic stratagem, but also evoked an era of community cooperation and self-reliance.... Home production fits into an ideology of regionalism or localism In this ideology, Newfoundlanders do not want to be like Ontarians, but to be close to the sea and forest, where they can own their own home, hunt and fish, and share with family and neighbours (1995: 126).

Annie often compared the quality of her life to that of urban Ontarians, these comparisons always turned in favour of North West River. The point made by Omohundro and Annie is twofold. One, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are emphasizing that they are happy where they are. Secondly, self-provisioning activities and their history reinforce the unique characteristics of Newfoundland and Labrador, which locals pride themselves in.

4.5 How has self-reliance survived from one generation to the next?

The lives of Doreen and Annie demonstrate that home production has survived from one generation to the next. Neither of their households is an exception, they both represent a common household strategy in North West River, and as Felt, Murphy & Sinclair, Omohundro and Porter point out, a strategy that is common in other areas of the

province. In North West River, of the nineteen households represented in the work history charts (see Appendix A), sixteen relied partially on self-provisioning activities.¹²

Felt, Murphy & Sinclair explain the use of self-provisioning activities "as a constructive reaction to the environment, isolation, small population, and poor local economy" (1995: 101). These factors have not changed much from one generation to the next which can account for the persistence of self-provisioning activities. What has changed is the availability of and increasing dependence on cash income from wage labour and social welfare programmes. The effect has been to produce a young generation that relies more heavily on consumer products than past generation have, but continues with home production for cultural reasons as much as economic ones.

Certainly the material standards and the expectations of the younger generations have increased. This fact has been noted by researchers in Newfoundland. Writing in the 1990s of a small outport on the Northern Peninsula, Omodundro lists: "video cassette recorders, all-terrain vehicles, chain saws,

¹² Of the six households in generation one, five took part. In generation two another six households are described in the work history charts and five of these took part. Of the seven households of the third generation, six definitely participated in self-provisioning activities. For statistics for the Great Northern Peninsula see the work of Felt, Murphy & Sinclair (1995) and Omohundro (1995).

snowmobiles, and cars or trucks" (1995: 108) as the material goods "considered necessary for full participation in the modern Canadian rural lifestyle" (ibid). He notes that for people from this outpost the "demand for modern consumer goods has increased in the last 25 years" (ibid). Writing twenty-four years ago, Wadel notes that "outport people have come to measure their 'progress' by the possession of such items as television sets, oil stoves, fridges, and the like" (1989 [1973]: 39). A comparison of Wadel's list of consumer goods with that of Omohundro shows that acquiring material goods is not new to the youngest generation of Newfoundlanders - and one could include North West River townspeople. It does display, however, to what extent the definition of "necessities" has changed. The items in Wadel's list are automatically included in Omohundro's list, alongside a variety of consumer goods unavailable two decades ago.

Self-provisioning activities today in some ways resemble those of the past. Many men in North West River rely on seasonal employment, which gives them time for self-provisioning activities; this pattern is not a significant departure from the past. Both Alan and Richard have held seasonal wage jobs. In other ways, self-provisioning activities are practised differently in 1993 than in the

past. In 1993, they require a different manner of organizing and managing household resources. While home production reduces the financial strain on a household, these activities also require a certain cash output (Felt, Murphy & Sinclair 1995: 100 & Omohundro 1995: 119). Where self-provisioning activities do differ from the past is in the use of modern vehicles and tools such as snowmobiles, speedboats, and pick-up trucks thought necessary for hunting and fishing. Chain saws are used for collecting wood. The consumer goods thought necessary for second and third generation households to live comfortably are also considered necessary for participation in home production.¹³

Women still bake bread and make jams, knit and sew clothing, however, few women of the second or third generation are at home completing these tasks full-time. Many women spend their days at a paid job outside the home. Women's participation in home production demonstrates that providing an income to the household often takes precedence over producing home-made goods for the family's use.

While participation in home production remains wide spread, changes have occurred. The economic value of home production is not its only reason for being. As previously

¹³ In North West River, both Doreen and Cindy, as well as others, implied that the purchase of consumer goods is also a form of dependency.

discussed, home production has also become a cultural statement about where people are from and how they wish to live their lives. Self-provisioning activities, then, are inextricably connected with the desire to prove oneself self-reliant, with the pride people feel for their history and geography, as well as with their dependence on social assistance and wage labour. In many ways, a life-style that depends both on self-provisioning activities and on unemployment insurance contradicts the local ideal of self-reliance. However, people's attitudes towards self-provisioning activities affirm their link with self-reliance and the past, while ignoring the interdependence with government assistance and wage labour.

4.6 Conclusion

Self-provisioning activities do relieve families' financial burdens, but they are also a cultural idiom through which people express attachment to place and history as well as involvement in a life style that is valued locally. Self-provisioning activities become an expression of self-reliance, of an individual's ability to provide for his/her family.

Self-reliance offers different life-styles for men and women. The necessity of providing for one's family forces

young women to look for paid employment outside the home and to become smart bargain-hunters. When a younger woman has the talent and the time, she might also sew moccasins, knit sweaters for her family or even for sale. She may bake bread and make preserves or learn to cook wild meat so that her family can enjoy higher quality products and spend less at the grocery store. Third generation women have to measure the time spent at home production against the cost of purchasing goods given that most of their time is spent at their paid jobs and at other household chores. First generation women, in contrast, had to produce goods for their families because consumer items were neither readily available nor affordable. First generation women 'worked' at home. Domestic chores demanded heavy physical labour and much time. Home production fit in easily with their other responsibilities.¹⁴ There are young women, like Nina, who consciously think of their grandmothers and the trapper's wives when they sew moccasins. And women of all ages are praised for their skill as craftswomen. But, these activities do not give them time away from their daily household responsibilities as does hunting for men.

¹⁴ See Cole (1991: 139) for a similar difference between the organization of women's work responsibilities of older women and their daughters in a fishing village of the Northern coast of Portugal.

Self-reliance for a man necessitates providing for his family as a wage labourer, a gardener, a hunter and a trapper. The lore surrounding hunting and trapping emphasizes the excitement and physical endurance of the hunt. A man can prove his manhood by successfully hunting and trapping. He engages in an activity that asserts his freedom, strength and skills as a woodsman. By hunting and trapping, he also connects himself with the heroic trappers from the past. Even when Alan took his boys hunting, the trip remained an all male outing far from the daily burdens of the household. In addition, Alan could choose when he was going to take younger boys with him and when his trips were to be exclusively adult male endeavours. Women who take on craft production do so in and around their other daily household responsibilities. Although they can make it a leisure activity by inviting other women to join them, it does not carry the same feeling of adventure as does men's hunting activities. As we shall see in later chapters, men's hunting and other subsistence activities can be used to justify their lack of help with other household and child care responsibilities.

What must be emphasized is that in North West River providing for one's household, whether in 1916, 1950 or 1993, has never exclusively meant subsistence activities. Members of Doreen and Annie's households have provided for themselves

by a mixture of self-provisioning activities, wage labour, cash income or credit. These forms of income have been used to purchase the consumer products from the Hudson's Bay Company Store, the International Grenfell Association or more recently introduced retail stores. What has changed has been the importance of self-provisioning over wage labour. As the cash economy has increased in importance, self-provisioning has become a cultural idiom through which people assert their partial independence from the modern wage economy, consumerism, and government remittances. Through self-provisioning, men and women in North West River demonstrate their self-reliance.

5.0 Chapter Five:
The Work Culture of
the International Grenfell Association

5.1 Introduction

The transfer in 1916 of the Grenfell Mission hospital from Mud Lake to North West River precipitated the growth of the town of North West River. The town grew around the facilities offered by the Grenfell Mission. As the population increased, so did the number and variety of facilities. The influence of the International Grenfell Association on the town of North West River and its townspeople runs deeper than the provision of medical and educational services.

The Grenfell Mission provided employment for local women and men, instituted women's volunteer associations, created a work culture specific to an era in the history of North West River, and, created a local elite of those associated closely with the Mission. A discussion of volunteer work follows in the next chapter. This chapter is devoted to an examination of the International Grenfell Mission as a local employer and its effect on women's lives.

The International Grenfell Association instituted a new work culture in North West River, the dominant characteristic of which can be likened to the "familial patterns of authority and responsibility" as described by Joy Parr in The

Gender of Breadwinners (1990: 35). Parr is specifically discussing the social organization of Ontario factories from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which share similarities with the Grenfell Mission. Elitism embedded in a local ethic of egalitarianism and a relationship of interdependence between the Grenfell Mission and the townspeople who benefited from its services are other characteristics of the work culture of the International Grenfell Mission. The life histories of Anna and Jean, who were eighty and seventy-three years old respectively at the time of the interviews, will shed light on the work culture of the Grenfell Mission. Following the discussion of the lives of Anna and Jean, this chapter briefly describes the influence of the I.G.A. on the employment expectations of third generation women.

5.2 The life of Anna (born circa 1915)

I met Anna, like Doreen, at the pancake breakfast. The two widows were seated together and they were introduced to me as well-respected craftswomen. Of the two, Anna was more jovial and talkative. She did not hesitate to invite me for a visit. I visited her on a regular basis. I would drop by her house once every two weeks.

On my first visit, I knocked at the front door but later realized that everyone else came in through the back

door without bothering to knock. On subsequent visits I did the same, not wanting to be treated as a special guest. During this first visit, Anna was reserved and keenly aware of my note-taking. Anna had laid out on her dinner table pairs of miniature moccasins, mittens and one pair of adult size moccasins made with rabbit fur, duffel and moosehide. There were balls of yarn by her side and two wee moccasins in the making. She explained to me that she obtains all the material from the craft shop and sells her crafts there. In the past she made gauntlets, parkas, moccasins and embroidered coats as well. We talked about her craft work, her experience working for the Grenfell Mission, her childhood and marriage. She offered me tea and home-made cookies after we had had a good chuckle over her advice to marry my boyfriend soon because he might find another woman while I was in Labrador. Then, Anna brought out a tea cup and saucer for me; the cup was filled with boiled water. On the table she laid out bags of tea, a sugar container and evaporated milk - a common way of drinking tea in North West River to which I soon became accustomed.¹ During subsequent visits we chatted for twenty minutes to an hour and I reserved my note-taking for later, explaining that I would

¹ While most Settlers drink tea in this fashion, townspeople like Jean with close ties to England, prepared tea with a teapot.

never use her real name in discussing details of her life. Anna and I enjoyed each other's company. The smile on her face when I arrived for later visits let me know that I was welcome. Anna had several neighbours who dropped by and she appreciated having another regular visitor.

I personally liked Anna for several reasons. She is a strong-minded, opinionated and stubborn woman. Physically, she is strong. She has a healthy sense of humour and expresses herself simply, with straightforward common sense.² Her life story demonstrates these qualities. There are several themes that dominate Anna's life narrative. She discusses her employment history with a certain amount of bravado. According to Anna, she worked hard for many different employers in North West River, under strict and demanding conditions. She presents herself as someone who has cared for many. Although unable to bear children, she has fulfilled a nurturing role by caring for relatives now deceased: her husband, mother and brother. She also cared for her younger siblings, helped raise her 'niece' (sister's granddaughter) and cared for a boy whose parents had to

² The following account of Anna's life is my own taken for the most part from my fieldwork journals. The phrases are simple; unconsciously in writing I was reflecting the pattern of her speech.

travel for several months.

In 1993, Anna lived alone in a small rectangular house in North West River. She had just finished making payments on the house in June of 1993 and had applied and received a grant and a loan to pay for renovations to improve the insulation of the house and to repaint the exterior. She was having the house painted in Grenfell colours: dark green and white. The front door opened into a sitting room with a large front window facing Lake Melville and Sheshatshit. This room was furnished with an armchair, a sofa, telephone, and further back a dinner table behind which was an old wooden cabinet where she displayed an array of china dishes. There were photographs everywhere of nieces, nephews, of her mother and father, of her niece Martina with "her man" and their daughter, as well as a landscape and a representation of Jesus. Like all first generation women I knew, Anna kept her house tidy and clean.

Anna made a point of stating that she was born in North West River. Most members of the first generation were born in tiny settlements and isolated homesteads along the shore of Lake Melville. She was one of six children although only five survived childhood. Her parents were employed by a French fur trading company, Revillon Frères Trading Company. From 1901 until at least 1921 the Paris-based Revillon Frères Trading

Company had a post across the river from the Hudson's Bay Company post in what is today Sheshatshit (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 152). In actuality, Anna and her family lived at the trading post across the river from North West River. Her mother was employed to cook, scrub and clean. She made seal-skin boots for the Thevenet family, who managed the post. When the Innu arrived to sell their furs, she cooked and served them meals. She never had time to sew crafts for sale but she did make clothes for her children. Anna taught herself to sew moccasins, she says, "I worked away at it until I knew." Anna's father delivered furs and goods between the trading company and fur trappers. He travelled by dog team to North West River and then to Grand Lake or Mud Lake to meet and trade with Innu fur traders. He also cut wood and tended to the dogs for the trading company.

As a child, Anna recalled playing with Innu girls. She played with a doll and a dish set. "They were good, [back] then, Indians. They would play and they wouldn't steal nothing," says Anna.³ Anna figures she must have started

³ Townspeople in North West River most often referred to the Innu as Indians. While members of the older generation sometimes speak derogatively of the Innu at present, they speak positively of the Innu in the past. According to the older men and women in North West River, Settlers and Native people got along and helped each other in the past. See Plaice (1990) for a further discussion on Innu/Settler relations.

school at the age of seven which would have been in the early 1920s. She remembers beginning school when she lived at the French fur trading post "across the river" from North West River. She remembers being visited by an itinerant teacher and also having to take a boat across to attend the school in North West River. After "freeze-up" (once ice started to form on the river) it became too dangerous to cross over. She claims that "them days"⁴ school was much harder than it is today. They had to read from Royal Readers series: she wanted to learn to read and write but had to learn arithmetic too. She also attended Sunday School where she told me they had to sit still and not make a sound. She remembers that senior Dr. Timmins - the head of the Grenfell Mission station in North West River at the time - made them memorize verses from the Bible. After four years, Anna stopped attending school because her mother needed help at home. She remembers that she quit school during the sealing season, when men caught seals in nets. The seals were sold to the fur trading company and her mother was hired to clean the seal skins. Anna said that she had been "right glad", that she had not wanted to spend more time in school.

When the Revillon Frères Company post shut down in

⁴ "Them Days" is a local colloquialism used to refer to the past, often the heydays of trapping. It has been popularized by Them Days a magazine from Happy Valley/Goose Bay.

1921, Anna's parents found employment with the Hudson's Bay Company in North West River. They moved to the village. Anna recalled how her parents did not like having to move to North West River, because there were too many people there.

When Anna was twelve years old, she went to live with her brother, whose wife was in the hospital. She cleaned his house, cooked their meals and looked after his children. She was not paid and she insists that unlike young people today, she would never have accepted money from him. It was enough that he fed her and provided her with a bed. She did not want anything more, she didn't want to get paid. She did not expect her brother to pay her. She said, "these days brothers and sisters don't do anything for each other. They expect to get paid."

Anna says she has worked for almost everyone in North West River. She was a staff maid at the Grenfell Mission Hospital. She cleaned and waxed floors at the Hudson's Bay Company. This she did after a full day's work at the hospital, working with two or three other women. A list of her employment experience also includes the following activities: cleaning house for people in town, including the doctor's residence; working as a cook for a boarding house; and caring for a boy, while his parents travelled for several months.

She recalled the work she did for the Grenfell Mission with a certain amount of bravado. She described it as hard work. The supervisors were demanding and the pay was little. She worked as a staff maid, working in the dining room and cleaning bedrooms. She lived on Grenfell premises and was paid \$8 a month. She had to be in bed, lights out by ten thirty every night, "young kids wouldn't stand for that today!" According to Anna young kids stay up to all hours of the night, "you can hear them at one o'clock at night." Anna described the Grenfell Mission "as a good place to work if you had a good housekeeper." She remembers one in particular who was from Holland. Anna said of her, "they must be right clean folk. She was a hard housekeeper, very demanding. She wanted things just so." American university students who volunteered their labour to the Mission during the summer were known as WOPS because they worked *without pay*. "Millionaires!" she called them. She thought they worked very hard. Anna had to wake them up at six in the morning and then had to wait until their return at nine thirty at night to serve them their supper and clean up after them. According to Anna, "young kids would never do that today. They don't work as hard today."

In the early 1940s, she married Norman who was from North West Islands. He was born circa 1910. She had known

Norman all her life. Anna said she "went with" many men before marrying Norman and laughed saying she should not be telling me these things. "I'm old now but I was young then," she said, adding something about "trying things out". She said she "went with" another man but did not like him, then "went with" Norman. She affirmed that once she married Norman he was hers for life. They were married for over fifty years.

When they first married they lived with Norman's mother. Anna quit work to help her mother-in-law keep house for the three of them and for Norman's four male cousins. These young men lived on North West Islands, they trapped in fall and winter and were employed by the Grenfell Mission in the summer. When they worked for the Mission, they lived with Anna, Norman and his mother. "With all those boys it was constant work," said Anna. She obviously did not like the living arrangements, although she did not say specifically why. "Today young couples would never have that," she was referring to having had to live with her mother-in-law and having had to live with so many young men. They lived with Norman's mother for twelve years, until she died. When his mother passed away, the cousins found their own homes, while she and Norman had a log house built on the property they now own.⁵

⁵ Anna and Norman remained in her mother-in-law's house

After they married, Norman trapped in the fall and winter. During the summers he worked the gardens or chopped wood for the Grenfell Mission. He trapped along the Grand River from October until December or January. In spring he would trap for a week at a time closer to home. She said she was lonely when she was young and Norman left to trap.

When Anna first got married, she wanted to have two kids. She even stopped work for awhile. But as she put it: "she wasn't born to have kids." Later she asserted that you don't have to bear kids to understand them. She talked often of having cared for Martina, her niece's daughter. According to Anna, Martina enjoyed staying with Anna and Norman, she grew up with them. When her mother bore another child, Martina lived at home again to help her mother care for the infant. In 1993 Martina was living in St. John's and was still very present in Anna's life. In the early 1990s, when Anna was admitted to the General Hospital in St. John's, Martina visited her regularly. Anna often showed me the same photograph of Martina, with her common-law husband and their daughter. When Norman died, Martina made a substantial contribution to his gravestone.

Anna often talked of how children are raised today

until their second log house was built. I do not know what happened to Norman's mother's house.

compared to when she was growing up. She said that "now kids do something bad and their parents laugh at them. Parents give them a hug and a kiss but never a licking." She said, "we were given a hammering. We had to listen. We were told to listen once, and if we didn't we got the hammer." I asked if they really used a hammer? She laughed and replied that a hammering means to pick something up and give someone a "licking". Her father always gave the punishment. He used the dog harness. It stung them so they would listen. "Not like today, today kids run out of the house when they're young still. Today they run around like dogs." In her day, parents wanted children to obey and if they did not obey they got punished. She did not agree with the way in which some teachers strapped children. She recalled disapprovingly of how boys were strapped, some were hit so hard that their hands became red and swollen. She told me that she had never had to spank Martina.

Anna was proud of having cared for many people. When her mother was dying from stomach cancer, she took care of her. She pointed to a photo of her parents hung on the wall behind her. In this picture her mother is a cheerful, obese woman with bright eyes and white hair. Anna said that by the time her mother was seriously ill, she weighed so little that Anna could lift her. She remembers her mother laughing and

saying she never thought she would see the day when Anna would carry her around. She remembers visiting her father and mother one night when her father said "What are you going to do mother when I dies?" Her mother told him not to talk like that. Anna reminded her father that she was going to care for her mother. "I suppose that's why I did care for her because I told father I would," explained Anna. Anna's father died a year before her mother did. After he died, her mother grew very ill. Then, Anna's brother, who had lived with his parents, died the following year. When her brother became ill, Anna brought him cooked meals.

When Norman found year-round employment with the Grenfell Mission, he quit trapping. Anna also returned to her job at the hospital.⁶ In the early 1970s Norman suffered a stroke and he was not permitted to work at the hospital any more. After that he spent his days at home. She said they were then living in their first home on this property. To differentiate their first home from the present home, she pointed out the front window to the shed and said "to the house just outside there." At first, Norman could care for himself and took charge of the wood stove; however gradually his health deteriorated and she cared for him and the house

⁶ Unfortunately I was never able to understand exactly when Anna returned to work at the Grenfell Hospital.

and also worked at the hospital. According to Annie, after Norman suffered his stroke, Anna refused to let him do anything. For example, Anna refused to let him shovel the snow off the roof of the house. He suffered a second stroke after 1983 and had to be admitted to the hospital in Goose Bay.⁷ He stayed at the hospital for one week. Anna went to visit him one night when he was in good spirits and joking with everyone. He suffered another stroke that week and died, approximately one year before I arrived in town to conduct field work.

In 1993 Anna looked after herself, her house (keeping it clean and having it renovated), and her husband's gravestone. She participated in the monthly seniors' suppers organized by Helping Hands. She attended their meetings and produced baked goods for any bake sales organized by Helping Hands. Since her retirement, she started producing moccasins for sale on a regular basis. Her days are filled with telephone calls from her friends, like Doreen, and visits from younger neighbours. Once a day she walks through the town and she still does her own grocery shopping. She used to attend the United Church regularly, but stopped because she disapproved of the female minister.

⁷ Therefore it must have occurred after the hospital closed in North West River and after Anna had retired.

5.2.1 Dominant themes in Anna's life

Anna is a resilient and responsible woman. In a reserved manner, she expresses pride in having worked hard.⁸ She enjoyed telling me of how she worked for the International Grenfell Association. Reiterating the manner in which other women of her generation discuss 'work', Anna emphasizes the importance of work in her life. She is proud of having cared for her brother's children at the young age of twelve; of having supported herself and her husband; of having been a responsible and reliable employee of the Grenfell Mission. It was important for her to tell me of how she cared for her husband, mother and Martina. Thus she could present herself as having cared for others. Despite the fact that she could not bear children, she fulfilled the cultural expectation required of women to be mothers.

Anna demonstrates how Settler attitudes towards work were transposed onto wage work. Like Doreen, she acquired a view of life as demanding constant work for survival. In describing her employment history Anna presents herself as hard-working, disciplined, responsible and respectful of

⁸ Anna and other first generation women often reiterated how hard they worked. In doing so they are commenting on how younger generations of women either complain of work or work less hard. This is a way of affirming the values that first generation women hold dear and of making sense of the changes in life styles that they have witnessed in this century.

authority. All three of these qualities were expected of employees of the Grenfell Mission. These are also qualities valued by local Settler culture, especially by members of the first generation. Anna's description of her employment experience as a Grenfell employee displays the importance of such values as self-sacrifice, resilience and hard work. These values dominated the narratives of other first generation women.

Anna had learned the values of responsibility, hard work and respect for authority as a child. At the age of eleven she had to assume her share of household responsibilities. She left school to help her mother clean seal skins. She cared for her younger siblings and cared for her brother's children. The "lickings" and "hammerings" taught her to respect her father's authority. As a young girl she was taught to respect the authority of teachers and later on local professionals.

In a published autobiography called Daughter of Labrador (1989) the author, Millicent Loder,⁹ depicts visits from the doctor or minister to her childhood home in Rigolet.

⁹ Millicent Loder is a first generation woman born in Rigolet. She was educated at Grenfell Schools and later at nursing schools in Ontario and the United States (with Grenfell financial support). Following her training, she worked as a nurse in Labrador and Newfoundland. She has been a permanent resident of North West River since 1969.

These visits would have occurred a few times a year and were considered "events" in the daily life of any poor Settler family. Loder emphasizes how the visiting professionals were given the best food to eat and were treated reverentially. As a child, she was expected to be on her best behaviour. She writes:

It was such a strain to be on your best behaviour that we children sometimes felt like bursting. After the visitors had left, we would always get a lecture from Ma for something we had done or didn't do. The strangers were held up to us as examples of the way we should try to be. I grew up believing that professional people could do no wrong, that they were a different kind of people than we were (1989: 18).

Loder's upbringing would have taught her not to question the authority of professionals. She was not an exception, Anna would have been raised with similar ideas. These ideas would affect her adult relationships with employers at the Grenfell Mission.

Eleanor (a woman of about sixty years) offers one of the first complaints of the Grenfell Mission and the British that I had ever heard expressed in town. She said she has lost respect for the British:

They worked us hard, they were taking advantage of us and not treating us as people. We were brought up never to answer back to our parents. The British had the advantage, because we could never talk back to them.

Eleanor's complaint describes the experience of Anna and

other Settlers. Anna's father taught her to respect authority. Like Loder's mother, Anna's parents most likely taught her to treat foreigners with respect. These two childhood lessons were then carried into adulthood. As Anna's account confirms she worked hard and never complained and, as were other older generation women, she is proud of not having complained. They are expressing another value of their work ethic.

This sentiment disappears with succeeding generations, for whom complaining about working conditions is considered a legitimate right. Thus women like Cindy, who was in her thirties in 1993 (see work history chart in Appendix A), acknowledges a difference between her grandmother's (born in 1907) relationship with her employer and her own relationship to her employer:

Now Grandmother, whatever she had to do at work, no matter what, she would do it. Now I might question it and probably would go to my boss and say "No, I don't think I should have to do this." But she wouldn't even think about doing that....,

For third generation women, an employer does not carry the breadth of authority over their lives which Grenfell Mission staff did over the lives of locals until the 1980s. The Grenfell Mission, as it operated during the first half of this century in North West River, could not have persisted in the late twentieth century.

The Grenfell Mission staff carried tremendous influence over the lives of Settlers:

As the purveyors of medical and educational services, the Grenfell mission and especially [the resident doctor] possessed significant power to effect many changes in the lives of the people of Hamilton Inlet (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 162).

On a practical level, the Mission changed people's lives by establishing medical and educational services. The Mission did more than build hospitals and schools. These services were offered according to standards established by the International Grenfell Association. For example, at the boarding school, children studied, and...

earned their keep by cutting wood, shovelling snow paths, feeding chickens, taking care of the cattle and numerous other chores. The children's health was provided for and non-denominational religion was taught along with associated values and attributes of a rigidly enforced Protestant Ethic (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 163).

The goal of the Grenfell Mission involved more than attending to people's medical needs. The Mission sought to develop the future of Labrador by educating local people, providing economic opportunities through various development projects and improving the local standard of living (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 160).

The influence of the Mission can be attributed to several factors. The deference locals' paid foreign professionals placed the Mission staff in a powerful social

position. What Kennedy refers to as "the essentially colonial character of the Grenfell Mission, [and] the well-intentioned though patronizing perspective of Grenfell's staff" (Kennedy 1988: 203) reinforced their local authority. Based on fieldwork in 1983-84, anthropologist Evelyn Plaice confirms how those associated with the Grenfell Mission remain members of the local elite. Those in influential positions in town at the time of Plaice's research were either directly related to staff of the I.G.A. and the Hudson's Bay Company, or had benefited from the patronage of the I.G.A. and the Hudson's Bay Company (1990: 58).¹⁰

Anna's life was greatly influenced by services offered by the Grenfell Association and the Hudson's Bay Company. She was taught at the Grenfell school and taught Sunday School by the mission doctor. Both the mission and the trading post hired her and members of her family. After her husband had been diagnosed as having suffered a stroke, she continued to work at the hospital. Her experiences as an employee at the hospital and her recollection of having been a responsible and disciplined employee displays her attitudes towards 'work' and the Mission's expectations of its employees. "The work culture" of the International Grenfell Association is

¹⁰ The local elite, during Anna's childhood and much of her adult life, comprised of Hudson's Bay Company managers and their families, the minister, and Grenfell Mission staff.

created from the relationship between the local's attitudes towards work and the Grenfell Mission's expectations of work.

5.3 The life of Jean Timmins (in her seventies)

Meeting Jean Timmins for the first time, I became aware of the class differences existing in town. For instance, townspeople referred to Anna or Doreen as Aunt Anna or Aunt Doreen, but Jean was always referred to as "Mrs. Timmins". Annie gave me directions to the Timmins' house: "Go toward Mrs. Edwards'¹¹ and you'll meet a driveway with a sign posted close by saying PRIVATE DRIVEWAY DO NOT ENTER. You won't be able to see the house from the road for all the tall spruce trees." The house is stately by North West River standards; by urban Canadian standards, however, it is a middle class home. I entered onto a porch, into the kitchen and Mrs. Timmins led me to the sitting room. We sat by a fireplace and above the mantelpiece were a number of paintings; one was by the Newfoundland artist Christopher Pratt and five were by Americans who had volunteered for the I.G.A. I sat in a comfortable armchair and Mrs. Timmins sat opposite me on a wooden chair beside which was a small round table. The room

¹¹ Mrs. Edwards' was also a member of the town's elite. One possible explanation for this could be that in the 1950s her husband had been a member of the first and earliest forms of town council, the Local Roads Committee. In the late 1960s and early 1970s he was an elected member of the Town Council.

was bright, windows lined the right wall looking out onto their property towards Lake Melville. The room was cheerfully and tastefully decorated, the upholstery and curtains matched. Mrs. Timmins sat back in her chair and tried to recall the past saying, "It is hard to convey the era, it is so very different from the 1990s." She still has a strong, well-groomed, British accent. She spoke positively of the 1950s and 1960s when she was actively engaged in the Grenfell Mission station. She referred to the good cheer of people, the makeshift "work-with-what-you-have-at-hand" challenge of life. Although she never described herself as a leader in town, her description of her activities and responsibilities made obvious her leadership role. There was a rehearsed quality to her speech during this first visit, which was lost in subsequent interviews.¹² This was the first of several visits and three interviews. During interviews I took notes because she preferred it to my using a tape recorder.

Jean was born in England circa 1920. At the age of twenty she began training as a nurse at the Prince of Wales Hospital in London. The hospital was short staffed during the Second World War so she was trained as a first-year nurse in

¹² During later interviews she invited me to join her for tea. Unlike Anna, Jean would set before me a pot of tea, a cup and saucer, milk in a pitcher, sugar in a bowl and a plate of cookies.

the morning and worked as a third-year nurse in the afternoon. During the War, she met a doctor who suggested that she work for the Grenfell Mission. When asked what her goals were as a twenty-five year old woman, her initial response was that her concerns were the same as every woman at that age, which were to be married and to be healthy. She said, "We didn't think that far ahead." She thought about the question and explained that during the war no one was allowed to leave the country, but that in 1945 she was permitted to leave the country and take with her some money. She chose to visit her brother in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. There she enjoyed a holiday and read Northern Nurse by Elliot Merrick, which inspired her to apply for work with the Grenfell Mission. After the war, the bombings and the rations, the quiet of Labrador was attractive.

When Jean returned to England, she inquired about working for the Grenfell Mission. She knew she wanted to work overseas in the colonies. She apologized for using the word "colonies". I interpreted her apology as an indication that she did want to appear paternalistically British. She explained that she came to Labrador because she wanted to see if she could nurse competently in an isolated setting, with basic medical care and few amenities. She described it as having been a challenge and that she wanted to test herself.

Jean first nursed in St. Anthony in 1949. She returned to England for a year of midwifery training, with plans to return to Labrador. In 1951 she arrived in North West River to replace the head nurse. Soon after her arrival, the resident doctor, Dr. David Timmins left by dog team to visit families along the northern coast of Labrador. He would return several months later. She spent the winter of 1951-52 running a small cottage hospital in Harrington Harbour. Before leaving for Harrington Harbour, she and David Timmins were engaged to be married. After working in Harrington Harbour, she arrived in North West River exhausted and returned to England for a brief period of rest. In the early 1950s, she came back to North West River and when hospital duties allowed them the time, she and the doctor were married.

Once married, she expected that she would quit nursing. However, the hospital was short staffed, her replacement had not yet arrived so she continued to nurse. Of being a mother, she said she had been looking forward to getting a break from nursing. She had four children.¹³ Jean insisted she was not any different from other mothers in North West River. She had the same responsibilities as Doreen had; for example, she changed diapers and fed her children as any other North West

¹³ See appendix A for a time-line of Jean's life.

River mother would have. She took her children on picnics, for walks in the woods, assisted them with their homework and participated in local events such as church fairs.

When asked about mothering, she responded that when she was raising children that "was a world away from today." I asked her when mothering had been a pleasure and when had it been an obligation. She would not separate the two qualities. To paraphrase Jean, terms like "mothering" or "to be a mother as one would be an engineer" were inexistent when she was a mother. Likewise to have to think of "quality time" was inconceivable then. "We didn't compartmentalize our time," she explained, "there was no sense of working as a mother or as an engineer and devoting the right time to our children. You were a mother and you did it without thinking."

In spite of her insistence that she lived the life of any other woman in North West River, when she described the details of her life, it became evident that there were socio-economic differences between Jean and other townswomen like Doreen. For instance, Jean's children attended the school in town until the age of nine or ten, after which they were sent to boarding schools in England and Canada. Like most women in town, once married she moved in with her mother-in-law and assisted her in keeping house. Unlike most women in town, however, they hired local Settler or Innu women to help with

the cleaning of the house.

As the doctor's wife and a retired nurse, Jean had many responsibilities in town. When the hospital was short staffed for example, Jean volunteered her services as a midwife. She also entertained visiting researchers, missionaries, and a bishop. Since she and her husband lived in a big house they were able to offer teachers, staff and volunteers from the United States and England a temporary place to stay. She bought furnishings for newly built Grenfell staff houses. Based on the letters of application sent to the North West River Regional School Board, Jean also assisted her husband David (then head of the school board) in hiring new teachers (like Clare in Appendix A). The grade eleven provincial exam results arrived first at their house and parents would phone her for the results. She organized a woman's community volunteer group, the Women's Community Club. Jean's influence comes across in the content of her narrative. But the tone of her replies also reveals her influence. She speaks as a representative of the Grenfell Mission and of her generation. Jean believed strongly in the goals of the Grenfell Mission and still does, and as the doctor's wife spent her adult life in the pursuit of these goals.

I asked her to describe her goals at the time of our interview in 1993. She responded that they were the same for

any other woman in her seventies. She wants to care for her husband, keep him well and make life enjoyable for him. Dr. Timmins was suffering from Alzheimer's and she was his main caregiver. She explained that "living with someone with Alzheimer's is like watching someone head out to sea in a small boat. One day," she said, "he's not going to recognize me anymore." She added that at her age, "you hope you'll be well, independent and that you can provide for yourself." She explained that she is fortunate in that she has money, her children are close by, and they keep in touch. She told me she does not want to depend on her children in her old age. Instead, she wants to provide financially for herself and her husband and to offer help to their family. In November of 1993 she and her husband would fly to England where they spend the winter. They would return as usual the following spring.

5.4 The work culture of the Grenfell Mission

In Jean's life narrative, she creates the perception that the labour done for the I.G.A. was a community-wide effort. During our first interview, she likened the Grenfell Mission to a family: "We were all very happy together. I want to say that it was like one big family, but that's not it. People were cheerful and easy-going and the work was terribly

make-shift." She pointed out that employees worked with whatever was at hand. For example, she described preparations for an operation, which involved taking the fish kettle, scrubbing and disinfecting it. The operating tools were then boiled in the fish kettle. The kettle had to be returned to the cook by eleven o'clock in the morning so that she could prepare dinner (the noon meal).

Jean is describing conditions of work that were unique to communities like North West River. The Grenfell Mission hospital was located in an isolated setting where basic medical supplies arrived sporadically. The isolation and the missionary ethic created a specific work culture. Jean repeated several times that it was difficult to convey the era and the work:

You were expected to stand up and be independent and make decisions for yourself. "Use your common sense!" people said then and you did. You did anything that was needed and you did it the best way you could. There was no sense of employee/employer, and I only do my job and no more. This is recent.

Jean is recalling a work ethic that was characteristic of North West River and the Grenfell Mission during the first half of the twentieth century. Employees of the Grenfell Mission were expected to be committed, flexible, to be willing to try their hand at almost any task, and to accept some sacrifice.

Other townspeople reiterated a similar attitude. Roman, who was in his sixties in 1993, had worked for the Mission since 1949 (see Appendix A). He said that he would do whatever work needed to be done as long as he could do it. If a house needed painting, he would pick up a brush and paint it. Roman recalled that jobs became specialized when the International Grenfell Association medical services began to be managed in Newfoundland and Labrador by Grenfell Regional Health Services (G.R.H.S.) in 1978. At which point, he explained that if you needed a painter, you had to get a painter, and if you needed repairs on plumbing, you had to get a plumber. He pointed out that employees joined a union then, and although "there was more staff and more pay" as he put it, what was lost was the flexibility with which the Mission had previously functioned.

The following excerpts from a tape-recorded interview with a Newfoundland born, single woman in her thirties, named Jennifer, proves that many of the familial qualities of the work culture of the I.G.A. persisted until the 1980s. Circa 1980 at the age of nineteen, Jennifer moved from Happy Valley to North West River to work for the Grenfell Hospital. She recalls the move as a positive experience. Within six months of working as a nurse's aide, Jennifer was offered a position in "diversional therapy". She kept patients occupied with

craft work. These patients were those whose health was improving but were not yet ready to return home, or, who were waiting for their return flight home. Jennifer also assisted the physiotherapist from Goose Bay, who delegated some responsibilities to her:

what I found really good about it was these people [her supervisors] always take the time to show you things?! Like I was showed a lot of things about occupational therapy, I was showed a lot of things about stroke rehabilitation... she'd kind of say you know Mr. So-and-so needs this done so many times a week and so I would do that until she came back.

Jennifer found that she was given the opportunity to learn:

you were encouraged in every way, it was really nice,... like I wanted to watch surgery, I watched um...delivery...um I was really fascinated... anything..., Like the nurses would teach us how to give needles. I mean we weren't allowed to give needles but ah, she'd let us practice on an orange? And I mean it sort of built up confidence and stuff like that... And there's a lot of people who left the hospital nurse's aides and went away and did nursing, which is really good.

Since its opening in 1916, the Grenfell Hospital in North West River took the opportunity to train local women in the field of nursing. The women would begin working as nurse's aides; those who showed interest and skill were taught different aspects of nursing. Local women of all three generations left Labrador to train as nurses or as teachers with the financial backing of the Mission. The financial support was given on condition that they return to Labrador

to practice their profession. Millicent Loder (1989) is one example.

Jennifer describes the working atmosphere at the hospital as familial. When she pinpointed what she liked about working at the hospital, she said, "You can put your foot in a lot of different doors," meaning that she was given the opportunity to learn about many different facets of hospital work. For Jennifer, the phrase "family atmosphere" also describes the relations between staff and patient:

when I first came down I was working as a nurse's aide and I was doin' shift work and...., almost everybody who came to the hospital were really polite, really nice people. And everybody was coming from away..., so it was really a family atmosphere. Like all of us, like I don't know there was not so much of a separation between patient and nurse or patient and doctor. It was sort of everybody's together sort of thing. And it wasn't uncommon to walk into a room and see a nurse sitting down talking to a patient. Where you know....even....in times when I've had to go to hospital I don't very often see that. There was like room for lot's of extra little things, like nurses could curl their [patient's] hair...

Since many people at the hospital, staff and patients, were "away from home", people were very polite and considerate of each other creating, according to Jennifer, a "family atmosphere". "Family atmosphere" also describes her experience as a "diversional therapist" learning to make moccasins from a female patient from Rigolet.

Jennifer describes the freedom and the constraints of

having been an employee of the Grenfell Hospital in North West River. She, like Mrs. Jean Timmins, uses "family-like" to describe the working atmosphere and the relations between patients and staff and those between professionals and local staff. Jennifer was given the freedom to watch and experience several areas of hospital work. She lived on hospital premises and ate with other staff members. Thus she was freed from the financial burdens usually associated with leaving your natal home and finding paid work. However, it also meant that her supervisor could keep an eye on her moral conduct. Regina Lloyd was both Director of Nursing and Housemother of the staff residence. She both supervised the nurse's aides during their shifts, as well as kept an eye on their off-duty activities. When Jennifer's boyfriend spent the night in her residence room, Mrs. Lloyd reprimanded her the next day.

The first time Tom stayed in my room [over night] she knew about it (giggle)...I don't know how but she knew about it (giggle)... And I got up next morning, I went to work and I was called into the office and it was "Oh my what did I do?" and I was given a pep talk then as if she was my mother... "You know, girls mustn't do this, you must not have somebody stay in your room"... and all this stuff, so I was basically warned... I think she felt somewhat, well she thought of us as her girls I think, you know. And she felt that she could play that role, because most of us were away from home... She was like mother to us all... She was like really old fashioned... But there is some security in that too. Knowin' that somebody cared enough to say that? Especially first being away from home, I think she was a very special person.

Even though we were all afraid of her (giggle). We all, we always made sure we did everything just perfect on our job. I don't know how she...um... don't know how she managed to achieve such respect.¹⁴

In 1993, Jennifer laughs about the incident, but is still somehow struck by Regina Lloyd's command of authority as a supervisor. While this may seem surprising considering that it occurred in the early 1980s, it was in keeping with the Grenfell practice of accepting moral responsibility for its employees.

5.4.1 The work culture of early factories

The sense of responsibility of the employee towards his/her duties as recalled by both Jean, Jennifer and Roman is familial and generalized. The Grenfell Mission's work culture was paternalistic, creating a sense of moral obligation between employee and employer. It resembles that of knit-wear factories in Paris, Ontario as described by Joy Parr in The Gender of Breadwinners (1990). Joy Parr traces changes in Penman's knit-wear factory between 1870 and 1949. She focuses on the large number of women employed in the factory. Central to her examination is the role of gender expectations in relations between employer and employee, in

¹⁴ Unlike the previously mentioned informants, Jennifer allowed me to tape record the interviews.

the representations of the female employees in the mass media and the acceptance by the town of women in non-traditional gender roles: such as mothers employed outside the home, women as heads of households or as picketing strikers. One theme of relevance to this chapter is the paternalistic relationship between employer and employee.

Penman's employees recall accommodations made by millworkers, foremen and managers during the depression of the 1930s "in highly personalized terms, as favours, grounded in a tradition of mutual helpfulness" (Parr 1990: 51). This tradition of helpfulness dates back to when John Penman, owner of the business, still lived in Paris, Ontario and financed:

a night school, the YMCA, the YWCA, and the central public school; subsidized university students and the work of community nurse; and provided food hampers for needy families (Parr 1990: 37).

According to Parr, "these interventions created a deep sense of loyalty and personal indebtedness toward Penman in the community" (1990: 37).¹⁵

But Penman's philanthropy did not come without some sacrifice to the workers:

¹⁵ McGuire and Woodsong (1990) provide a similar example from Broome County, New York: "Throughout its history the Endicott-Johnson company sought to forestall worker unrest and unionism through a system of welfare capitalism" (1990: 172).

Though he did not have to demand that it be so, Penman's philanthropy was acknowledged as compensation for the low wages paid in the mill, in part because amenities he installed in the community, by establishing the civic virtue of the town, secured the respectability of all those who looked to him for their livelihood (Parr 1990: 37).

At the turn of the century when Penman's staff was mostly female, publicly ensuring their respectability was both a moral duty and good business for Penman. The female staff at Penman's were contradicting gender norms of the time, which could be used against them in public, making employment unattractive. "By securing the good name of his employees through the good name of his firm," John Penman assured himself a loyal workforce and secured Penman's a good reputation in the business community (Parr 1990: 36).

Kessler-Harris provides a similar example dating back to the nineteenth century from New England (1981: 56-62). New England mills wanted to attract "a reliable labor force that was easily disciplined in industrial routines and was cheaper than male labor" (1981:57). They hired young single women, often from New England farms. The mill employers offered the young women residence in supervised boardinghouses, claiming to offer "a training ground in morality" (1981: 57).

Between 1916 and 1941, with the exception of the Hudson's Bay Company, a few temporary trading companies and elite households hiring of housekeepers, the International

Grenfell Association was the principal employer in North West River. The I.G.A. offered employment to both women and men; however, it could not offer high wages and at times requested that employees take a reduction in pay. In her biography Daughter of Labrador, Millicent Loder recalled being asked to take a reduction in pay in 1929 when she was working as a ward maid at the North West River hospital:

My starting salary at the hospital was fifty cents a month... At that time the Grenfell Mission was financed entirely by donations. I suppose that was why our wages were so low. I do remember occasionally we would all be called together by [the resident] Doctor...; he would tell us that the Mission was having a hard time and ask if we would be willing to work a month or two without wages. Of course we always did. We were still getting free meals and a bed to sleep in (Loder 1989: 40-1).

In the 1920s and 1930s in North West River, local people were dependent on the I.G.A. for employment. Poverty was so endemic that young women whose employers provided them with a bed and food were making a significant contribution to their natal households.

Like John Penman of Paris, Ontario, the resident doctor in North West River became a local paternal figure. Annie was told by her grandfather to behave as a young girl because if not the doctor would take her to the orphanage. Eve, who was in her fifties in 1993, said she married her husband under the advice of the doctor:

I always found it kind of interesting, ah because ah he had such a say in people's lives.... as an example, my husband and I had been going together for two years and I got pregnant. Of course that was an awful thing to happen in those days. And I had to go to the doctor to get a check up. And he said, "Now I got some advice for you young lady, you get married as fast as you can." That was his advice. And when I told Eric's mother that,... there was no question about it, we got married, in her mind, you know, because the doctor said. There was no such thing as did we want to get married, which is what it was anyway. But it was the doctor's say, you know, it was really strange. But that came from even his father too, he was the law and order in the community and it passed on to younger Dr. Timmins.

He was doctor and surgeon, judicial authority and head of the local school board. The paternalism of the Grenfell Mission was highly personalized, familial and grounded in an indebtedness locals felt toward the Mission. Relations between staff and their supervisors continued to be familial until the early 1980s, as Jennifer confirms in her previously quoted account.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Grenfell Mission sought to build a self-reliant mission station that would develop into a self-reliant community. Charity was offered to local residents, but they in turn were expected to donate their labour and their skills to the Mission. The Mission was dependent on the paid and unpaid labour of locals and those 'from away'. For example, the Mission depended on the food hunted by locals to provide a

varied and non-foreign diet to their patients and orphans. Locals were dependent on the Mission for employment, health and education facilities. Mission staff built a mission station that was as self-sufficient as possible with building facilities for patients, staff, students, with a garden, hen house, and livestock such as cows or pigs. But to maintain these, the Mission required the assistance of local people. The Mission staff emphasized that nothing could be had for free, that locals had to also provide for their community (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 162). Older generation women expressed their indebtedness to the Mission in their willingness to work for little pay in difficult conditions under the authority of foreign staff.

5.5 The impact of the Grenfell Mission on later generations

The International Grenfell Association had a great impact over the lives of women of all three generations in North West River. The Mission attracted first generation women and their marital households to settle in North West River. As the village grew around Mission services, the Mission staff organized women's community associations. First generation women have been committed volunteers since the 1950s. The Mission hired women from Newfoundland, Ontario, Britain and the United States. Some of these women enjoyed

life in North West River. They met and married their future husbands in town and settled in North West River, thus diversifying the local population. The I.G.A. created new female role models and offered young women better opportunities than their mothers had. Younger women grew up expecting to find paid employment. In fact until 1983 and the closure of the Grenfell Hospital in North West River, girls were almost assured after-school and summer jobs, and, married women part-time or full-time employment. Young local women saw women working as professionals, both as nurses and as doctors, for the I.G.A. These young women attended local schools (originally established by the I.G.A.) and continued their education at the local community college or at universities in larger urban centres of Newfoundland and Canada. Thus third generation women grew up expecting to be employed for a wage and knowing that they would need a post-secondary education. While only one of many factors in creating these expectations, the International Grenfell Association had a significant role in the creation of the expectations of third generation women.

5.6 Conclusion

In this chapter the examples given of factories such as, Penman's knitwear factory in Paris, Ontario; the Endicott-Johnson company in Broome County; and mills in New England demonstrate that the social organization of factories during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was commonly built around paternalism, the creation of familial relations between employer/employee and welfare capitalism. These examples provide us with a historical context to understand the similar tactics used by missionary organizations like the International Grenfell Association. The hard work and low wages, the flexibility requested of employees, the volunteer work and the wide-reaching paternal authority of the doctor in residence are the characteristics of work at the Mission until the 1980s.

During the first half of this century, the work culture of the Grenfell Mission (as described above) fit in well with the notion of 'work' of trapping families. Settlers were ready to take wage labour opportunities and had previous experience in wage labour.¹⁶ The concept of wage labour was not foreign to them. Settlers at the time can be described as proud and ready to work, but poor. The opportunity of hard

¹⁶ A lumber mill operated between 1901 and 1911 or 1912 in Mud Lake (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 153-4).

work at little pay with an offer of room and board was itself an aid to families. To many women and men, like Anna, having worked hard was something to be proud of.

A relationship of interdependence developed between local Settlers and the Grenfell Mission. Grateful for the medical and educational facilities, local people willingly gave their time and labour to the Mission. To provide for a mission station that was as self-sufficient as possible, the I.G.A. was dependent on these individuals. For example, local women provided unpaid domestic labour to improve services and offer a more varied town life. Gradually as the Mission grew, receiving funds from the new province of Newfoundland and the federal government of Canada, the Mission could afford a bigger staff. The unpaid labour of the volunteer women for the hospital was replaced by paid workers. Younger generations experienced a different relationship with the International Grenfell Association. Women of the third generation tend to view the Mission solely as an employer and were less accepting of the stratification of North West River society as created by the International Grenfell Association staff.

The influence of the Mission was great in the lives of Settlers of North West River. Medical services improved their health and increased their life span. Men and women were

given wage job opportunities. Schools increased the employment possibilities of younger generations. A few individual Settler men and women were given scholarships to attend professional schools and then return to Labrador with their improved skills. It was around the Mission hospital and schools that Settlers gathered, creating a vibrant village life from the 1920s until the 1970s. With the closure of the Grenfell hospital in 1983 and the increasing importance of Happy Valley/Goose Bay, North West River has become a much quieter community.

The lives of Anna and Jean illustrate the class differences in town in the middle of the twentieth century. A British woman who was a well-educated professional held a wider range of responsibilities in the community than a Settler woman working as a staff maid at the Grenfell hospital. Despite these differences, there are strong similarities between Jean and Anna. Both women held paying jobs and both women emphasized how important being a mother was to them. Jean explained that after she had married, in 1952, she stopped working to care for the house and children. Even Anna, who did not bear children, had quit her paid job upon marrying Norman and emphasized how she had cared for others. These two women and others like them, led me to believe that while paid work was a part of most women's lives

in North West River, they placed priority on their responsibilities as caregivers. This topic will be further discussed in chapters seven and eight. The next chapter discusses women's volunteer work in North West River and the influence of the Grenfell Mission in creating a tradition of women's volunteer associations.

6.0 Chapter Six:

Volunteer Work

6.1 Introduction

Volunteer work was essential to the running of the Grenfell Mission in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Grenfell Mission requested the unpaid labour of locals to maintain the hospital. This chapter will examine how women's volunteer work became an established activity for young married women and the role that Grenfell staff took in establishing women's voluntary associations.

Some members of the Association's permanent staff in North West River, such as the resident doctor and his wife, were leaders and role models in the community. The doctor's wife, Jean Timmins, initiated a woman's community volunteer group. The community group diversified community life and offered women new activities and new ways of socializing with fellow women. Through the volunteer group, Jean introduced and defined culturally appropriate activities for adult married women. This chapter will describe the work of women's community groups in particular, the Women's Community Club, Women of the Land and Helping Hands, to illustrate the development of women's voluntary groups in North West River. It will be demonstrated that the 'work' of these volunteer

groups was both "recreational" and "political".¹

The life story of Clare, a woman of the second generation who was born in Newfoundland, will illustrate why she became involved in volunteer activities. The two most important reasons she gives are: (a) her attachment and commitment to North West River and to its history; and (b) that as a mother, she felt that it was important to provide her children with various activities outside of school. She compares living in North West River with life in Churchill Falls and concludes that the effort made to improve town life by North West River volunteers created a sense of commitment towards the town.

6.2 The Life of Clare

Clare interprets life in North West River from the perspective of someone raised in St. John's, as someone married to a local man, as a teacher, and as someone who whole-heartedly adopted village life and its heritage as her own. The growth of the wage economy and of North West River as a "community" affected Clare's life, her activities and her values.

¹ These terms are in quotation marks because they have been used as Davis (1979) and Porter (1993) defined them.

We arranged four interviews during which she provided ample information.² Each interview built upon the preceding one. From the beginning, she described the main events and revealed many of the important issues of her life. With each succeeding interview, she added more information and discussed the issues in greater depth. The issues and events we discussed were the following: the charm of North West River in the early 1960s, the early years of her marriage and having to wait for her husband "to settle down", raising their children, sharing household chores, employment, and being a community volunteer.

Clare was born circa 1940 in a small Newfoundland outport. She claims to have simple roots and thus can appreciate and enjoy life in a small place like North West River. Her family was middle class, however, and soon after her birth, they moved to St. John's. Her father was a writer and a politician. Like many middle class girls, Clare took piano lessons. Upon completing high school, she received a scholarship from Memorial University. Faced with the possibility of attending university, she sought her father's advice. He told her to take the scholarship and become a teacher. Having completed a two-year education degree, she

² Clare gave me permission to use a tape-recorder for all of her interviews.

turned to her father for advice again. Where should she teach? He had recently heard a lecture on the Grenfell Mission and told her to apply to North West River. She exclaimed that she had not known whether it would suit her but that he had, and that he was right. She describes her father as a wise man. She spoke of her parents with pride, admiration and gratitude.

She also described some of the harsh realities of her childhood. Clare's father was strict and severe in his punishments. She remembers being sent to bed without her supper. This was the only example she provided of her father's severity. She knew that her mother would come in with a lunch³ before the night was over. She still does not know if her father knew of this. She needed her mother's softness beside her father's harshness. She respects her mother for having been caring and loving. She believes that a good mother is someone who cares and brings love into this harsh and cruel world.

Taking her father's advice, she applied for a position in North West River. Her letter of application was reviewed by Dr. Timmins, who hired her on behalf of the North West

³ In North West River, a lunch meant a snack often eaten after supper at night before retiring for bed. Dinner refers to the noon-time meal and supper the main meal eaten at six o'clock sharp (in the household where I lived).

River Regional School Board. In the early 1960s, she was hired to teach elementary grades. When the person hired to teach senior grades did not arrive, Clare was asked to take over. That was a challenge! She was in charge of a classroom of students only a few years younger than herself.

Clare describes the status she acquired as a teacher from St. John's:

Well when I came... it was a very isolated community and the children were very docile, very obedient. If you got a...if you got a hard time from the teacher for something, you got scolded or whatever or staying after school, and your mother or father heard about it, you got a licking besides! You know I mean?! Because they supported the teacher in whatever she was doing. The teacher's word was absolute law. You know, ...I suppose it was the next best thing to being worshipped back then...

As a teacher and as an outsider, she was treated with deference and respect. While Clare may have appreciated the respect paid to her by her students, she was never quite comfortable with the instantly acquired status.

Clare described how she was attracted to the sense of adventure she had only experienced in Labrador. Clare described arriving on a coastal boat and falling in love with the landscape. She described crossing the channel to get from the Settler side of North West River to the Innu side before the construction of the bridge and before there was a cable car that would carry people over the channel of water. In the

summer, when the water was free of ice, a manned boat ferried people across. During the winter when the ice was thick, a guide would take people across the ice. The guide walked ahead of Clare, holding a long stick to check the ice, and Clare kept to his footprints. If anyone fell through the ice, the stick was used to rescue them. She described with excitement how a group of men were caught on an ice pan while crossing the channel. They began floating out to Lake Melville and had to be rescued by boat.

In 1961 the construction of a cable car to cross the channel made it possible to cross the water safely, which made travel to Goose Bay easier. Clare remembers taking the whole school, numbering one hundred students, to a concert held at the Peenamin Mackenzie School on the Innu side of the river. The cable car could take six adults, so crossing the river to attend the concert became an all-day outing. The performance began at eleven o'clock so children began crossing over at eight-thirty in the morning. The youngest were taken first and the oldest last, with interruptions for older people and townsfolk having to cross. After the concert, they took the whole afternoon until four o'clock to cross back. The cable car made it possible to make school trips. Prior to that crossing the river was too dangerous; they could not risk the lives of the children.

Clare described with humour the arrival of household telephones. The first telephone book issued for Goose Bay and surrounding area, which included North West River, arrived in November 1960. When private telephones were first available, people called each other just to see who would answer. Someone in town would dial a number, Clare's phone would ring. When she picked up the receiver and said, "Hello?" and she would hear: "Oh! It's you Clare!"

During her first few years in North West River, she participated in many of the local women's organizations. She wanted to become involved in community life and she wanted to be seen as one of the locals. She participated in United Church Women and the Parent-Teacher's Association:

when I came here, I was involved in women's groups, I made sure of that. I made a special effort to get one with the women in particular so they could relate to me. And it took ah... a little bit of doing, 'cause I was an outsider. And I made sure I got into things and I became the president of this and the treasurer of that. And before I knew it, I was one of them.

"Oh my dear!" she told me on a separate occasion, "when I first started teaching, I was Go! Go! Go! all the time. I was in the middle of everything." Although her employers advised against socializing with locals, she made a point of doing so. She attended the regular Saturday night square dances. Today she thinks of herself as being from town and expects that others do too.

Clare described the community activities available in the early 1960s when she first lived in town. She remembered most vividly the effort taken to provide fun for the youth in the community:

But back then it was wonderful. I remember quite clearly the um.... you know going up to the community hall, every Saturday night without fail you had a big dance in the community hall for the young people. Well you had to be old enough to get in, about thirteen, I guess. But I mean all the young ones, young couples, they all went there, plus some of the older ones, dancing. But what happened was the parents were taking turns supervising and meeting there. Scattered time there was a bit of a problem, but I mean you get that anywhere. And every Saturday a good healthy entertainment, that kept you going 'til the next Saturday. And you were content. And thank goodness for those parents, because now I worry today.

Clare recalled the great fun she had at square dances. She also remembers that the dances were successful thanks to the involvement of the parents who acted as chaperons. According to Clare, there was an organized system of volunteers:

Yeah, people taking turns over-seeing the young people's activities. The town was very well organized back then. And you had your system of volunteer helpers, and it was never a problem. Your volunteers did their turns. Today it's very difficult to get the people, parents to volunteer. They think it's up to the teachers, or the kids can go on their own, you know....I think about the young ones that are just idling around. There's nothing to just let loose on and it be healthy. Nothing like getting up there in a square and saying, yahooing! swing your partner and all this. And you're beat out by the end of it. But you had a good time.

Clare remembers how much the town had to offer the youth at

the time. In 1993 comparable activities were fewer in number. Clare blamed this on younger parents, who are not making the effort to organize activities for their children.

Despite the Grenfell Mission warning, directed at incoming professionals, not to mix with the locals, Clare dated a local boy, Christopher. Christopher was born and raised in North West River. In the 1960s Christopher attended one year of trade school in St. John's. He was trained as an electrician. While Christopher was in trade school, Clare travelled to Europe. She says she got the travel itch out of her system and was ready to settle down. They were married in the early 1960s. Clare and Christopher were married at the United Church in North West River. Once married, Clare quit her teaching position. They moved to Twin Falls, where Christopher had a job waiting for him on the hydro-electric project. Christopher promised her that they would return to North West River after living in Central Labrador for ten years.

Clare discussed how her husband and many others chose to develop their skills in trade school:

But anyway my husband's generation, it's interesting you know, he um... went out to trade school in St. John's... There was a bunch of them, from this community around that time, and they were probably some of the first ones to actually see beyond the life that's in North West River and what there was here. And a lot of them did go outside, a lot of them they got trades, all kinds

of it. Some stayed outside. Some like my husband came back and worked their trade back here and found jobs in the area. There was that period in the early '60s when a lot of that happened.

According to Clare, her husband's generation was the first to realize that trapping and fishing were not going to sustain them. They knew that going to trade school would give them an advantage in getting jobs. They saw beyond the life they had known and their parents had known in North West River. Christopher's parents did not understand why he should live in St. John's for a year to study, rather than trap and hunt for the family. Clare says that it took forethought and common sense to know that learning a trade would serve her husband well. In the early 1960s electricity was not provided for the whole town. Only the hospital and a few houses had private generators, which were shared with neighbouring houses.

In Twin Falls, Clare bore three children and stayed home to look after them. She explained that she and Christopher were raised to expect that a mother was to stay at home with her children while they were young. There were also few job opportunities for women in Twin Falls and Churchill Falls (where they moved after three years).⁴ Clare busied herself with caring

⁴ See Parsons (1987) and Luxton (1980) for a description of women's lives in these "male-centred company towns". Clare's

for the children and the household. She volunteered in town. She organized Christmas plays that involved both children and adults. Clare admitted that she disliked life in Twin Falls. She socialized with other young mothers, who competitively compared how much money they had spent on things, such as drapes. Clare missed the community spirit of North West River. Christopher was restless during the first years of their marriage. He enjoyed the hunting, beer drinking, fishing and camping in Twin Falls. There was a community of men with whom he could enjoy these activities. She wanted him at home more often. Clare found that she could not interfere with Christopher's leisure time.

Clare was responsible for the care of the house, the raising of the children, the budgeting of their finances and the organization of holidays: "He was the head of whatever work he was involved, but when it came to the house I actually had the...the say... probably eighty per cent of the time it was me." Clare explained further:

experience is similar to the experience of other married women who live in northern Canadian company towns. In these towns "company policies on hiring, housing, and the provision of facilities" are informed by a "vision of the 'male breadwinner/female domestic' nuclear family" (Parsons 1995:

I mean I handle all the money to this day, he doesn't know where his money is going, if he asks I can tell him. But he trusts me I suppose and he knows what happens with it. But he never inquires, as long as he gets his little dole out for each day so he can buy his lunch and pay for his gas....

Clare budgets the finances, and they discuss any expensive purchases. Clare figures that Christopher did as his father had. His father, who was twenty years older than Christopher's mother, left the running of the household and the raising of the children to his wife. As a trapper, Christopher's father would have been absent from home for months at a time, leaving the household and children in the care of his wife.

Clare and Christopher maintained a fairly rigid division of labour. As I stated above, Clare's duties included cleaning the house, caring for children, organizing holidays and budgeting finances. Christopher provided the main income, and he hunted wild game for the family's consumption. He also built a playroom for the children and a pram on sled runners on which his wife could push their three small children. Clare explained how there was some flexibility:

when I say that we shared responsibilities first when we got married, it's only shared when I can't do what I.... what my job is. You understand what

213 and Luxton 1980).

I'm saying? Then, like if I'm pregnant again... which I was (giggle) three times right quick, and unable... he would do it. Otherwise if I was well and healthy and could do the work then I did it. A scattered time he stepped in to ah... cook and to this day he'll always do at least one meal a week, he'll cook it, probably Sunday, I sit back....

Clare clarified how household chores were shared. They were her responsibility but he helped out when she was unable to perform them. She described herself changing a light bulb and having Christopher step in to do it for her. She reciprocates by not allowing him to help her wash the supper dishes. Clare likes to think that a certain amount of affection and respect is displayed in doing domestic chores for one another:

But when I think of it, he was quite a pioneer in his thinking, because ah... his background and the people around him were very traditional. The fact that... he had his first child at twenty-three. He was changing diapers and I can see him on his hands and knees washing and waxing the kitchen floor, 'cause I was pregnant again. And for him with his traditional background, that was quite miraculous. I like to think of it as love and respect for me that got him to do that, I can assure you 'cause nobody else would have seen him do that.

Flexibility was an answer to necessity, otherwise the sexual division of labour in their household was well defined.

Ten years after leaving North West River, Clare, Christopher and their three children returned. Christopher took a job with the Grenfell Association, but accepted a significant reduction in pay. Clare returned to teaching. The children were now in school and the extra income was needed.

Asked whether she ever felt any guilt for working outside the home, Clare answered:

Now, I experienced a bit of that, although I didn't go back to work until my youngest was in grade three. But I mean there were times when they were sick and there were times when they... you know.... got into fights with other kids and got frightened and stuff and I wasn't here and they needed me. And one girl was attacked by a husky dog and I was still up in school...you are overwhelmed with the guilt because you are not there. But that is why I waited until they were older before I went back to work, 'cause I knew I wouldn't be able to live with the guilt.

Clare compared how she raised her children with the methods of first and third generation mothers:

I think children years ago must have had to grow up pretty fast too. But for my own, I'm thinking of my own, I let them be children. I did not put on them too many demands. When it came to chores and things, there are just certain things and I stuck with it, that's what they had to do, but it wasn't overwhelming or anything....No, to me, today's mother is more lenient.

Did she think that today's children have fewer chores to do?

"Oh less! None at all, that's why when you ask them to do something they won't do it."

Upon returning to North West River, Clare took on volunteer work again:

Only in the capacity like..... as a teacher and as a parent. Like say for instance, as a parent my girls were involved in Girl Guides and so I was always making sure I was in to that. When they were in Sunday school, I was always involved in Sunday school teaching, just to lead by example.

She compared North West River to Churchill Falls and

described the difference in how people cared for their town. She explained how money was raised to replace the church organ in North West River compared to Churchill Falls:

Well, this is what I liked about it. I lived in Churchill before that. And when they needed an organ in Churchill the company came up with it, "Oh here you are, there's your new organ" You see! Donated by the company. And when we moved out here and we were needing an organ, it was wonderful to see the spirit pitching in, raising it, raising the money. Then we got our organ! And boy! You talk about proud of that organ. It was such a different feeling. And I think that's it seems to me that's basic for everything in life, you know when you work for it, how much you appreciate it. Here's a prime example. And so that's what our little church group was doing, you know raising money like that.

Clare has become active in various community groups, including the Labrador Heritage Society and the Grenfell Centennial Committee. Not surprisingly, she was involved in organizing the week-long celebrations of 250 years of history in North West River.

She retired from teaching in 1987. Since her retirement, she has taken up knitting with a vengeance. She knit throughout every interview. She produces sweaters, stuffed dolls and houses. In 1993 Clare and Christopher lived in a pleasant home that contained modern conveniences (television, VCR, boats and skidoos). It was a simple home, kept both clean and comfortable. She was looking forward to her husband's retirement, after which they would spend most

of their time at their cabin. They would hunt, fish and live a traditional Settler way of life.

For Clare the cabin is a place to escape to and in which to live a "traditional" life:

'cause once he retires we will spend probably half our time living in our cabin, easily that amount of time, maybe more. Living the old traditional way of life, hauling our water and our wood, in harmony with nature. No telephones.

Would they have CB radios or electricity?

[CB radio] is in case of an emergency, it's good idea to have.... Ah we have a generator we'll turn on in the night-time, so we can turn on some lights and it can run our television set.....

Clare and Christopher can therefore choose which modern conveniences they want at the cabin. This means that they can choose to maintain the traditional activities that they enjoy:

we got to bring our own [water].... like there's no water to drink on the island, we have to in summertime go to the shore there's a spring. And we catch rain-water for washing and so on....two wood stoves, well you need two in the wintertime believe me. So we enjoy that, we look forward to it. And I got a little scrubbing board too down there to clean my clothes and a line to hang them all out to dry. So we're fine. We catch fish, set our nets to catch fish, dry them and smoke them. Do a bit of hunting in season.

Clare portrays herself as returning to an older way of life. Thus, going to the cabin becomes a way of returning to what is pure and true, their heritage.

6.2.1 A discussion of Clare's life

Employment brought Clare to North West River. She was a teacher with university qualifications. As a professional from outside, locals respected her authority. Yet, Clare wants to portray herself as one of the locals. She fell in love with North West River when she first arrived as a young single woman. When she married into a trapping family, she accepted North West River heritage as her own. She has celebrated local history as a community volunteer. She has been committed to volunteer work both as a parent and as a professional. Being a teacher, she was expected to take on positions of leadership in town. Used to leading a classroom, she placed herself in similar situations as a volunteer (e.g., directing plays, giving slide shows).

As a married woman and a mother, her responsibilities included care and management of the house, raising the children and community volunteer work. While she accepted fully her family responsibilities, she expected more from her husband. She wanted him at home more often. As a mother, she stayed home with her children, until they were all in school. When her youngest child entered grade three and the household needed a second income, Clare returned to teaching full-time. Her commitment to formal education and employment and her family's dependence on wage income are repercussions of the

growing wage economy in North West River and Labrador. Like other households of their generation, Christopher moved his family to Central Labrador to find wage work at the hydro-electric projects in Twin Falls and Churchill Falls. The expanding wage economy, which attracted single men and families to central Labrador for wage work, brought about the growth of North West River. During the 1950s and 1960s the Grenfell Mission hired more staff, attracting Labradorians, Newfoundlanders and foreigners to North West River. The community grew. Women's volunteer work provided the community with much needed services and pleasurable social events.

Clare's status as a professional outsider affected her volunteer experiences. As a teacher and an outsider, she would have been expected to take on positions of leadership. Being extroverted and energetic, Clare claimed these positions easily. Her commitment as a volunteer grew from her status as a teacher, her responsibilities as a mother, and her affection towards North West River.

6.3 Women's volunteer associations in North West River

This section will examine the types of volunteer associations and volunteer activities that women have undertaken in North West River. This discussion will concentrate on three associations in particular: the Women's

Community Club, Women of the Land and Helping Hands. There are other groups that have existed in North West River. Few have been as broad in their community efforts as these three. There exist the groups found in most communities: town council, church boards (both for the United Church and the Pentecostal Church), Parent-Teacher's Association, and recreation programmes for children and teenagers. A small public library is run by a volunteer group of women. What was once the Grenfell Mission craft shop is now run by local women and a few men. There are men and women who take part in the Mokami Development Association. Associations formed to promote and celebrate local history include the Centennial Grenfell Committee, the Beach Festival Committee, the Labrador Heritage Society, and the 250th Anniversary Celebrations Committee. Unlike the Community Club, these groups are specific in their function. Thus we can see a change in the types of volunteer groups in existence in North West River throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

In discussing these three women's associations, the following characteristics of volunteer work will be discussed: the influence of the Grenfell Mission and professionals in creating volunteer activities; volunteer work as the provision of women's domestic skills to the whole

community; and the dedication of many first and some second generation women to their community.

6.3.1 The Women's Community Club of North West River

Women's volunteer work in North West River was heavily influenced by the Grenfell Mission. Initial women's groups were organized around the needs of the Grenfell Mission. By formally organizing women's volunteer groups, the staff of the International Grenfell Association introduced to North West River a new category of 'work': volunteer work.⁵ The doctor's wife, Jean Timmins formally organized a woman's volunteer club that would look after the maintenance of the Grenfell hospital.

With the construction of a newly built Grenfell Mission Hospital in 1955, a Community Women's Club was established. Jean initiated the Community Club at a time when she was assisting in the management of the Mission Station. Jean acted as president of the Club for a number of years. Most married women in town participated, the majority of whom were the wives of Grenfell Mission employees.

Jean provided the most detailed description of the

⁵ By volunteer 'work' I mean a formally organized and often hierarchical group of women, who will meet regularly and take on projects that will better town life. I am excluding informal help which Settlers often offered their neighbours when in need.

activities of the Club. The Community Club kept the town clean. At the time there was no town council to organize garbage removal so the Club provided the town with empty oil drums painted green. The lettering painted on the side of each oil drum politely asked to "Please Keep North West River Clean!" Jean also supervised garbage collection. The Club functioned as a charitable organization. The Club prepared meals at Christmas to offer needy families in the area. They raised money and held bake sales. They also sponsored a foster child from a developing country.

Servicing the needs of the Grenfell Mission Hospital was the primary purpose of this community group. The Club raised funds to purchase an incubator and provide one cot in the hospital for a child. Once a year the members of the Club cleaned the hospital. They rotated on shifts, four women working for a day. They scrubbed the floors and ceilings. They mended sheets and gave the cook a few days holiday. When the hospital was able to hire an assistant cook and to hire more people as their cleaning and laundry staff, the Community Club's services were no longer necessary. Jean disbanded the Club in the mid-1960s. She explained that there was no need to continue anything that had run its course.

The Women's Community Club was the first formally organized women's group in North West River. It's existence

is proof of the influence of the International Grenfell Association over town life. Jean organized the women to provide together essential domestic services for the hospital and the community. It was women who cared for the maintenance and cleaning of the hospital and of the town. Acts of charity were the work of women.

When Jean Timmins disbanded the Community Club, the United Church Women took over its community work. Affiliated with the church, this group of local women provided many of the same services: spring cleaning at the hospital and at the church, Christmas parties, Christmas hampers for families in need, bake sales, clothing sales and the church fair. The U.C.W. dissolved about ten years ago in the early 1980s (another informant dated it as of 1990). They had trouble finding presidents after many of the older ones had had their turn. The association dismantled because in later years there was little energy left in the group. Older women complain that they are not being replaced by the younger women. In the 1970s government funding was available to form a native women's association in North West River. This group, Women of the Land, was given funding to look after the concerns of local women. Its membership consisted of younger second and third generation women.

6.3.2 Women of the Land

Women of the Land is an example of another community group that provided some of the same services as the Women's Community Club. Women of the Land existed from the 1970s until the late 1980s as a local chapter of the Labrador Native Women's Association. The umbrella organization received funding from the federal government. There were local chapters of the umbrella organization in most coastal Inuit and Innu communities in Labrador. Being a native association in North West River, the members were solely Settler women.⁶ During the 1980s Linda (generation II, from Nain), was the president of the Labrador Native Women's Association. According to Linda, Women of the Land was involved in community-wide volunteer work with children and seniors. For two years in the 1980s, Annie worked as book-keeper for the umbrella organization. According to Annie, the local chapter catered dinners for tourists, elderhostel tours and work groups. Women of the Land also organized events for children, participated in a high school level "Life Styles" course. They prepared meals for seniors. They also held a variety of fund raising activities, including bingo nights and cookbook sales. These are activities similar in function

⁶ The women of Sheshatshit had their own chapter of the Native Women's Association.

to the Community Club and U.C.W.

Women of the Land is remembered in town for the travel opportunities offered to those involved. "Mostly you would hear about them when they were getting ready to go to a conference," said Nancy. As co-ordinator of the group, she attended a conference on the status of Native women in Yellowknife, NWT. She told me that the conference "was a women's lib thing." Women's issues, how women are treated in their communities and family violence were topics discussed at the conference. After attending the conference, she presented a verbal report to the other members of the group. Other members, like Annie, said they enjoyed the travel opportunities. Annie also went to Yellowknife. Annie cheerfully remembered stopping on the way in Vancouver and visiting Expo '86. Members also travelled to Montreal, New Brunswick and Winnipeg.

The volunteer activities in town, the movie nights for kids, the meals for seniors, the catered suppers for Elderhostel tourists all resemble the work of the Community Club and the United Church Women. However, funding from the federal government allowed members to travel as other women have not been able to. Women in town who were unable to take part certainly expressed envy, and from their perspective, the travel profited individual members. Unlike past groups,

for which self-sacrifice is a main element in how women's groups are remembered, personal gratification for the members characterizes recollections of Women of the Land. The Community Club and the U.C.W. are described as groups in which everyone took part. They did so because the hospital and the town were important to them and they felt the need and responsibility to care for them. Self-gratification characterizes Women of the Land; these women were able to travel for their own enjoyment and the community did not benefit from their travels.

Two researchers of Newfoundland society, Southard (1982) and Davis (1979), note the expression of envy towards members of community organizations. From field work in Grey Rock Harbour, Davis (1979) cites the example of "one woman who formed an exercise group and took in dues to pay rental on the hall" (ibid: 18). According to local gossip, "she was making a bundle", implying that she requested dues for her own profit (ibid). Davis concludes that envy "negatively sanctions displays of leadership initiative or individualism" (ibid:17). Davis affirms that the sanctions act to prevent some from profiting above others, but also prevents the "formation of interest groups of any sort other than recreational" (1979: 20).

Based on research conducted in a southern Labrador

community, Southard notes that some sanctions act as a levelling mechanism. The highest are brought down to the level of the lowest: "Should a fisherman, for example, hold a public meeting on his own initiative in an attempt to drum up support for the Fisheries Union, he would be the subject of various levelling mechanisms, such as gossip, ridicule, and possible ostracism" (Southard 1982: 177). Southard ties this "levelling mechanism" to an ideal of equality that in effect inhibits people from moving ahead (ibid). The studies of Southard and Davis raise questions about how leadership is accepted and expressed in Newfoundland and Labrador communities. This is a complex question in North West River, which involves the relationship between the community and the International Grenfell Association, as well as local people's acceptance of the authority of professionals versus the local belief in independence and egalitarianism.⁷

The expression of envy directed towards members of Women of the Land perhaps also indicates what people saw as the main purpose of all volunteer work. In North West River, volunteer work is to provide social events and services to

⁷ Porter's description of the Annual South Avalon District Meeting of the Women's Institute offers an example of how an hierarchical organization such as the Women's Institute incorporates members' egalitarian ethic (1993: 108).

the community.⁸ Travel to cities across Canada provided enjoyment to the members. However, there was an expectation that members initiate new forms of services to local women (i.e., a women's shelter), which local members were apparently not willing to do. Thus providing fuel to the argument that the community did not benefit from these conferences and travel opportunities.

6.3.3 Helping Hands: the senior's association

The group of active women who volunteered in the Community Club and the United Church Women are now between fifty and eighty years old and are actively participating in Helping Hands. Helping Hands is not an exclusively female endeavour, although the two past-presidents have been women. The president for the past four years has been an elder respected male in town. The group's activities are centred on servicing the needs of seniors. A meeting and supper is organized monthly. The women organize, prepare, serve and tidy up the meal. In the early 1980s, Regina was acting president of the senior's group, she was also a councillor and deputy mayor on town council. Regina is now reaching her

⁸ This finding corroborates with Davis' (1979) thesis that the function of volunteer groups in Grey Rock Harbour are primarily "recreational"; providing a space for women in which to socialize and offering social events for the community.

80s. In 1983 when the Grenfell Hospital was closing down, Regina managed to secure a heritage Grenfell building for the use of the seniors. This building, Woods Cottage⁹ is now owned and maintained by the senior's group and kept as a meeting place and as a lodging to accommodate seniors travelling through the area. Regina was also able to secure a van through a government subsidy. For six dollars per person, the senior's van transports senior passengers to and from Happy Valley/Goose Bay twice a week. The van is driven by three or four senior male volunteers. There are other services provided by Helping Hands which include visiting invalids. In addition, funds are raised through bake sales and this money is used to maintain Woods Cottage, to make donations to the Paddon Home for Seniors, and to help support the Federation for Seniors and Pensioners.

The focus of the community work for these seniors has changed from the days of the Community Club and the United Church Women; nonetheless, community-oriented volunteer work remains highly valued by the members. Many of the activities in which this group is involved is defined in North West River as "women's work": cleaning Woods Cottage, preparing suppers and baked goods for sale, managing the group's funds

⁹ Woods Cottage was built in 1926 as the first dormitory for children from coastal Labrador attending school in North West River. It has been used in several capacities since then.

and paying bills for Woods Cottage, phoning people to announce events. What I found most interesting was the persistence of this core group of women who have been involved in community activities since the 1950s and continue to do so as long as they are able. They participate in various groups dedicated to helping community members as well as to preserving and celebrating local heritage. These women expressed a strong commitment to the community.

6.4 The commitment of first and second generation women to volunteer work

In Luxton's study of three generations of women in Flin Flon, Manitoba, it is the first generation that is noted for their community volunteer work (1980: 29-31). The volunteer work of later generations of women dealt more with organizing themselves around the strike efforts of their husbands. But in 1929, Flin Flon women actively engaged in improving the living conditions of community life at a time when the community was just being settled. Luxton writes:

Women extended their domestic labour into the community. They acted collectively and politically to weave the fabric of social life in the town, lobbying for schools, sidewalks, more stores, community centres and recreational facilities (1980: 31).

In this company town, money was available for services from the mining company; however, townspeople needed to enact the

changes. Women fought for particular services that were necessary for their own and their families' well-being. In North West River, the International Grenfell Association offered many of the necessary services (hospitals and schools); however, they required the assistance of volunteers to maintain them. In both of these cases, first generation women readily extended their domestic duties to the community at large.

The following is Regina Lloyd's description of the volunteer work performed by women for the Grenfell Mission in St. Anthony, Newfoundland.¹⁰ Regina's description implies that while the women of St. Anthony were asked to help by Grenfell staff, these women wanted to take care of the community hospital:

Grenfell ran his Mission just by monies he made in the winter by going around making speeches to different countries and all that... so there was never enough money for anything. And the women would come, say for instance, in the spring and clean the hospital from top to bottom. And they would do the mending. And this was all volunteer work. I remember being in St. Anthony years ago. A bunch of women, volunteer women, would come in do all the mending of the hospital sheets and clothing and all that. And they'd do all the house cleaning. And they wouldn't want any pay for it. What they would get is a good cup of tea and a meal. And they would do it because they wanted to do it, and, it became their hospital. They always felt very strongly

¹⁰ St. Anthony became the Grenfell Mission's headquarters (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 159).

about their church and their hospital and their schools.

Regina Lloyd points out that the Mission was funded solely from donations, and thus had to depend on the efforts of both their poorly paid staff and many local people who volunteered their labour. According to Regina, local people felt loyal to the Grenfell Mission. In fact they were indebted to the Mission and thus were willing to sacrifice a day's labour for the hospital in exchange for nothing more than "a good cup of tea and a meal." When Regina talks about "their hospital... their church and their schools" she is implying that loyalty became a feeling of appropriation. Townspeople in St. Anthony and North West River were appropriating the Mission as their own. These older women have contributed to the growth of North West River as a town, thus, they remain committed to the town they have helped to make.

I asked a few first and second generation women why they volunteered. According to Regina, townspeople valued the community and applied their energy to maintaining the town and its services. She depicted volunteer work as a community-wide effort. Julia, a woman in her sixties born in the North West River area, explained that the community work was something she did to help to see that things were done. Even in 1993 she was an active volunteer with Helping Hands and at the craft shop. As an adult, volunteer work had always been a

part of Julia's daily life. Both Regina and Julia described volunteer work as a duty.¹¹

I asked a second generation woman, named Marilyn, why she participated in United Church Women. Surely, she had enough work to do with a house to manage and children to care for?

I guess it gave you a chance to get out, you know, get a break from home, yuh. Barred in with the children all day long, I suppose, and glad to get out for an evening hour or so.

For Marilyn, meetings of the United Church Women offered her a chance to be in the company of adult women outside of the house and away from children.¹²

For Clare and other women of her generation, volunteer work was considered part of a mother's responsibility to her children:

when I had young children,... I got them into Sunday school and Girl Guides whatever, and Cubs, little girls in cubs and that... I went to all these meetings, did my fundraising, took them all figure skating, whatever I could, you know..

By organizing various children's events and activities, a mother ensured that her children remained physically and

¹¹ According to Porter (1993), a sense of duty toward community was one reason given for participating in volunteer groups by women of the Avalon Peninsula.

¹² Both Porter (1993) and Davis (1979) discuss the importance for women of having an opportunity to meet other women socially through their volunteer groups.

socially active in a supervised and constructive manner.

Why did women, of the first and second generation, take part in volunteer activities? Compared to their mothers, women of this generation found themselves with time to volunteer. The gradual arrival of household appliances decreased the physical demands and time requirements of domestic labour. For example, with a wringer washer a second generation woman would have found washing clothes less physically tiring than her mother who had to wash clothes by hand. While her mother would have spent a whole day from morning until evening washing clothes, her second generation daughter would typically work from nine o'clock in the morning until three o'clock in the afternoon washing clothes. Some women certainly looked forward to the meetings and activities as a social time. The community groups offered women a chance to socialize in the company of other adult women. The organizations offered an outlet for active and energetic women, who could then take on leadership positions in the community.¹³

North West River had also changed. The community's population was increasing. Community life was becoming settled and organized. The International Grenfell Association

¹³ This idea has been inspired by Kessler-Harris (1981) and Hunter (1984).

increased the services in town and required the help of volunteers to maintain them. The I.G.A., whose mandate was to provide services to the local population and to train people in the skills to manage these services for themselves, used volunteerism as a way of reinforcing self-reliance. The emergence of later women's associations that cared for community activities is proof that the I.G.A. succeeded in establishing a commitment to volunteer associations.

Local women inherited a sense of duty toward the community that was expressed by participating in voluntary services. There must have been a certain amount of public pressure from local women themselves to belong; whether anyone ever begrudged volunteer work is hidden by statements that describe volunteer activities as a "community-wide" effort. Ultimately, despite the participation of some men, the nature of the majority of this volunteer work remained domestic and therefore was considered primarily women's work.

6.5 The Influence of the Grenfell Mission

Formal volunteer associations in North West River were introduced by the Grenfell Association because the I.G.A. depended on the help of locals. In public memory, specifically public memory as created by ex-Grenfell staff like Regina, Grenfell Mission facilities are portrayed as

belonging to the local people, thus justifying all the self-sacrifice demanded of locals by the Mission. Regina's portrayal creates a sense of equal participation and commitment throughout the community. This is part of the lore surrounding the Grenfell Mission; the Mission station and the town of North West River belonged to those who lived there and it was up to them to care for it. There is some truth in this romantized recollection. Everyone did take part, simply because the Grenfell Mission was able at some time to hire or request the help of most adults in the community. However, the reality is also that the town was (and is) socially stratified, which influenced who participated and how they did so.

It was Jean Timmins, the doctor's wife, who formally created the first women's volunteer association, and thus introduced the notion of "volunteer work". Jean Timmins was an influential woman in the community. Her English background and her training as a nurse set her apart from other women of her generation in North West River. Her marriage to the doctor gave her a position of status and prestige that came with extensive responsibilities in town. Jean Timmins' participation and initiation of the Community Club provided an example and defined volunteer work as gendered, as the duty of adult married women. Women were to offer time to

volunteer community work. As president of the club, Jean Timmins organized a woman's group according to standards she considered appropriate. The Community Club was organized hierarchically with positions of president, secretary and treasurer. This organizational pattern was eventually used by the local women to set-up later women's groups.

The Grenfell Mission also fostered local leadership. As previously mentioned, the International Grenfell Association offered employment to local women and men. A few of these who showed promise, like Regina Lloyd, were offered funding to study in Canada and the United States and thus pursue professional careers.¹⁴ Thus, a local elite, who could provide leadership for community concerns and organize community social events, emerged. In a study of ethnicity in North West River, Plaice notes the existence of an elite:

At present [1983-4] 'elite' is not a term used by North West River Settlers - there is no such term used in the community - but a group of families is recognized and renowned for their influential position in North West River local affairs. These families are those who were directly related to or helped by the older Hudson's Bay Company and IGA elites. Today, several members of these families fill positions in local level politics such as town councillors and other government workers (1990: 58).

Plaice makes a direct link between a local elite and the

¹⁴ The I.G.A. expected these individuals, like Regina Lloyd, to return to North West River to work as professionals as repayment for their studies.

Grenfell Mission or the Hudson's Bay Company. Although she does not mention the women's volunteer associations, members of the elite families tended to take on prominent positions within these groups.

In North West River, the expression of leadership is not straightforward. Stratification within North West River society existed alongside a local belief in independence and egalitarianism. The local belief meant that no one individual can presume to have authority over someone else's life. Yet, first generation women born in Labrador were raised to respect the authority of foreign professionals. I was told that Dr. Timmins directly influenced locals' lives. From the accounts of Clare and other professional women who married men from the community, locals treated foreign professionals with deference and respect. It is Elizabeth, a second generation woman and a nurse from England, who told me that local people always looked up to outsiders. "They took us for granted," she said, "and expected us to be leaders." ¹⁵

Elizabeth's reproach expresses another element of this situation, that professional women who married into the

¹⁵ Elizabeth's reaction parallels a similar finding from Grey Rock Harbour. According to Davis: "strangers are asked to take leadership positions and withstand the unpopularity that characterizes leadership and decision making roles" (Davis 1979:17).

community did not wish to be treated any differently than local women. Both Clare and Jean Timmins portray themselves as not being any different from other local women. They both wish to be accepted as community members. Yet, first and second generation women "from away" were placed in and accepted leadership positions in town. It is unfair to suggest that only outsiders took on leadership positions, there were some local women and men who accepted such positions. For the most part, however, these individuals also had connections with the International Grenfell Association.

How locals and outsiders interacted with and established authority and respect for each other is the topic of another thesis. While I did attend a few meetings, I did not have the opportunity to study group dynamics within volunteer associations. During these meetings, I found that the most active members were those who held leadership positions (i.e., mayor of the town council, the chair of the 250 Anniversary committee, past-president of Helping Hands); first or second generation women who were experienced volunteers; or, in a few instances third generation women who were interested and assertive members. From attending these few meetings and from various conversations about volunteer association and other groups, I assume that it is accurate to make the following general conclusion: that the same few

people are active throughout the community. This conclusion was reiterated by others in the community.

As time passes, the Grenfell Mission has lost some of its influence. The instantly acquired status of professionals is no longer accepted blankly by the younger generations. In fact, I interviewed third generation women who criticized the paternalism and assumed authority of the Grenfell staff over the lives of locals. The young people, like Meredith and her husband John, who I expect will become the new generation of leaders in the community were not themselves long-time employees of the I.G.A. They are active volunteers, have a wide group of friends and are ready to offer a helping hand to friends and in the community. Their potential as leaders will be based partly on their professional jobs, their commitment to the community, and their amiability.

6.6 Women's volunteer associations in Newfoundland

The following brief description of women's volunteer work in Newfoundland will illustrate the similarities in women's volunteer work between North West River and other communities throughout the province. Historically in Newfoundland and Labrador, every community had at least one church and each congregation had its women's society or association to raise funds for the church, clean the building

and feed and clothe the destitute in the community (Cullum 1992: 54). Murray writes that in Elliston, Trinity Bay, once a year all the women of the congregation thoroughly cleaned their church (Murray 1979: 140). This occurred for both the Anglican and Methodist churches in Elliston. In Elliston, Methodist women were formally organized:

The Methodist (United Church) Ladies Aid, begun in the 1920s, organized events to raise money for the church; looked after the "Parsonage"...; welcomed new ministers and their families to the community; and saw that everything at the parsonage was in readiness for the new occupants (Murray 1979: 140).

The women of each congregation also organized and prepared for the major annual social events organized through their church. Murray explains: "In Elliston, as in most small outports, the church was the centre of community life, and almost all the social events were church or church-school sponsored" (1979: 141). Since the early 1900s, these events were catered by the women of the congregation. Church associations were the most common type of formal women's voluntary groups in pre-Confederation Newfoundland.

On an informal, community-wide basis, women organized major community social events such as weddings and funerals:

A funeral in the community, like a wedding, was an important social occasion involving everyone, and the women's role on this occasion, as in happier circumstances, was an extension of her family tasks of housekeeping and supplying personal care, food and clothing (Murray 1979: 136).

During community wide social events, women have offered their domestic skills to the wider community through their volunteer efforts.

Women's community volunteer work can be characterized as an extension of the informal organization that had always occurred around the necessity of social events and emergency needs. The idea of formally organized volunteer associations appear to have been introduced to outport women through their churches. Otherwise, women's community volunteer work, such as catering weddings, assisting funerals and helping neighbouring families when in need, was an extension of their domestic duties. The very notion of "volunteer work" was probably foreign, until church associations and other formal women's organizations were introduced.

This description of women's community work in Newfoundland prior to Confederation shares similarities with women in North West River. For instance, women volunteered their services to the village church, and in the case of North West River the local hospital. When North West River did grow to be a village large enough to support social events, local women did involve themselves, for example, in the organization and catering of weddings. In North West River, the International Grenfell Association often did offer to help. At weddings for example, staff might offer to

provide the wedding cake, or, the bride might purchase her dress from the resident doctor's wife (Goudie 1983 [1973]: 19-20).

Formally organized women's associations did exist prior to Confederation and included the Jubilee Guilds of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Women's Patriotic Association and the Co-operative Women's Guilds (see Cullum 1992). Perhaps the best example of a woman's association which imposed its own ideology and organization on rural women was the Jubilee Guilds of Newfoundland and Labrador. This was a volunteer organization established by urban middle and upper class women of Newfoundland. During the 1930s and 1940s, they promoted an ethic of self-help and self-reliance in rural Newfoundland (Cullum 1992: 240):

The Jubilee Guilds envisioned rural women as home-centred, nurturing wives and mothers accomplishing an urban, middle-class ideal of domesticity (Cullum 1995: 108).

Outport women were expected to re-learn the skills and knowledge to make them into "better" mothers, able to take "better" care of their families and homes (Cullum 1992: 242). The Guilds were supporting and reinforcing the class structure of the day. According to Cullum, the Jubilee Guilds assisted in the implementation of state policy. There were close ties between the Jubilee Guilds' executive and the Commission Government of Newfoundland (1992: 245). Executives

of both were members of the upper class and the founding member of the Jubilee Guilds, Lady Anderson, was the wife of the Governor of Newfoundland (Cullum 1992: 241).

The Guilds both assisted and frustrated government policies (1992: 246). While the Guilds had direct access to outport women in order to implement state ideology, the Guilds also offered rural women an alternative social space (Cullum 1992: 251). The activities fostered by the Guilds reinforced women's domestic responsibilities. Meanwhile, the meetings took women away from home and offered them a social outlet that local women used to meet their own needs (Cullum 1992: 251-2). Newfoundland outport women used their local Guilds "to their material and economic benefit" (Cullum 1995: 107). For example, outport women at times used Jubilee Guild meetings to produce handicrafts for sale, an activity considered to be part of the mandate of the competing women's organization, the Co-operative Women's Guilds (Cullum 1995: 106-7).

Thus during the first half of the twentieth century, women in Newfoundland and Labrador have organized themselves informally to care for social events, the emergency needs of neighbours and the care of community buildings. Much of women's volunteer work can be characterized as informal and essentially an extension of their domestic responsibilities.

However, they also participated in formally organized women's associations introduced to them by outsiders; for example, the church minister, upper and middle class women from St. John's. These examples also depict the class differences inherent in Newfoundland society. The women on the executive of the Jubilee Guilds saw their involvement in the Guilds as their Christian duty toward those less fortunate than themselves (Cullum 1992: 60-1). And, as Cullum points out, the work of the Jubilee Guilds reinforced "the status quo of merchant control and capitalist enterprise" (1995:108) that has kept the upper classes in their position of privilege. As Cullum points out, rural Newfoundland women used these formally organized women's associations to serve their own local interests (1995: 108).

The Jubilee Guilds of Newfoundland and Labrador share some similarities with the Grenfell Mission. Both organized rural women in formal and hierarchical women's organizations. Both organizations were paternalistic in their approach to rural women. Newfoundland women, like the women of North West River, adopted for their own associations elements of what was useful in these groups and discarded the rest. Thus when the doctor's wife disbanded the Women's Community Club, the members of the United Church Women (many of them had also participated in the Community Club) took on many of the

activities and responsibilities of the Women's Community Club. They also added to their list of activities regular social meetings during which they met, enjoyed tea and knit items for the church fair. They were committing themselves to important community 'work' and assuring themselves a chance to socialize together.

6.7 Conclusion

The Women's Community Club, Women of the Land and Helping Hands, are three examples which support evidence of continuity within women's volunteer groups. These three examples have provided many of the same services to the community. Women members of these groups have catered suppers, looked after community buildings, provided activities for their own membership and other community members, and raised money. The earliest of these groups, the Women's Community Club, defined the types of services that women's groups were to offer to the community. Subsequent groups have not deviated from this example. Continuity exists also in their membership. Women who were members of the Community Club are also the members of Helping Hands which indicates a commitment among the first and second generation women to volunteer work and to their community.

For first and second generation women, volunteer work

is inextricably linked to an image they carry of the community as it was in the past. Regina recalls the sense of community that existed during the height of the influence of the Grenfell Mission over town life:

Those days we had stability here in North West River. We had a minister for many, many, many years. We had a doctor for forty years and the next one for thirty years. So I mean, you know, it was a very stable community and everybody would do things for the church and for the hospital and everybody worked together.

Regina and other women of her generation create an image of the past as a time when townspeople were united by an ethic of commitment to their village. She also ties the community's past to the existence of the International Grenfell Association. The I.G.A. made the town an important service centre providing medical and educational services to Settler, Innu and Inuit people all along the northern coast of Labrador. Through their volunteer work, the women of the first and second generation helped to create and maintain the community and its services.

Yet, the romanticized memory of volunteer work and town life from the past says nothing of the stratification of North West River society as created by the I.G.A. The resident doctor and his wife had enormous influence over town life. Other professionals "from away" also had influence over the town, as Clare experienced. Elitism defined the role of

membership in each association. And perhaps helped to define North West River townspeople as more fortunate than the Inuit and Innu population of Labrador.

According to many older women, there are fewer young women participating today as compared to when the first generation women were young mothers. I had the impression that the older generation of women were more interested in their community. They had brought up their families in a town that was an important and busy service centre. They were proud of its history. The youngest generation also expressed pride in the town, but they did so with a sense of futility because today little remains of what was. As Clare suggests, "we've done it to ourselves". The older generation of women have not passed on the commitment they have felt to their community to the younger generation. In addition, the older women are still actively involved in community work, so why would the younger generation need to take part? What is celebrated in town is the trapping history and its heyday as a service station of the Grenfell Mission providing services to northern coastal Labrador.¹⁶ Older women had been children during the trapping era and had raised their families in town

¹⁶ These activities are evidence of how women volunteers are actively engaged in creating or re-creating a symbolic representation of the community, its history, and its work ethic (see Davis 1985: 9).

when North West River was a bustling service centre. The past that they are celebrating was a part of their lives. As young married women, they had had an effect on town life. Younger women perhaps do not feel as connected to local history. They may feel that they are celebrating a past now gone.

Clare compared the volunteer work that she did as a young mother to that done by her daughter, who is twenty-eight years old, employed full-time outside of the home, and has two young boys:

well, the daughter that has children, she's... she made an attempt to get involved in the school and she found it took too much time from her work. Her attitude is that she's working all day and she wants a bit of quality time at home in the evening with the children.... that wasn't the way I did it when I had young children,... But ah... I don't know... it just doesn't seem as though... she doesn't have the same zip for that kind of thing like I did at all. She's got the attitude the same as the others I guess, kids can go out and play and there's lots of things they can do outdoors.

The availability of salaried paid positions, the fact that more married women are employed now than they have been in the past has meant a decline in the time spent volunteering in the community. Since the hospital closed in 1983, townspeople complain that the community has lost its sense of unity. There are young women who corroborate with this view, who say that they do not have time to volunteer, between their own lives and working full-time.

Time spent on volunteer activities has to compete with

wage work, house care, child care and leisure activities. Many women of the younger generation said that they did not have time to participate in volunteer organizations. The statements varied somewhat, however. Nina said she did not have any time. In contrast, Cindy chooses one organization a year to belong to. Meredith was involved in the Teen Summer Recreation program, but found that she was doing much of the work herself. Without the support of others in the community, she is not willing to take it on again. Members of this generation of women complain of having less time and energy for community groups. The demands of wage work and family take priority over concern for community welfare.

For those who are active volunteers, changes in volunteer work include the creation of special interest groups or groups with very specific agendas. Another related change has been the gradual involvement of women in formal "politics", i.e., the town council. However, as the three examples of community work have shown, women's volunteer work has also continued to provide domestic services to the community.

The women volunteers of North West River have taken on manageable community concerns.¹⁷ Older women have cleaned the

¹⁷ Manageable community concerns is a phrase inspired by Porter's (1993) description of women's "political culture" on the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland. By taking on such

hospital and schools. They have organized community social events and special activities for their children. Older women have also offered charity to families in need from communities along Labrador's north coast. As volunteers, women of North West River have had and continue to have a significant impact on community life.

concerns in North West River, women volunteers have affected town life.

7.0 Chapter Seven:
"My Place In the World":
Women and Domestic Labour

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores both continuity and change in domestic labour in the twentieth century in North West River. While domestic labour is still considered to be 'women's work', technology has altered the way in which domestic chores are accomplished. Technological changes and the growing number of "necessities" has increased the importance of women's income to their household. Domestic labour in North West River will be explored through the life of Nancy, who was forty-one years old in 1993. She will be compared to Doreen, whose life story appeared in chapter four: "Self-provisioning as an expression of self-reliance". The care of elderly relatives will also be discussed below, if only briefly. Finally, the following points will be examined: the defining of domestic labour as women's responsibility; the allocation of household chores between husbands and wives in four households in North West River; and changes in women's attitudes towards housekeeping.

Literature on the topic of North American women and domestic labour offers one major conclusion: the technological advancements made toward making household chores easier has not decreased women's work (Cowan 1983;

Kessler-Harris 1981). While technology and mass marketing have made labour-saving appliances available, these consumer items demanded larger cash incomes of household members, forcing women into the labour force. The result for women is to have to work at their paid job outside the home, to return to their homes to complete the endless tasks of caring for a family and a house, and to be unable to enjoy the leisure and luxury promised them by mass-marketing advertisements and consumer culture.¹ These conclusions are true for many women in North America and they are also true for women of North West River.

7.2 The life of Nancy (in her forties)

In 1993 Nancy was married and a mother of three young adults. She was working full-time at the Labrador Inuit Health Commission's rehabilitation centre, taking correspondence courses and was a volunteer for the North West River United Church. Nancy and I met three times. I interviewed her twice in her home taking notes without the use of a tape recorder. The third time she invited me to join

¹ Three ethnographic and sociological books in particular raise this point effectively: Cole's (1991: 138 & 147-8) study of two generations of women from northeastern Portugal; Hochschild's (1989) study of working parents in California; Lamphere et al (1993) who examine Anglo and Hispanic women factory workers in New Mexico.

herself and two friends for a craft night. Betty, Nancy and Mary get together once a week to work on their quilts, knitting or sewing projects. I joined them with my newly begun quilting squares.

Nancy's house is large and modern. The lay-out is irregular. Its interior is defined by large rooms, wide open spaces, small corridors and stairs. The house has a middle-class appearance. It is comfortable and warm, furnished with thick carpeting, plush sofas and armchairs, two television sets, a compact disk player, records, books, photo albums, a clock, and macrame plant holders hanging from the ceiling. The walls are decorated by graduation photographs of her children and paintings by local artists. Whenever I was at the house, Nancy offered me tea and cookies or muffins; once she apologized for not having any freshly baked goods to offer me.

Nancy was born in the early 1950s. Like many women interviewed of this generation she moved to North West River as a young adult. She spent her childhood in St. John's and Gander and her adolescence in Eastport, Newfoundland. When asked how much schooling she had completed, she pointedly answered, "Oh I finished!" meaning that she had completed high school. She also has a year of trade school, as a clerk typist. She and her parents moved to Happy Valley/Goose Bay

in 1971. In the early 1970s she met and married her future husband, Michael.

Michael was born in North West River circa 1945. His father was a trapper, who also was employed seasonally at the American Air Base in Goose Bay. His mother raised ten children. His father was not often home. When he was trapping he was gone for months at a time. When he was working on base, he was away during the week and returned home on weekends. As a young man, Michael went to trade school to train as a machinist. When Nancy and Michael were first married he was employed at Linerboard, a lumber mill in North West River.

For the first nine years of their marriage, they lived in North West River. During the 1970s, Nancy bore three children. Since marriage, Nancy has accepted jobs when she could. When she was four months pregnant with her first child, she quit one of her jobs. Between her second and third child, Nancy ran a day care centre. The year was 1975. She was a member of a board that applied for a Canada Works Grant to open and manage a day care for children aged one to twelve years. They hired one staff member and three assistants. The day care closed after a year. Their grant had expired and parents could not afford to pay for the maintenance of the building and the staff's salaries.

In the late 1970s, Michael was laid off and Nancy sought employment. In 1979, she was hired as a Grenfell housemother during the last six months that the Grenfell junior dormitory was open. While Nancy was employed full-time, Michael stayed home to care for the kids. The children were then aged three, five and seven. She explained that this was before it was the "in thing to do". None of her friends were working with their husbands at home. She said that she had felt uncomfortable. "It didn't feel right" she said, "and then he treated me so good!" She described how she would come home and the kids were bathed, supper was ready. He would tell her not to lift a finger, that she had worked all day and needed to rest. When she spent her days at home, she always expected him to help. But then, she told me, she used to turn every room upside down and inside out to clean it and this was done every day. Nancy explains that she no longer bothers cleaning to that extent. When her position as housemother with the International Grenfell Association expired, she returned home to the domestic chores and the children.

Nancy told me that she has never served Michael "hand and foot". She explained that if he wants a cup of tea, he will make it himself. He will also offer to make a cup for her. He has prepared cups of tea for his mother-in-law and

father-in-law. When he does, Nancy's mother "has a fit". She will tell Nancy: "How can you sit while he gets up and serves you? He's worked all day, you should get tea for him!" Nancy's mother has forced Michael to sit down, taken Nancy into the kitchen and reprimanded her for not serving him. Nancy remembers being told by her mother when she married Michael to worship the ground that he walked on. Nancy's response was, "What about me Mom?"

When the children were small, Nancy made and sold crafts: boots, moccasins and mitts. It began by word of mouth. She made a pair for a friend, another friend saw them and asked her to make a pair. It started out as a hobby, then she kept getting more and more orders. She did not like running a business, nor did she like dealing with customers. They demanded that their slippers be made sooner than she could manage, or, they wanted bead work and embroidery that she had not learned to do. There were times when she was not paid. For example, she was never paid for one pair of \$80 boots and an expensive pair of slippers she had sewn using mink fur and expensive hide. Nancy continues to produce crafts, but she does not take orders any longer. She has since decided that she could not enjoy her hobby if she had to earn money from it.

Nancy learned to make slippers, boots and mitts from

her mother-in-law. When Nancy asked her mother-in-law to make a pair of slippers for Nancy's daughter, her mother-in-law refused but offered to teach Nancy. After a lesson, Nancy took the material home to work on it. When Nancy presented her mother-in-law with her newly made slippers, she was told that it was not done properly. Her mother-in-law undid the stitches and Nancy went home to sew once again. Nancy succeeded the second time and continued to produce crafts. She macrames, quilts, knits. She has produced parkas for her family. She makes photo albums from binders, cloth and lace. She enjoys the handiwork. Much of what she produces is used by her family. She knits sweaters because her daughters like to wear them. In November of 1993, she had many of her extended family's Christmas presents made and ready for shipping. She said that they save money by not having to purchase store-bought Christmas and birthday gifts. She cannot imagine what women who do not make crafts do with their spare time.

In the early 1980s Nancy, Michael and their three children moved to Churchill Falls, where Michael found employment. In Churchill Falls, Nancy worked as a part-time librarian. At first the position was voluntary, she worked for a few afternoons a week. Then she was paid for working two nights a week. With cut-backs, she lost her job, but she

stayed on as a member of their support staff. Once again funding was cut and she lost her position. She took a paid position at the hospital office, where she worked as a secretary/book keeper. Soon after beginning this position she had to quit, Michael found employment in North West River and they returned.

Even when they lived in Churchill Falls they maintained close contact with North West River. In the summer, Nancy and the children lived in North West River. Michael spent the week working in Churchill Falls and weekends in North West River. In September they all moved back to Churchill Falls, but they returned to North West River on weekends until Thanksgiving Day. When they moved back to North West River, Michael and his brother built their house. Nancy and Michael took out a mortgage to pay for its construction.

As stated previously, in 1993 Nancy was a full-time permanent employee at the Labrador Inuit Health Commission. When asked whether she was employed out of necessity, Nancy answered that this is partly true. They do need a second income to pay off the mortgage. "But" she said, "what would I do at home?" She responded that the house would be cleaner. "I can't do crafts seven days a week and all my friends work so I can't go visiting during the day." She added that she enjoys her job. It is the first permanent job she has had.

She was enjoying its advantages: paid vacation, benefits and job security. Aside from full-time employment and producing crafts, Nancy was also taking a two year correspondence course in journalism and creative writing. Nancy has also taken a course in basic accounting. This enables her to do her family's taxes. In 1993, she used some of these skills as volunteer for the North West River United Church. As a mother of adult children (only one of her children was living permanently at home), household chores take up less of her time. While she is still responsible for preparing meals and washing laundry, cleaning up after meal time is shared between Nancy, her husband and their youngest daughter. In addition, Nancy has paid her youngest daughter to vacuum and clean the house when her daughter could not find a summer job.

Nancy explained how her views on house work have changed over the years. As a child she remembers that her mother had a routine. Her mother always baked on Thursdays and did washing on Saturdays and Mondays.² She remembers that every Saturday her mother emptied the kitchen cupboards,

² Luxton (1980) notes that such schedules were common at the turn of the century. The list of domestic schedules practised by housewives in Flin Flon, Manitoba resembles almost to the day the same rigorous schedule practised by Nancy's mother (1980:120). Luxton notes that these rigid schedules were promoted by domestic scientists and home economists (ibid: 118).

scrubbed them and put everything back. It was her job to help every other week. When she was first married, Nancy thought that she needed a routine too. She remembers being young and working to have the house "spit-polished clean and sparkling". Nancy will not clean to that extent any more.

When asked what she was thinking of as a twenty-five year old woman, she responded that when she was twenty-five years old, she was pregnant with her third child. She remembers taking pride in the house and in baking bread, pies, muffins and cookies. In 1993 while she was proud of the house, it was not all consuming, she received pleasure and satisfaction from her job and her family. She remembers that when she was first married she thought that it was "her place in the world" to keep a good house and be a good wife and mother. She exclaimed, "It was so narrow! It's better today." She has realized that she can keep house, be a wife and mother, be employed and take correspondence courses.

7.3 The increasing dependence on cash income

Nancy's life story provides an example of the increasing dependence of households on cash income from waged employment and social welfare benefits. The increased dependence on wages has taken women from home production to waged labour. Women's paid employment has become more

important to the household than their self-provisioning activities. This change has occurred over three generations of women's lives in North West River.

A comparison of the lives of Doreen and Nancy provides an example (see Appendix A). The significant difference between Nancy's and Doreen's lives has to do with the increased need for wages. In 1950 when Doreen married Richard, she quit her paid job. Nancy did not quit her wage employment until she became pregnant with her first child. Following the birth of her children, Nancy sought employment opportunities. At one point she was the sole wage earner of her household. Doreen earned extra cash from the sale of crafts that she produced, but her main contribution to the household was home production.

Some expectations and attitudes expressed by Nancy would be inconceivable to Doreen. Nancy talks of taking less time for household cleaning chores. She mentions how she has shared these chores with her husband and children. She relates her need for employment to financial need in the household and for her own need to keep busy and have an occupation when most women she knows work for pay. Nancy enthusiastically relates how in 1993 in her early forties, she takes pride in her family, her job and her house. This she presents in contrast to when she was twenty-five and took

pride in her children, her house, and her baking. In comparing these two different attitudes, Nancy affirms that the stance she takes in 1993 is better than her previous youthful one. She seems to be implying that she is 'a modern woman'.

In contrast, Doreen describes the extensive chores involving cleaning, cooking and sewing that she had to do as a young mother. These were chores that she did for her own household and for the community as a volunteer. She insists with pride that she never depended on a babysitter to care for her children and that she and her family required fewer material goods than people do at present. Doreen's comments portray a clearly defined sexual division of labour. Her life story also speaks of stoicism, self-reliance and hard work.

Despite these differences both women assumed responsibility for the care of their children and the domestic chores inside the house. They both expected that their husbands would provide the main income. In fact, Nancy admits to feeling uncomfortable when Michael took over her household responsibilities and she was employed full-time outside the home. She knew of no other husband and wife who were switching domestic roles. She presents her husband as the perfect housewife, as having been better than she had been. Although Nancy expected to find paid employment outside

the home to provide an income to the household, she also maintained responsibility for domestic chores normally attributed to women in North West River. While Doreen also earned extra income for the household, her main contribution was home produced goods. This activity combined more easily with her responsibilities as mother and housewife than paid work outside the home.¹

Economic changes, the increasing need for two sets of wages to support a household and the availability of paid employment for women have affected women's attitudes towards domestic labour in North West River. It must be made clear, however, that both women and men expect women to take responsibility for the domestic chores. For Doreen and other women of her generation, keeping a clean house was a way of maintaining dignity in the face of poverty. First generation women had been raised in homes that by today's standards were materially poor. From the accounts of first generation women, their mothers maintained rigorous cleaning standards, perhaps

¹ In her study of women from northeastern Portugal, Cole points out that when capitalism separates women's productive work from their reproductive work women are faced with a double workday. When women can combine these two types of work in their homes and in their neighbourhoods, as did the older generation of women, women are "better able to combine their domestic labor, their reproductive work, with their productive work" (1991: 139).

as a point of pride, to prove that poverty did not take from their dignity. Second and third generation women, like Nancy, work hard at their paid jobs and at home, their houses are clean and tidy. But they do not spend the time and effort that their mothers and grandmothers spent in house cleaning. Younger women do not need to labour as hard (thanks to technological advances in household appliances), and they want to enjoy the benefits of their time, work and money. Third generation women, especially, spoke of wanting to enjoy their leisure time.

7.4 Women's domestic responsibilities remain the same

To compare two lists of women's domestic responsibilities, Doreen's versus Nancy's, we find virtually no change in the actual kinds of tasks that they are responsible for inside the home. What has changed is how these tasks are accomplished. The amount of physical labour required of Doreen as a young housewife was not required of Nancy. The appliances available to Nancy when she married circa 1970 were not available to Doreen in the early 1950s when she was married. However, they are both responsible for cooking and serving meals, cleaning, mopping, sweeping, dusting rooms. They both produce hand-made clothing for the family. The daily care of their children remained largely the

responsibility of these women. While Doreen hunted and trapped small game, Nancy earns an income to pay for household expenses. Both of these women have assumed responsibility for the daily nutritive, cleaning and caring needs of their families.

The work of women between 1900 and 1950 in Trinity Bay compared to that of women in the late twentieth century on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland demonstrates that the number of tasks women are responsible for and how they are accomplished has changed. Yet, women's general household responsibilities remain the same.

Murray (1979) describes women's work between 1900 and 1950 in Elliston, Trinity Bay, Newfoundland. Like work for Doreen and other women of the first generation in North West River, the women of Elliston were responsible for producing the food, clothes and other products that their family required on a daily basis. Women of Elliston cooked meals; tended their vegetable gardens; cured fish; sheared sheep; carded and spun wool; knitted clothes; collected firewood or boughs; grew hay to feed the horses, cows or goats; milked the family's goat or cow; strained and boiled the milk and made butter (1979: 12-32). Compared to what is required of outport women in the late twentieth century, women's domestic work during the first half of the twentieth century was time-

consuming, demanded hard physical labour and consisted of tasks no longer required of individual households because most household products can now be bought.

Research on the work of women in the late twentieth century in Newfoundland and Labrador confirms that, essentially, women's domestic responsibilities have not changed. Women no longer have to milk cows, cure fish, shear sheep, or card and spin wool. However, as Sinclair and Felt (1992) and Porter (1993) confirm they do clean their houses; prepare and serve meals; mend and make clothes; as well as care for children and elderly relatives (Sinclair and Felt 1992: 62-68).

The literature on women and domestic labour delivers the same message: young women in late twentieth century North America are responsible for the same domestic tasks that their grandmothers took care of early in this century, although the manner in which these tasks are accomplished has changed (see Cowan 1984; Kessler-Harris 1981; Margolis 1984; McGuire and Woodsong 1990). In 1985 in Grand Bank, Newfoundland, Porter found that "women felt they did the *same* work as their mothers, but under easier circumstances" (1988: 554).

7.4.1 The care of the elderly:

Care of the elderly has been assumed by women in North West River, throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada (see Porter 1993; Strong-Boag 1985). For instance, a study of women's economic lives in Newfoundland carried out between 1988 and 1990 (Porter et al., 1990), researched the lives of women in Grand Falls and found that women were responsible for the care of aging parents. The work history of a nurse in Grand Falls demonstrates this:

For more than twenty years, Bernadette's life was dominated by the needs of her sick and aging parents... The fact that Bernadette was a nurse simply made it more obvious that she should take care of her father... When her father suffered a second heart attack, her parents had no health or drug plan, no sick leave and her father's pension was not enough to live on. By paying board in her parents' home, Bernadette could take care of them and contribute financially.... Because she was a nurse, Bernadette got even less help from the hospital and home care services than other people did... Her brother, who lives nearby with his family, took no part in the care of his parents (Dettmer 1995: 274).

According to Dettmer, Bernadette was doubly burdened by having to nurse patients in the hospital and her parents at home.

Women in North West River of all three generations have cared for their ailing parents and parents-in-law. For instance, Anna (of the first generation) cared for her sick mother until she died. Cindy, a third generation woman, who

was raised by her grandmother, cared for her grandmother when she was ill and dying. Meredith, in her late twenties and employed mother of two sons, has to care for her father-in-law and her mother. She helps her mother financially and her mother helps her with child care. Meredith visits her widowed father-in-law on a daily basis, bringing him his mail and chatting. She occasionally brings him meals. She will clean his home and has decorated it, putting up wood panelling and fresh wallpaper.

There are many more examples of the care that women have given to their elderly parents. The existence of a nursing home in Happy Valley since 1978, the Paddon Home for Seniors, has diminished the unpaid care work that women have had to expend in taking care of their elderly relations. For instance, I used to visit Grace, who was in her eighties in 1993. When I first met her, she was living in the log house that her deceased husband had built when they were first married. Neighbouring her house were the houses of some of her offspring. Two of her grandchildren would visit her after school and bring her groceries. They kept her company, finishing their homework during their afternoon visits. At night, the same two grandchildren slept in her house, so that she would not feel alone. Her daughter-in-law, who was a neighbour, cleaned her house from time to time. The care of

this elderly woman seemed to be divided between children, daughters-in-law and grandchildren. Nonetheless, her children and in-laws were concerned for her safety. I was told they were worried that she might fall on the wood stove in her house. When an opening came available in the nursing home in Happy Valley, Grace moved in.

Finally, Porter makes an important point about the care work of women in general. She describes how "invisible" this work is:

Early in the project we were testing an interview schedule with a woman in her kitchen. She had already told us that she did no unpaid caring work apart from her own daughter. At this point the door opened and a young lad, came in, went to the oven, took out a dish, covered it, and left. When we asked about it, it turned out that every day this woman cooked dinner for an old man who lived close by, and his nephew collected it for him on his way home from school, 'caring work' that was as invisible to her as it was to the outside world (1993: 130).

When Meredith delivers mail to her father-in-law; when Grace's house was cleaned by her daughter-in-law; when Cindy cared for her ailing grandmother, this was all care work for which these women assumed responsibility. The tasks may be small and may take only a few minutes from the day to an afternoon or, as in the case of Cindy and her grandmother, involve ten years of caring and attending. This is all part of the work of women.

7.4.2 Four North West River households

The following discussion of domestic chores explores the extent to which husbands and wives share chores in North West River. The sharing of household tasks in North West River involved some degree of flexibility within a well established gendered division of labour. Life histories from first generation women, like Doreen, demonstrate how household responsibilities were clearly divided along gender lines. Yet, remarks from first and second generation adults indicate that the harsh conditions of life necessitated flexibility within the division of labour. As Doris Saunders writes: "We are all capable of surviving alone if we have to thanks to the fact that in our family there were no 'girls' and 'boys' jobs from what I remember and from what I've been told by hundreds of old timers in Labrador" (1982: 88). Children of both sexes would be taught to haul water, chop wood, keep traplines and fish and to cook and sew. However from my experience in Labrador, I learned that as adults members of both genders had clearly defined and separate responsibilities. Their childhood education meant that men and women could take on the tasks of the other when required by necessity; however, my research indicates that men were largely responsible for men's tasks and women for their own. The following discussion of four separate marital households

displays how household responsibilities are divided between husbands and wives and the extent to which flexibility exists within the division of labour.

Annie and Alan provide an example of a sexual division of labour that in 1993 was well-defined and almost rigidly adhered to. Alan worked in construction. He hunted, cared for the garden, provided the bulk of the monetary income and had built and continued to renovate the house. Annie took in boarders and was self-employed, providing day care to local children in her home. She cooked and served three meals a day, cleaned, looked after the children and the household finances. Annie and Alan can be said to complement each other. The only time that I witnessed any overlap was when Annie helped Alan weed the garden or harvest the vegetables and Alan babysat the children.

Nina and Peter were married in the early 1990s and in 1993 did not have any children. Peter worked in construction. That year Nina left a full-time job to begin a two-year program at the local Community College. She earned unemployment insurance benefits while taking the course. She described housework as her responsibility. Like Nancy, Nina admitted to being more relaxed about house work than her mother was. Nina figures "the dust will settle again." While her father did no house work, Peter helped out. He washed

dishes, but cooked only wild meat. The other household duties which Peter took on are those expected of Labrador men (and men in other parts of Canada). For instance, he chopped the wood, shovelled snow and cared for the car. Peter, with the help of a few friends renovated the house. He also provided the house with wild meat. At the time of the interview, he was hunting goose in Rigolet.

Vicky and Arthur (see Appendix A) were married in the early 1980s and have one son born. They provide an example similar to that of Nancy and Michael. Until recently, Vicky (who is a nurse) was earning the main household wage, while Arthur as a trapper provided an incidental wage. His main contribution was the wild game that he hunted and fished, the wood that he chopped, and the vegetables that he grew. While their son was still a baby, Vicky was working full-time as a nurse. Arthur, as a trapper was never home for very long. Vicky explains:

he would go trapping in October, like the old fashioned trapper, and not come back 'til Christmas or New Years.... He came home at Christmas, was home for three or four weeks, went back for a couple of weeks, came back for a week and did it like that until he couldn't do it any more. Then he started getting his wood for the winter. Then... it was ice-fishing as well. And then when that was finished, he also had a commercial license for trout fishing. So then he'd go trout fishing and sell the trout. And come back and get ready and go off to the fish camps as a guide. Then he'd come back in the fall, and get ready to go trapping.

Arthur was away from home for months at a time, but when he was home from trapping, he shared in the daily household chores. He mopped, cooked meals and did laundry. Nevertheless, Vicky found full-time work and caring for an infant stressful and exhausting. Eventually she sought a part-time position, which gave her more time at home and changed the extent to which Arthur was willing to help with the chores.

In 1993 Vicky was working part-time as a nurse and Arthur was no longer trapping full-time. While he continued to trap and hunt to supply his family with food and wood for heat, he also taught trapping and guiding courses at the local Community College. Thus he was earning a wage and qualifying for unemployment insurance compensation. As a part-time nurse, Vicky worked afternoons. Arthur cooked supper on the days she worked. Vicky, who was home in the mornings, was responsible for the noon meal. He helped with the laundry by hanging it out on cold winter days, a chore Vicky disliked. He tended the vegetable garden: planting, weeding, harvesting and preparing vegetables for storage. Vicky had to be home every other evening in case she was called into work for an emergency. Since emergencies were rare she was home to help her son with homework, play with him and put him to bed. She did the household's accounting,

paid the bills, and went grocery and clothes shopping. In 1993 a younger female relative, who was temporarily living with the couple, shared the cleaning and child care responsibilities with Vicky.

At twenty-five years of age, Nancy was a young wife and mother, who practised the cleaning standards she had observed as a child. In her mid-thirties, when she was supporting the household with a full-time job, her husband took over the domestic chores and daily care of their children. In her forties, with young adult children and a full-time job, the focus of Nancy's daily life was less centred on the home. She had a full-time job, was a volunteer at the United Church, and took correspondence courses. In 1993 she called on her husband and children for help with household chores, but she regarded the domestic chores as her responsibility. Nancy described a change in how much she demands of herself with respect to domestic chores. She claimed that she no longer cleans to the extent she did as a young wife and mother. Changes in Nancy's attitude toward domestic responsibilities reflect a different stage in her life cycle.

In all of these examples, Nancy and Michael, Annie and Alan, Nina and Peter, Vicky and Arthur, there is some sharing of the household chores between wife and husband. The degree of flexibility can be attributed to several factors: the

expectations of each spouse which are carried into marriage; the importance of each spouse's income to the household and the degree of flexibility that his/her job allows for him/her to see to household responsibilities. Obviously Annie, who is self-employed at home, has a more flexible job than Vicky who is required to leave the house to work at the local health clinic. Finally, the stage at which they find themselves in the life-cycle of their family also affects the sharing of domestic chores. For instance, do they have infants and toddlers to care for, which usually demands extensive time and physical energy from the mother? Or, are their children young adults and living independently of their parents, which allows a woman more time to develop her own personal interests? Annie, who in 1993 was a mother of four school-aged children, felt far more needed at home than did Nancy, whose children (but for one) were living on their own.

Vicky discussed the expectations within her marriage:

But Arthur is of the generation when women's work and men's work was well, well laid down. Men did outside work, women scrubbed the floors and cooked the food and looked after the children. And he.... although he's a good housekeeper... I mean if Arthur mops a floor it shines... But he resents it. ... he got married and that's it, his duty stopped then.

Arthur has lived as a single male for much of his adult life, thus he was accustomed to household chores. According to Vicky, once he married he felt that he was under no

obligation to do them, that it was now the responsibility of his wife. But, as Vicky points out, Arthur was willing to help out when the housework became a heavy burden for her:

Funny, when I was working full-time and Alexander was a baby, I'd wake up and the house was mopped and the laundry ready for me to hang it out, the dishes would be done and the house would be clean.

In spite of Arthur's help, Vicky felt strained by full-time employment, household responsibilities and motherhood. She applied for and got a part-time job. The example provided by Vicky and Arthur demonstrates that while a well-defined division of labour remains between men and women in the home, a degree of flexibility exists.

In a study of rural women of the Magdalen Islands, Muir notes that "there is a strict geographical division of labour. A man's work is done outside,... a woman's place is in the house..." (1977: 47). This remains largely unchanged in North West River. Doreen's husband Richard, as well as Arthur, Alan and Peter all engage in outdoor chores as their contribution to household labour. Annie, Nina, Nancy and Vicky's share of domestic labour takes place indoors. Overlap and sharing of domestic chores can occur with both outdoor and indoor chores. But this sharing would depend on the individual skills of each spouse, their employment schedules and which chores are perceived by particular women and men as

gender-neutral.

The expectations carried into marriage by both spouses is perhaps the most significant factor in shaping the division of domestic labour.⁴ When Nancy and Michael had switched household roles, Nancy admitted to having felt uncomfortable. The household duties he was accomplishing so well were in Nancy's mind still her responsibility. Perhaps she felt that he was proving himself a better "housewife" than she was. Annie clearly stated that it is her duty to provide warm meals for her husband and children, to know the whereabouts of her children and to be accessible to them in case of an emergency. Nina stated that the household chores are her responsibility. The women I interviewed in North West River indicated that they were responsible for the household chores and child care. While the younger women were pleased to tell me of the help their husbands did offer around the house, their help did not relieve women from their responsibilities.

In 1993, young fathers in North West River were taking on more tasks than their fathers had, however, men appeared to be choosing which tasks they take on. For example, Peter cooked only the wild meat he hunts. During the day, Alan

⁴ This brings us back to the gender ideology that sees women as home-centred and nurturing.

voluntarily babysat the children (which can include his own, any foster children and neighbourhood children) when he had the time. But, he did not cook, clean up after supper, or bathe the children before bed. Arthur stopped doing some of the chores he had taken on when his wife began part-time work and was home more often. The fact that all of the women interviewed considered domestic chores to be their own primary responsibility means that husbands were not actually sharing equally in domestic chores, they were simply helping out.

7.4.3 Paid employment and the sharing of household chores

Much of the existing literature on women and domestic chores poses the following question: to what extent has paid employment and improved household technology changed the allocation of domestic chores in the household? The literature examines whether women's paid employment outside of the home changes the allocation of domestic chores (Hochschild 1989); the effect of technological advances that require only one person to complete most household tasks (Cowan 1983; Vanek 1974); and the continuing influence of an ideological movement originating in the Industrial Revolution that defined the female members of a household as nurturing and home-centred and placed the male members of the household

in the labour force (Bernard 1981; Kessler-Harris 1981; Margolis 1984; Moore 1988; Pierson 1985; Strong-Boag 1985).

According to the studies mentioned above, the cultural ideal of women as nurturing and home-centred has tied women to household labour even when they are employed outside the home. Technological changes in domestic labour in the United States within the twentieth century have not decreased women's work in the home. According to Cowan (1983), while technology has made tremendous advancements within the twentieth century, society's expectations of women in the home have remained relatively unchanged. Thus when technology lessened the labour required to complete each household task, women were still expected to complete these chores. Thanks to labour-saving technology women were left alone to complete them (see Cowan 1983; Vanek 1974). As a child in North West River, Doreen was expected to help her mother with household chores. In contrast, Doreen did not request as much help from her own children, partly because Doreen was able to purchase household appliances that her mother did not have, and, because Doreen placed more value on her children's education than was placed on her own.

Cowan (1983) and Vanek (1974) also note that standards of cleanliness have risen since the turn of the century. As domestic chores took less time, women's own expectations

concerning cleanliness grew, thus creating more work for women. As already stated, older women in North West River expressed great pride in having a clean house which seems to contradict the assertion by Cowan and Vanek, and indicates perhaps a tendency towards less rigid cleaning standards among the younger generations. The ideology of women as home-centred does not allow women to give priority to their paid employment activities. Porter's (1993) research in Catalina, South East Bight and Grand Falls provides evidence to support this claim. In contrast, the case of Nancy has shown that there are times in a woman's life when she can give priority to her wage work responsibilities. This varies depending on the number of dependents living with her⁵ and on her family's economic circumstances.

Recent literature on the gendered division of labour in Newfoundland and Labrador indicates that some sharing between spouses occurs, but concludes that women take on the majority of household tasks. In a study of gender and domestic labour on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, Sinclair and Felt listed the domestic tasks shared between husband and wife as the following: washing dishes, taking children to sports events, shopping, painting, picking berries, growing

⁵ I am including children and elderly relatives as dependents. Thus the age and physical well-being of the dependents must taken into account.

vegetables, banking, and completing tax returns (1992:63). This list is not long: "shopping, growing vegetables and berry picking are the activities most likely to be shared" (Sinclair and Felt 1992: 64). Their list of female-specific tasks is much longer than the male-specific tasks. Female tasks include the following: cooking the main meal, cleaning the bathroom, vacuuming, making beds, mending and making clothes, doing laundry, taking children to the doctor, caring for sick children, visiting school, and making jam. Tasks predominantly done by men include: plastering, minor car repairs, cutting wood and hunting (Sinclair and Felt 1992: 63).

According to Sinclair and Felt, "an extreme division of labour persists in unpaid work, even when women are employed" (1992: 59). The authors of the study conclude:

married women who are employed continue to do most of the domestic labour while their husbands spend little additional time on routine house-work and child care compared with husbands of unemployed women (1992: 66).

On the subject of chores that men do on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, Sinclair and Felt write that "men typically claim more involvement in domestic work than the women are prepared to accept" (1992: 64).

The fact that the husbands of young employed women in North West River are helping at home indicates that the

employment of women has affected the sharing of household chores. Among the examples that we have examined, employment did have an effect on the sharing of household chores. When Vicky and Nancy were employed full-time with small children at home, their husbands did more around the house. However, while Annie was employed full-time, because she was working at home, Alan did not pick up more household chores.

By comparison, Davis' research in a fishing village on the south west coast of Newfoundland shows evidence that the division of labour was breaking down and men were helping more. Davis writes: "with both men and women working at the fish plant and the increased involvement of men in household activities, the rigid division of labour which once characterized the traditional life is rapidly ceasing to exist" (1983: 26). Davis bases her positive conclusion on the fact that when she did her field research men were at home more often and women had to leave their homes for jobs at the fish plant.⁶ The majority of the evidence from other sources in Newfoundland and Labrador do not point to a demise of the gendered division of labour. Rather, they indicate that some sharing does exist but that the majority of the domestic work remains women's responsibility.

⁶ The division of labour may be changing again with the crisis in the fishery, the closure of the cod fishery in 1992.

For instance, writing of women's work in Newfoundland, Porter (1995) informs us that the women from Catalina, Grand Falls and South East Bight work very hard at both paid and unpaid work within the household (1993: 145). It is their extensive care responsibilities and domestic chores that prevent them from participating at a higher level in the wage labour market. While their husbands take on domestic or caring responsibilities voluntarily, these responsibilities "will always be secondary to their [men's] wage labour" (Porter 1993: 147). In other words, women are far more circumscribed by domestic responsibilities than are men. While men may help with domestic chores, their help is dependent on how much time they have available. A man's other responsibilities, such as his paid job, his hunting responsibilities, and at times even his leisure time, are given priority over household chores; not so for women.

According to Porter, women's care responsibilities and domestic chores limit a woman's opportunities (1993: 146). This can be seen as the result of an ideology that defines women as home-centred and nurturing. In North West River, the extent to which a woman was circumscribed by her family and household responsibilities varied with the number and age of her dependents. In her early forties, Nancy enjoyed more freedom to develop her interests than Annie whose child care

responsibilities kept her at home. Nevertheless, in most cases in North West River, women maintained that their priority was to keep a clean house and to do a good job in raising children.

Hochschild (1989) studied American couples in an urban context and how household responsibilities and child care were shared when both wife and husband were working at paid jobs outside of the home.⁷ Hochschild found that the level of income from employment can affect how chores and child care are shared. Income is often only a factor when it is advantageous to the husband, i.e., he earns more money and so has a legitimate claim to doing less at home (1989: 221). A more significant factor is that of the balance of power between husbands and wives in the home:

The more severely a man's identity is financially threatened - by his wife's higher salary, for example - the less he can afford to threaten it further by doing "women's work" at home (1989: 221).

In Hochschild's study, these men felt they were already sacrificing by earning less than their spouses (1989: 221). Their wives also "balanced". When they sensed their husbands

⁷ The research is based on the observation of daily life and interviews conducted with working couples raising children under six and working at full-time jobs. These couples lived in urban California and Hochschild describes them as "typical of mainstream America". The research was conducted over an eight year period, between 1980 and 1988 (1989: 5).

were touchy or depressed, these women waited on their husbands at home, as if to compensate them for their wives' higher salary and potentially more powerful position in the home. Hochschild's findings illustrate how the ideology that places women in the home, as nurturing and caring individuals, allows domestic labour to be used in balancing the power relations between husbands and wives. Domestic labour is used in "balancing" because these women and men perceived household chores to be "women's work".

My examples from North West River do not all corroborate with Hochschild's findings. Both Michael and Arthur took on household chores because their wives were working full-time. These men must have appreciated the fact that their wives were earning a steady income. Arthur and Michael are exceptions. I knew of no other husbands who had shared in household chores so extensively. According to other researchers, Sinclair and Felt (1992) and Porter (1993), these men would also be exceptions in rural communities in Newfoundland.

Hochschild's examples convey the important point that notions of femininity can still be tied to domesticity. These women may be working full-time and earning more than their husbands, but they insist on taking on full responsibility for household chores. Their femininity is tied to their

domestic role, just as their husband's masculinity is tied to his ability to provide the main wage. Perhaps a similar phenomenon is occurring in North West River. Women in North West River, like Nancy and Annie, continued to assume that they are primarily responsible for domestic labour, perhaps they perceive a connection between their femininity and their ability to keep a house clean.

The expectation that men provide the main wage in their household may be changing among marital households established since 1971. This includes most third generation and some second generation women and men. Economic circumstances have created more year-round service sector jobs for women, while most men are seasonally employed as skilled labourers. As skilled labourers men are still earning more than women. Unlike men however, women tend to be employed year-round. This has increased the importance of a woman's income. Annie mentioned that her income is important to their household, even though Alan earns more, simply because Annie has an income throughout the year. As a construction worker, there are periods when Alan does not bring home a wage. There are examples of households, such as Nancy's, where the woman's income supports the household or is of greater value than the husband's. Such is the case in Vicky and Cindy's households.

To what extent these examples actually prove that the expectation is changing is difficult to say. Certainly, most third generation women still assume that they will stay at home immediately following the birth of a child. However, some of these women tend to remain at home for a shorter period of time than did their mothers and grandmothers. If women are to remain at home with infants and small children, then a male wage is necessary to raise a family. The fact that mothers consider returning to their wage jobs sometimes within six months to a year following the birth of a child indicates that a woman's wage is increasingly important.

In an interview, Nina, a third generation woman, indicated that there is some change in the perception of how women and men share responsibility for financially supporting their household. Nina compared her own marriage to that of her parents. While both Nina and her mother have earned money for their separate households, Nina perceives a difference. Nina understood that her mother's income was secondary to her father's. Her father supported the family. According to Nina, both she and Peter together support their household. They depend on both their incomes. They could survive with just Peter's salary, but they would lower their standard of living and neither she nor Peter want that. A number of other third generation women made similar comments. For instance,

Meredith also said that she and John could live from his salary, but that they enjoy the standard of living they gain from having two salaries. Third generation women expect to maintain a higher standard of living than they experienced as children. This is one of the main reasons why they continue to work for a wage.

7.5 Conclusion:

Women's responsibilities are the same today as they were fifty years ago but they are accomplished in a different manner. In North West River in 1993, a married woman's contribution to the household includes earning a wage to afford the material consumer goods and domestic appliances thought necessary to live at a comfortable standard of living. These household appliances lessen the time spent and physical energy expended on domestic chores, but do not relieve a woman from these duties. Although some husbands are sharing in domestic labour, these daily chores are still perceived to be a woman's responsibility. Likewise, husbands are sharing in child care responsibilities, but again the main responsibility for the daily care of children and elderly relatives is assumed by women.

While expectations concerning the main division of domestic chores between spouses has not changed, several

other factors seem to contribute towards some flexibility and sharing between husband and wife. These factors are the availability of paid employment for women and men; stages in a family's life-cycle; and an individual's preference for certain tasks. While the women in this study who worked for pay tended to ask for some help from their husbands, how much help they requested also depended on what expectations the wives and husbands held of each other. In the end, how each couple shares domestic chores depends on how they, as individuals and as a household, balance the priorities of paid employment, child care and house work.

8.0 Chapter Eight:

Raising Children

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses changes in how children are raised. I discuss two kinds of relevant changes: (a) standards for raising children have changed, and (b) the expectations to work placed on children have decreased. The manner in which children are raised has changed from one generation to the next, producing new expectations in younger generations. Economic and technological changes have altered the work demanded of men and women and thus lessened the work that they have demanded of their children. The Grenfell Mission made education readily accessible and government laws made formal education mandatory. The effect has been to prolong childhood. In North West River each succeeding generation of parents has allowed their children more leisure time, which has lengthened childhood itself and created an expectation among younger generations that leisure time should be a part of one's daily life.

This chapter will examine the examples of women whose life stories have already appeared in this thesis. Although I did not concentrate on child care during interviews, I collected information from women about their childhoods and I observed practices in child care among the third generation

of women. I will compare their childhood experiences with those of their mothers and grandmothers and add to that women's descriptions of raising their own children. Raising children has changed from one generation to the next.

8.2 Raising children is women's work

Child care responsibilities dominate a woman's life. Doreen felt herself to be chiefly responsible for the care of her children during the 1950s and 1960s, just as Annie has been since the 1970s. In North West River, women have and do make the daily decisions concerning the care, needs, and wants of their children. Annie explains:

but basically now with running the kids and stuff like that, it's mainly up to me, unless it's something...they gotta be disciplined for or some big decision on something they want or something, then we'll talk it over.

When it was time to purchase an expensive item for the children or to seriously discipline them, Annie and Alan talked the matter over, arrived at a decision and implemented the decision together. Otherwise, just as it was for most married couples in trapping households, Annie, as mother, made most daily decisions.

Eleanor, a woman in her sixties, told me a story of a father and a mother that humourously relates the extent to which the wives of trappers were solely responsible for child

care. This story was told as much for its humour as to point out the fact that this particular mother was a strong and independent woman. She married a trapper, who trapped during the fall and winter and worked for wages where he could in the summer. One summer he had found work on the boats (the Hudson Bay Company boats travelling between Rigolet and North West River). He had come home on one boat and as always happens boys and girls crowded around the wharf to greet the boat, cargo, and crew. This time a three year old boy followed him around and did not leave his side. The boy followed the trapper all the way home. The boy was still behind the man when he entered his kitchen. When the man arrived and greeted his wife, he called out to her: "Mother! Who is the boy?" She told him that this was Ernest, his youngest son. While the story should not be believed as absolutely true, the humour of the story relates and exaggerates the fact that raising children was seen as a woman's job.

Fathers have been expected to teach their sons the skills they are required to know as adults. Arthur, for example, teaches his son Alexander to handle a rifle and to canoe, which are considered to be masculine activities in Labrador. Meanwhile, Alexander's mother, Vicky helps him with his homework and makes sure that he is in bed on time. She

looks after him when he is sick. I saw Vicky asking for advice on buying his hockey equipment and on how to dress her son for practice. She drove Alexander to practice. Vicky and Arthur's household provide evidence that not much has changed since the days of Eleanor's story. Just as Ernest's mother did, Vicky assumes responsibility for most of the daily care required by their son.

There are younger husbands who are more involved in raising their sons and daughters than fathers have been in the past. This can be seen as the result of a change in men's jobs. Since men are no longer trapping and can return home at the end of their working day, young fathers are home more than were trappers. Most young mothers interviewed affirmed that their husbands did involve themselves more with their children than did their fathers. Meredith, who was in her late twenties and married with two sons, said that she and her husband shared child care "50/50". She figures that "where the kids are boys, they are more interested in what their father is doing anyway." I saw Meredith and her husband John share in certain chores: putting the boys to bed, entertaining them on evenings and weekends. When Meredith needed a break and wanted to be alone, John took the boys away for a couple of hours. My impression was that John was a committed and helpful husband, but that Meredith made sure

she was available to see to the daily needs of her children more than he. She most often dropped them off and picked them up from the babysitters. She prepared their meals, supervised their homework and organized their birthdays.

Writing of changes in family life along the southwest coast of Newfoundland in the late 1970s, Davis describes the significance of the fact that "men are at home more than ever before" (1983: 25). In the past, fishing used to take men away from home for weeks, even months. Since wage work had been available at the local fish plant and since more men were involved in the inshore fishery, "men are at home more than ever before" (ibid: 25). Davis writes that "women do not feel that the burden of childrearing is placed as completely on them as it used to be" (ibid: 25). She declares that "Men are expected to help out in the home, especially with child care, although this varies with the personalities of the couple involved" (ibid: 26). While Davis writes in a very optimistic tone, the proof she offers indicates to me that in effect these changes for the southwest coast of Newfoundland in the 1970s and 1980s are similar to those that have occurred in North West River and elsewhere.

For example, in Flin Flon Manitoba in the late 1970s, women of the youngest generation noted that their husbands were helping with raising the children, but they assumed, as

had their mothers and grandmothers, that this was women's work (Luxton 1980: 98). Sinclair and Felt (1992) write in a similar fashion of men on the Northern Peninsula in the late 1980s: "In so far as they were involved in child care, the men claimed to share these activities with their spouse; rarely did they assume sole responsibility" (ibid: 64). Men may share in the care of children, but the responsibility for the daily care of children is still considered to be a woman's responsibility. This statement depicts the situation in North West River in 1993. While I was told that younger fathers were more attendant to their children than their own fathers had been, this did not mean that fathers were willing to assume responsibility for their children's care.

8.3 Styles of parenting have changed with each succeeding generation in North West River

The manner in which children are raised has changed with regards to the expectations placed on children to take on household chores, the importance of formal education, and finally, how children are disciplined and punished. These changes are partly the result of larger social changes in the lives of North West River Settlers.

The move from isolated homesteads to the village of North West River, which most first generation women and men

took advantage of, had great social impact. As already stated, the village offered medical facilities, which improved life expectancies (Zimmerly 1991 [1975]: 183). The Grenfell Mission school bettered the future opportunities of Settler children. The village, with its network of volunteer women, offered an increasing number of social activities for children.

Between 1941 and 1983¹ increased wage work opportunities meant that households had more wages to spend, and, an increasing number of consumer items available changed the work of running a household. First generation women could dispense with making winter boots from seal skins and caribou hides. With the availability of wringer washers, women no longer had to wash clothes by hand. Household appliances decreased the physical labour women expended in keeping their houses clean and their families fed, however, the technology did not remove women's responsibilities. The result was that women depended less on the help of their children to complete

¹ These dates mark important events in the formal economy of North West River. In 1941 the construction of the Goose Bay Air Base offered new employment to Settlers from North West River. New economic opportunities were developing throughout the 1950s and 1960s. They began to diminish in the 1970s. 1983, with the closure of the Grenfell Hospital in North West River, marks the beginning of a downward turn in job opportunities.

household tasks. The ever-present need to maintain and raise their children's material standard of living has kept women working for a wage. This need, which is further fed by consumerism, has influenced younger mothers to return to their paid jobs, following the birth of their children, sooner than their mothers did. In the following two sections, I will discuss changes in the disciplining of children and in the demands placed on children.

8.3.1 Changes in discipline and punishment

First generation women's accounts of the punishment they received as children describe fathers and grandfathers who were physically harsh with children. In response, these children learned that the authority of the father was to be respected. Doreen remembers that she was strapped often. She recalled one incident when her father gave her the strap for wanting to sleep on feather beds in the kitchen with her brothers on her birthday. Anna recalled how her father strapped his children with the dog harness and how their teachers strapped pupils. While she disapproved of physical punishment that was so harsh as to be painful, she did not approve of the leniency that younger parents display toward their children. She argues that the punishment administered by her father stung his children so that they would listen

and they did listen. According to Anna, children today do not respect the authority of their parents.

As with most women interviewed of the first generation, Doreen and Anna recalled having suffered physical punishment. Yet, when they were raising children of their own, they claimed to have never hit them. Anna says she never had to spank the children she had cared for. They were older and they were good children. Doreen also says she never spanked her own children. While Anna complains that the physical punishment used when she was a child was often harsh, she concedes that it worked. In the past, children respected the authority of their parents and teachers.

In the accounts that I heard of spankings, mothers did not administer spankings. Fathers were called on for this. Clare describes how she and Christopher shared the responsibility. Clare was largely responsible for disciplining the children. There were times when she hid their mischief from Christopher. She did this to protect both her children and their father. She did not want to upset Christopher and she did not want him to punish the children harshly. At other times, she called on Christopher to distribute punishment she thought necessary:

I really stepped back a scattered time and let
him take over when it came to discipline...
I would say "okay Christopher you take over."

Because... I could see the need for it, you know. Clare may believe in physical punishment, but left it to Christopher to dispense and did not deliver such punishment often. In the following discussion, between two sisters, about the punishment they received as children, they say that their grandmother never administered the punishment.

Women of Doreen's generation do not recall having had to hit their children. I did not witness any beatings or spankings among the youngest generation of families. Children were reprimanded, "grounded", scolded or teased instead. In a conversation between two third generation sisters of a large family, they recalled the physical punishment used by their grandfather, who raised them both together with their grandmother. The conversation began because the older woman claimed to have never hit any one of her children. She said that she does not believe in hitting a child, "One smack leads to two, then three and soon you're beating them." The younger sister said that their grandfather beat them too often, that sometimes she had not known why she was being punished and that it had hurt. But the youngest of the two admitted to spanking her children. She asserted, "they need it sometimes!" I never saw the younger woman lay a hand on her children. When she spoke to me of spanking them, she could recall only two times when she had had to resort to

physical punishment to discipline her children.

The sisters' conversation was interesting for two reasons: for the description of the grandfather's stern character and how he dominated the household, and, for how these two women remember their grandfather and deal with the memory. Their conversation demonstrates the extent to which standards in discipline and punishment have changed. These women were raised by their grandparents, who were used to raising a large family. Administering physical punishment and delegating many chores to the children was considered an appropriate manner of raising so many. Few women, who were strapped as kids, admitted to strapping their own. Their usual response to my question, "Did you spank your own children?" was that they never needed to, that they had been good kids. Some admitted to never wanting to hit their kids as they and their brothers and sisters had been hit. Members of the youngest generations, do not see the need to punish children so harshly.

The two women dealt with their memories very differently. The youngest chose to laugh and recall her grandmother's gentleness and how many times her eldest sister protected her from their grandfather. The eldest expressed anger and bitterness. She disagreed with him, thought his treatment was unfair and called him "an asshole." The

youngest responded by giggling, "How shockin'?!". Few people remember their parents or grandparents with anger as the older of the two women has. Even when they believe that they were hit too harshly or punished severely, I did not hear a harsh criticism of their parents. This might be a reflection of the fact that everyone speaks well of any elderly person in town, so, few people speak badly of their parents.

The conversation between these two sisters brings to light the fact that parenting standards have changed in North West River. While I believe that this is true, I must also add that administering physical punishment takes place in private; much of what was private in North West River was hidden from me. I do know that there has been a social change so that people are now against physical punishment in general. As the words of Cindy confirm: "They [parents] can't do nothing now eyh?!... even the kids know it themselves,... I know one of my friends, her son Tommy [said to her]: 'Well if you hit me, I'm going to the social worker.'" According to Cindy this is an example of the child controlling the parent. But Tommy's words also demonstrate a change in attitude towards spankings. In the opinion of the elder of the two sisters described above, physical punishment can resemble too easily physical abuse.

8.3.2 Changes in the expectations placed on children

The household chores given children today as compared to those of the past indicates a change in how children are raised. Fewer chores are demanded of children in 1993 than in the past. Third generation mothers allow their children plenty of play time. I asked a third generation working mother if her thirteen year old daughter helped around the house. She told me that her daughter cleaned up after herself when she had a snack after school and that she made her own bed in the morning and also her mother's bed if her mother forgot on her way to work. This presents a stark change from the chores required of first generation women like Doreen and Anna. Even Annie, a third generation woman who was raised by her grandparents, claims to have had to wash the dishes when she was still very young, so young that she had to stand on a chair to reach the basin of water on the table. She recalled having been given innumerable chores to complete after a full day of school and a few hours at her after-school job. On Saturdays her list of chores was so long that they often took her the whole day to complete. If she ever had time to enjoy herself on Saturdays it was thanks to her aunt who came to help her complete the chores.

Implied in the accounts of first generation women of the chores they performed as children was that chores taught

children that life was toil. Thus children were taught to believe in a strong work ethic. Agnes (first generation) spent part of her childhood at the Grenfell orphanage, because both of her parents died before she was ten years old. From her description, childhood at the time offered little leisure and play time. Children's days were filled with school, after-school activities and chores. The list of the girls' Saturday chores is long: looking after and feeding the hens, cleaning the pens and collecting eggs, polishing silver, and cleaning oil lamps. Boys carried in the wood. Everyone changed his or her own sheets. On Sundays they attended church and Sunday school. Some women remember attending church twice on Sundays. The importance given to leisure and to play as a requirement for children to grow, be happy and learn social skills, was inexistent at a time when everyone had to work hard to survive. Instead children were taught the importance of hard work.²

In 1993 in North West River, I saw little evidence of children helping extensively with household chores. While they were required to help out somewhat, they were not given the chores that their grandmothers had had as young girls.

² During the early twentieth century, orphanages commonly placed particular emphasis on teaching their wards the importance of hard work.

Doreen and most older women admitted that they did not burden their children with the amount of chores they were given as children. I asked Clare, a married woman, a grandmother and a retired teacher in her fifties, if she thought that today's children have fewer chores to do? "Oh less, None at all! That's why when you ask them to do something they won't do it." Clare explains:

probably the beginnings of that were sown when [the third generation] were growing up. Because things were starting to change, attitudes by then, I mean the old way of life was gone. Not much point in me trying to teach my child to bring in wood, I mean we didn't have any wood to bring in. So they didn't have to do so much. I mean how can they help doing the laundry when 'tis a washing machine. So, so like that generation learned they didn't have to do so much, and so when their children are coming along and are around underfoot and that, there's even less again.

Arthur (generation I) now refuses to give chores to his son. The son's mother tells me that Arthur had to work so hard as a child that he does not think that his son should have to work as hard. The decrease in the household chores expected of children is a result of the increase in household incomes and changes in technology that have lessened the physical work required of most household chores, and, have resulted in most household items being purchased rather than made. The decrease is also a consequence of wanting to allow the next generation of children a chance to enjoy their childhood.

As the wage and cash economy replaced trapping and hunting, formal schooling replaced the teaching of household skills passed down from father to son and mother to daughter. As institutionalized education grew in importance, children were excused from physically laborious household chores. Women's volunteer work offered North West River children various social activities. The availability of consumer items, such as ready-made clothing, food and kitchen appliances has made the care of dependents and of a household less physically burdensome and time-consuming.

For example, three generations ago daughters had to learn to produce what we call today "crafts". Women born sixty to seventy years ago were taught by their mothers to sew clothing: parkas, sealskin boots and moccasins. Necessity forced these mothers to produce their family's clothing and teaching a daughter sewing skills was a necessary part of that child's education. Women of the second generation, who were taught as children, continue to produce moccasins and sealskin boots in their leisure time. The moccasins are now called "crafts" and are given away as gifts to family and friends or sold for extra cash. These second generation women could buy the boots and clothing their children required. Not all their daughters (generation III) have learned to make boots and moccasins, it was not seen as a necessary skill to

teach the younger generation. The third generation women, who do know how to sew traditional clothing, will only do so if they enjoy the activity itself, because they purchase their family's necessities.

Cowan (1983) notes that American children have been exonerated from house work, as technology developed household appliances so that completing domestic chores only required the work of one person. As Cowan argues, with late twentieth century technology mothers are completing these tasks on their own. Hence, technology has not in fact freed women from their domestic responsibilities. The only advantage to women has been to diminish the physical strain of completing household chores (Cowan 1983). As Clare notes above, when appliances entered the home, less help was required of children. While less is expected of children, the children I met in North West River were given regular chores. For instance, the adolescents I met were responsible for such chores as: making their beds, doing the evening load of dishes or preparing supper for their father when their mother was working.

Sinclair & Felt (1992) and Porter (1993) saw little evidence of children helping with household chores in their research in different locations on the island of Newfoundland. Porter writes: "Mothers of teenage daughters

today will require them to keep their own bedrooms tidy and occasionally to help with the cooking, but that is about all" (1988: 552). Davis (1983: 25) observes that on the south west coast of Newfoundland, children had few responsibilities at home, and, that they are paid for the favours and chores they do run.

The older generation of women, having been raised to be responsible for innumerable chores, have wanted to allow their children time to play and to complete their schooling. And, as Clare noted, the changes which technology brought to household chores meant that there was less for children to help with. With a washing machine Clare could easily wash the family's laundry without the help of her children. Children were being given plenty of play time, the effect on the younger generations has been to create a need in the younger generation for leisure time. This can be seen among third generation mothers, who actively seek leisure time. Their grandmothers seem to find foreign the whole notion of having leisure time.

8.4 Changes in how children are raised

Changes in how children are raised have affected women's lives more so than men's because women have been and continue to be their children's main care-givers. As

parenting and women's wage work both change so too do women's responsibilities concerning raising their children. Thus, in one generation women joined volunteer associations so that their children could enjoy a variety of activities in town. In a subsequent generation, young mothers work outside of the home to raise their children's standard of living.

The main changes that have occurred in child care have to do with the changing nature and requirements of raising children as well as changes in the demands made of children themselves. Women of Doreen's generation were raised to be responsible workers. Doreen and other first generation women were expected to perform a variety of chores at home. Anna, for example, stopped attending school after four years to assist her mother. By the time she was twelve years old she was caring for her brother's children and household, while her brother's wife was in hospital. As girls and adolescents, first generation women were taught the value of hard work and of responsibility.

First generation women, like Doreen, were the first generation of mothers in North West River who lived in the village close to the hospital and schools, which greatly affected how their children were raised. Doreen worried considerably less than her mother had about the physical survival of her children. Doreen did not require her children

to do many chores. They had their school work to keep them busy and there was less to do around the house. Doreen's generation also became the first generation of mothers who offered their children, through volunteer work, extra-curricular and social activities at the community level. Although Doreen had eight fewer children than her mother had, Doreen was completing house work with little help from her children, and added volunteer work to her list of responsibilities. Having fewer children did not necessarily decrease Doreen's workload. She had taken on responsibilities that her mother did not have.

The decrease in children's chores and the increase in their school and community activities has increased the household-related responsibilities of women from the first and second generation. Woodsong and McGuire (1990) provide an illustration of the increase in women's work that spans fifty years (1930 to 1980) in Broome County, New York. They note changes in the role of children within households between the late 1930s and 1955:

Whereas in the 1930s the child was expected to serve his or her parents and substantially contribute to the well-being of the household, by the 1950s the emphasis was on the household serving the child and preparing the child for adulthood. This meant that children began to require more than they contributed to the household. The majority of this burden fell on their mothers (1990: 181).

This pattern was intensified by 1977 (1990: 189). McGuire and Woodsong examined the increasing importance of education, sports and school clubs and the fact that children's wages were no longer remitted to their parents. Childhood had in effect been lengthened through the "creation" of adolescence and the conception of the home as a nurturing place (1990: 181). The idea of "home as a nurturing place" in North West River has meant that younger mothers expect to spend more time with their children than their grandmothers were able to.

8.4.1 Creating a nurturing environment for their children

As the importance of the household wage increased and the material standard of living increased, the cost of raising children demanded of households two incomes. Young mothers in 1993 were working for a wage to maintain a higher standard of material comfort. Although they expected to have time with each child, women are not necessarily spending more time with their children, because paid work outside the home inhibits them from doing so.

Sharing in a child's play time and being at home during a child's first years of life are understood by many young women as important parts of mothering. However, these priorities conflict with a woman's paid employment outside

the home. The following is an example of how one young woman has solved the conflict. Meredith, who was in her late twenties in 1993, had been married since the mid-1980s and had two young sons. She took little time off work at the birth of her first son. She planned to be at home for at least a year after the birth of her second son; however, when a job opportunity arose she took it. In 1993 Meredith was working full-time at an office in North West River. She paid Annie for providing child care. Her eldest son attended school and after school went to Annie's house for the afternoon. The younger brother spent his days at Annie's house. Meredith compromised by finding work in town so that she would not be far from the children in case of an emergency. She felt confident that the children were well looked after at Annie's. Meredith explained that she could not be a full-time housewife, that it would "drive her nuts." The need to keep busy and interact with other adults are both aspects of paid work that she enjoys. In addition, while Meredith realizes that she and her family can live on her husband's salary, she is not willing to give up their current material standard of living.

Cowan (1983) and Vanek (1974) contend that in the late twentieth century mothers spend more time attending to their children than in the past. Decreasing birth rates have

affected this change along with the cultural influence of the psychological and sociological research on child development since the turn of this century (Cowan 1983). Luxton also points out that ideas on the role of the mother as developed by social scientists have been popularized by mass media, (e.g., television, advertisements, women's magazines and popular literature) and have become part of women's daily concerns (Luxton 1980: 91). Vanek summarizes the point:

Today's mother is cautioned to care for the child's social and mental development in addition to the traditional concerns of health, discipline and cleanliness (1974: 117).

Luxton's (1980) comparison of three generations of women in Flin Flon, Manitoba reveals the differences in child care from one generation to the next:

In the early period women generally assumed that all their young children required was care and lots of love. Otherwise, the babies could be left alone and they would flourish.....Now women assume that even very small babies need regular emotional, sensual and intellectual stimulation and they believe that it is primarily their responsibility to provide this (ibid: 111).

Likewise, in North West River the interactions between mothers and children varied with each generation. For some young mothers, the time they do spend with their children can be characterized as developmental play time between mother and child. I knew third generation women in North West River who devoted their evenings and weekends to spending time with

their child or children. They talked of letting their children's priorities come first, by going for a bike ride or playing together. The amount of time that mothers spent playing with their children varied between families. While many women talked about playing with their children, most children were allowed to play freely around town. Earlier generations of mothers were too busy for such play time. Thus as the expectations concerning the caring, nurturing and time requirements of raising children have increased, so too have the financial burden of households. This has left women with conflicting priorities: wanting to be both at home for their children and earn an income for the household.

Women of the first generation, who had four to ten siblings, would have been taught to work hard. They would not have had play time with their mothers. Sylvia, a woman from Newfoundland who married into the community circa 1970, described her mother-in-law to explain the difference between the older generation's method of raising children and her own generation's standards. She described her mother-in-law as having been a stern woman who was firm and very religious: "Back then, in Them Days women had large families ten to twelve, or, five and six children and they had to work continuously. There was no time to spend on the kids, there wasn't the love to pour on the child." She explained that by

"love" she meant taking the child and hugging him or her or spending time to talk with the child. These Sylvia understood as essential aspects of raising children. Sylvia provides evidence that parenting has changed, and the changes are similar to those described by Cowan (1983), Vanek (1971) and Luxton (1980).

Socially accepted ideas on what it means to mother have changed from one generation to the next. The youngest generation of women have from two to a maximum of four children, while their grandmothers had anywhere from two to twelve. Mothers of young children, who are working full-time, are dividing their time between paid work, house work, care of their family and their own needs. Attitudes towards children expressed by young women varied from the worry that children are expensive to raise today, to the idea that children need the affection and frequent presence of their mothers. However, these two ideas are in conflict with each other. The first attitude is a result of the consumer culture in which these women fully participate. When children become a significant expense, mothers need to earn a wage. But if mothers are away from home earning a wage, they cannot tend to their child's daily development.

8.4.2 Volunteer work is a mother's duty

Since Doreen's childhood, children's household chores have decreased; their education and play activities are given priority. Women, who were in their fifties in 1993, had participated in the past in volunteer community work as part of their responsibility to the community and to their children. Women, like Clare, continued the precedent begun by Jean and Doreen who took on community work as part of "women's work". Clare took part in the women's church group, parent-teacher's association and children's activities such as Girl Guides. Clare perceived it to be a mother's duty to provide her children with extra-curricular activities and to participate in the organization of these activities.

Clare notes that mothers of young children, her daughter for example, do not exhibit the same zeal for these activities. Between paid work and house work, younger mothers feel that they have less time. The time that they do have is spent with their children. When Clare was a mother of young children, there was a full range of activities available to children in town. In 1993 most activities were in Happy Valley/Goose Bay and having to drive to the neighbouring community further reduced young mothers' enthusiasm for participating.

Mothers of the second generation had several community

activities that their children took advantage of. These were services provided by other parents, school teachers or WOPS (student volunteers from the United States working for the I.G.A.). The activities varied from movie nights in the church basement to Girl Guides and summer day camps. Children of this generation of mothers had many activities to take advantage of, and mothers were expected to volunteer their time towards the activities. Children and adolescents in the 1990s have few community activities to take part in since most of these activities take place in Happy Valley/Goose Bay. In 1993, several factors work against the organization of extra-curricular activities for children. The teachers, except for one, employed at Lake Melville School in North West River reside in Happy Valley/Goose Bay. Activities were organized for children during the lunch hour, but once the school day was over, I was told that teachers drove home. The town council hired a few individuals to organize children's events during the summer, but they were dependent on government grants and funding was low. Activities were available in Happy Valley/Goose Bay, but the drive to the neighbouring community inhibited some people from taking part. Extra-curricular activities had become harder to co-ordinate with the daily schedules of mothers of young children who work for wages outside of their homes.

In a comparison of women's work in three Newfoundland communities, Porter describes the over-burdened lives of women in Grand Falls who had to combine paid employment, domestic chores, care work for relatives and organizing and participating in a wide range of children's activities. Porter describes these children's activities as

a middle class ethnic [sic] dictating that children must be 'stimulated', do numerous sporting and cultural activities, read early, play instruments, and 'achieve' - and of course, the responsibility for this, falls to mothers (Porter 1993: 133).

Like women in Grand Falls, the responsibility does fall to mothers in North West River. Porter's description of Grand Falls describes an urban, class-based society:

It is dominated by the highly competitive, privatized, isolated nuclear family in which the wage (and status) of the man (usually twice that of the women) establishes the family social order, but in which the woman's wage is also crucial (1993: 148).

This description of Grand Falls might also describe the North West River of the late twentieth century. I heard many complaints from women and men of all three generations that the town was not what it once was. North West River is loosing its sense of cohesion and unity. People are no longer as helpful and were less community-minded.³ North West

³ Perhaps this indicates a move toward a society of isolated nuclear households. Does this imply that a competitive "middle class ethic" is taking hold in North West River? I

River's history of trapping and the influence of the International Grenfell Association provide the town with an ideology that contradicts the "privatized, isolated" households of Grand Falls. This ideology would state that a mother's volunteer work that is directed toward her children or the community is perceived in terms of both helping their children and as bettering the community as a whole.⁴

8.5 Conclusion

Women still consider child care to be their responsibility. But child care is not the only form of work of which women are mainly responsible. In North West River, second and third mothers have been burdened by paid work, domestic labour and volunteer work. They view the care of children as their primary responsibility, but they may not have any more time than their grandmothers had with two to twelve children. The consumer culture of the late twentieth

would argue that some form of middle class has always existed in North West River as indicated in the chapters discussing volunteer work, leadership and the International Grenfell Mission.

⁴ This paragraph and discussion of "middle class ethic" versus ideology of cohesion unearths another thesis topic unto itself. I would suggest that the two might co-exist in North West River. A middle class ethic as described by Porter may be surfacing, while an ideology which contradicts this ethic, such as community-minded cohesion, can also exist.

century prevents them from playing the idealized role of mother. Since raising children demands a certain expenditure of money, both spouses must work to maintain this standard of living. Mothers, then, cannot always be home. Yet, the youngest generation of mothers are concerned with offering their children the attention they feel mothers ought to devote to them.

The work of raising children has changed in North West River, because the work of maintaining a household is different from what it once was. Household appliances have changed the labour required to complete household chores. Children's labour is no longer needed to the same extent to accomplish these tasks. Households often require two incomes to support the purchase of the many consumer items viewed as necessary to live comfortably. Children and young adults spend more time attending schools and post-secondary institutions, which is considered to be a means of ensuring better job opportunities in the future. Childhood is viewed as a time to enjoy, to play and to learn. The need to teach children that life is hard work has diminished with each succeeding generation. Changes in how children have been raised have created perhaps the most significant difference in expectations and attitudes towards work from one generation to the next.

Women's Work in North West River:**Change and Continuity****9.1 Introduction**

Change and continuity have been a significant underlying theme in this thesis on women's work in North West River. Within the life-time of first generation women, North West River townspeople have experienced phenomenal economic and technological changes. Within the past eighty years, North West River has changed from a Hudson's Bay Company trading post to a village and an important service centre of the International Grenfell Association, offering educational and medical services to northern coastal communities of Labrador. Most recently, since the commercial rise of Happy Valley, North West River has become a quiet community where families raise their children, seniors retire, and from where employed adults leave during the day for their jobs in Happy Valley and Goose Bay. Through the lives of three generations of women in North West River this thesis has traced these changes in the community.

Within the life-time of first generation women, life has changed drastically for Settlers of North West River. Sedentarization, the wage economy, new technologies within

the home (eg., electricity, sewage and running water, household appliances) and a rise in consumerism have all affected women's work. In eighty years, women's responsibilities have remained the same but the actual work that women do has changed. Women in North West River have worked to provide for their families. They have either provided the household with needed hand-made products or brought in a wage. They have caught small game or purchased food. They have prepared and served meals for their own families and as volunteers to the community at large. They have raised their children.

An ethic of hard work, self-reliance, commitment and endurance has kept women in North West River working. These values have offered women a chance to achieve respect in the community and to feel pride in what they have accomplished. The importance of hard work, commitment and endurance are most often expressed by the older women. When older women talk of these values they are often talking of their past, how they wish to remember it and the values that they want to impress on the younger generation. I believe that younger women have absorbed the same values, although they might express them and practice them differently than older women have.

9.2 What is women's work in North West River, Labrador?

This thesis has sought to define women's work in North West River, Labrador and to examine the historical changes in women's lives. By broadening the definition of 'work' from paid employment to "work activities", I have included all of the activities a woman from North West River might take on to provide for herself and her family. A list of all of the kinds of "work activities" performed by women between the years 1900 and 1993 would include: trapping and hunting small game; skinning and preparing wild game; fishing; picking berries; hauling water, cooking and serving meals, as well as baking, and preserving staple foods; cleaning, scrubbing, washing, and ironing; knitting, sewing and mending clothes; caring for children and elderly relatives; volunteering for the I.G.A. hospital; helping out with Sports Day at the school; organizing the annual Beach Festival; working for pay; shopping for groceries and clothing; and budgeting the household's finances.

The extent to which each of these activities is done by individual women varies from one generation to the next. Obviously first generation women did not go grocery shopping. They purchased on credit necessities such as flour, tea and sugar from the fur trading post. They also kept traplines and fished. Nevertheless, the preparation of food for the

family's daily meals is still a woman's job. Two generations ago women sewed their family's winter clothing. Today women purchase snowpants, coats and winter boots. Their responsibilities are the same, the tasks demand different skills and different activities.

The "work activities" listed illustrate the unique qualities of the lives of women in North West River. Women of the past are remembered as physically strong, variously skilled, capable of great endurance and of hard work. These provide strong female characterizations for younger generations of women in North West River.

9.3 Defining 'Work' in North West River

In North West River, 'work' is used in two meaningful ways. As an activity 'work' is most often defined as paid employment. 'Work' can also be a characteristic used to describe someone, as in 'hard working'.¹ In North West River, volunteer work would not be labelled 'work', yet, a volunteer can be hard at 'work' and thus earn the label of 'a hard worker'. The notion of 'work' in North West River includes

¹ Cohen's description of how Whalsay Island crofters use the term "hard worker" has assisted my analysis of the notion of 'work' in North West River. According to Cohen, "calling somebody a "hard worker",... expresses proximity to a symbolic ideal rather than an actual record of effort" (1979: 250).

both a list of 'work' activities and a cultural ideal. As an ideal, the local notion of 'work' includes the value of working hard, of being self-reliant and providing for oneself and for one's family. This ideal involves a variety of 'work' activities from paid employment to trapping, hunting and gardening.

9.3.1 'Work' is paid employment

Paid employment, defined as an activity engaged in for a wage to support oneself and one's family, is one sense of what is meant by 'work'. This definition is used by women of all three generations. During an interview, Jean Timmins of the first generation defined 'work' as "being paid" then added that it meant "being employed, having an employer". The fact that 'work' is commonly defined as paid employment suggests that the wage economy has affected Settler society.² Since most women, both young and old, in North West River have worked for pay at some point in their lives, it is not surprising that women of all three generations defined 'work' as paid employment.

One of Porter's (1988, 1993) recurring themes in her

² This suggestion is worthy of further analysis. Were past Settlers familiar with the idea of working for a wage? If so, would that mean that the definition of 'work' as paid employment is not new for Settlers in the late twentieth century? These are interesting research questions.

recent work is that women of Newfoundland have a commonsensical approach to wage work. Women accept paid employment as a part of their household strategy: "The point was not exactly what women did, but the expectation that they would contribute economically in whatever way was available" (1993: 120, also see Porter 1988: 547). Porter's research points out that wage labour is not often available to women in Newfoundland, especially in rural Newfoundland. Thus women have turned to "whatever way was available" in order to provide for their households. Fortunately for women in North West River, wage work has been more commonly available. Thus some women immigrated to North West River from Newfoundland and other parts of Labrador for paid employment.

Women and men of all three generations assumed that women will contribute in whatever way possible to their households. As girls, first generation women earned wages and remitted them to their parents. Once married, first generation women quit their paid jobs to have children and care for their homes. Yet, some worked for a wage following the entrance of their children in school. Others earned cash from the sale of craft items. The International Grenfell Association hospital provided wage jobs for women and girls over the age of thirteen. Girls of the second and third generation expected to find employment with the I.G.A. As the

cost of living increased, second and third generation women were less likely to leave their full or part-time jobs upon marriage, and they were more likely to return soon after the birth of their children to their paid jobs.

The fact that women grew up expecting to find wage work results from the cultural expectations placed on women to provide for their natal and marital households. These expectations also exist because there were wage work opportunities in North West River and later in Goose Bay. The existence of the International Grenfell Association held significant influence over the lives of first, second and third generation women in North West River. The I.G.A. provided paid employment to women, promoted education, and helped train local people. By hiring professional women and funding the professional training of a few local women, the I.G.A. provided a greater variety of female adult role models for members of the younger generation.

For third generation women especially, their contribution to their marital households is dominated by paid employment. Bringing home an income is not their only contribution to the household, but wage work dominates their lives in ways that it did not for first generation women. Third generation women are employed for a variety of reasons: for the income that allows them to maintain a comfortable

standard of living; for the company of other adults and to fulfil and challenge themselves as individuals. For third generation women success at their paid jobs does provide them with a sense of satisfaction and self-worth. While older women also earned a sense of personal satisfaction from their paid work experiences (see the life history of Anna), they did not emphasize to the extent that third generation women did that their individual self-worth was partly determined by their success at their paid jobs.

9.3.2 Self-provisioning activities

The local work ethic praises those who work hard, provide for their families, are able to reciprocate materially with family, friends and neighbour, and, are skilled in the "traditional" skills of the past (such as self-provisioning activities like hunting and craft production). This thesis has argued that one reason why self-provisioning activities are practised is that they symbolize values from the past. These values include: being self-reliant and a hard worker. By being skilled in traditional activities, or, being a skilled woodsman or a talented craftswoman, third generation women and men can portray themselves as carrying on values from the past. However, as I also have argued in this thesis, self-provisioning activities

are practised differently in 1993 than they were in 1916.

The dominance of wage labour in the lives of community members has changed the role played by self-provisioning activities in people's lives. Early in this century, when there were few wage labour opportunities and wages could not support a family, hunting meat, fishing, growing vegetables, picking berries, and sewing moccasins were work activities necessary in order to raise, feed, and clothe a family. In the second half of the twentieth century the creation of wage labour opportunities meant that households became increasingly dependent on wages and consumer products. Self-provisioning activities essentially became a choice. People took them on for a variety of reasons. First, because hunting your own meat and building your own house do help reduce the cost of living. Secondly, the pleasure taken in such tasks and in these products outweighed the extra work involved in taking on self-provisioning activities. Thirdly, self-provisioning activities are imbued with an ideal of self-reliance. Providing for your own family by the work of your own hands is culturally defined as satisfying.

Craft production illustrates the extent to which self-provisioning activities have changed. When first generation women were girls learning to sew moccasins from their mothers or grandmothers, this skill was not called "craft work". They

were learning to make winter clothing for their family, an essential task for any future mother. By 1933 the I.G.A. institutionalized the production of crafts for sale in Labrador (Kennedy 1988: 200 & Lynch 1985: 7). The International Grenfell Association paid local women to produce moccasins, gauntlets and parkas with prescribed decorative motifs. These items were then sold as native crafts by the mission at fund-raising events across North America and Europe (Lynch 1985: 6). Hence the creation of "crafts". The decorative motifs as chosen by the Mission for their aesthetic qualities, and, because they were representative of what southern urban donors perceived as native designs, became ethnic emblems for local townspeople (Lynch 1985: 8). In 1993 when young women practice "craft production", they are learning a "traditional" skill and creating cultural artifacts that define people locally. While the items are still practical (moccasins keep feet warm) they are also cultural symbols of Settler ethnicity.

Wage labour and an increasing dependence on consumer products has altered self-provisioning activities. In 1993 home production is a choice involving an output of time and money to be measured against the convenience and cost of making a quick purchase. Women have to weigh the cost of the material, the time spent in the making and the pleasure taken

in the task versus the ease of buying a product already made and the cost of the item. For many the overriding element in making a decision has to do with the pleasure taken in the task and the knowledge of having continued in the "tradition" of their forebears. Through craft production women can pride themselves in their skill and their hard work.

9.3.3 Domestic labour is women's work

This thesis has found that women's domestic responsibilities have remained relatively unchanged in this century. As had their mothers and grandmothers, third generation women are responsible for the daily care of their children, the preparation and serving of meals and the cleaning of the house. In 1993 the technology used to accomplish many household tasks requires a larger cash output on the part of household members, younger women feel they must work at their paid jobs in order to afford these consumer items. The household appliances purchased have decreased the physical labour women have to expend in order to cook and clean. Since the expectation that women are responsible for domestic chores has not changed from one generation to the next, third generation women are working for pay outside the home and returning home to care for the children and clean the house. Third generation women are not

working less than their grandmothers and mothers had.

How domestic chores are shared between husbands and wives displays both change and continuity. In North West River, townspeople distinguished between female and male activities, yet when necessary, members of both sexes have taken on activities of the other. In an article entitled "Women in Labrador: A Personal Viewpoint" Doris Saunders (a second generation Settler woman living in Happy Valley/Goose Bay) writes that women in Labrador knew how to maintain a household on their own:

In my early years my father went to the country in late fall and we would not see him again until late March or April.... my mom... was mother and father, and with the help of the children she kept everything shipshape while Dad was away (1982:87).

The unique quality of Settler women's work is their diversity of skills so that Settler women were self-sufficient when necessary. Women had to be capable in women's skills and in men's skills, so that they could survive alone (Saunders 1982: 88). Likewise trappers knew how to cook and sew, so that they could survive alone in the woods while trapping. However, upon his return home, the trapper and his wife returned to their distinct spheres of activity.

In 1993, a well-defined gendered division of labour existed alongside some flexibility. There were examples of a few households in which the husband was accomplishing most of

the household chores, eg., Arthur and Vicky, Nancy and Michael. In both cases, the husbands took on more domestic chores because their wives were employed full-time for pay outside of the home and were providing the household with its main source of income. However, these situations were temporary measures. When Vicky began working part-time, or, when Michael found a full-time job, the responsibility for domestic tasks returned to the women. Women of all three generations have assumed responsibility for domestic chores, and under certain circumstances their husbands have taken on some household chores. These circumstances seem to be determined by the age and number of children in the family, the income, the employment schedules of both parents, and the expectations held by both husband and wife.

9.3.4 Women's volunteer work

The formation of women's volunteer groups in North West River has been discussed in chapter six. I argued that the influence of the Grenfell Mission was central to the creation of volunteer associations. In her role as the wife of the resident doctor, Mrs. Jean Timmins, introduced to Settler women formally organized volunteer women's associations. Thus the Grenfell Mission created a new category of work activity for women. Through their hiring and patronage, the Grenfell

Mission fostered the creation of a local elite, an elite which has been involved in volunteer community work throughout this century.

Volunteer work essentially extended women's domestic skills to the community. As volunteers, women took care of the hospital, the church, and the school. They organized social events for the whole community and provided themselves with a space in which to socialize with other women. Volunteer associations have given individual women the opportunity to express their leadership and organizational skills.

While in 1993 volunteer work continues, the types of volunteer groups in existence have changed. In 1993 volunteer associations tended to have specific agendas. There were groups, whose purpose was to organize large social events, such as the Beach Festival Committee. Other groups, for instance the town council and the Mokami Development Association, were formal political organizations. Groups, such as the 250th Committee and the Labrador Heritage Society, celebrated the history of Settlers and honoured local trappers. Unlike past groups which tended to be general purpose community groups and whose members were all women, these groups are specific in function and both men and women participate.

Women's groups in North West River have had considerable political influence over town life. For example, women have offered their cleaning services to the community hospital and schools, services that were eventually replaced by hired employees. Women have lobbied government in the interest of their community. Regina Lloyd, as deputy mayor of town council and president of Helping Hands, the senior's association, acquired the senior's van through a government grant and fought for the ownership of Woods' Cottage as a meeting place for the seniors. In 1983 the town's first woman mayor fought against the closure of the I.G.A. hospital. Through groups such as the Labrador Heritage Society and 250th Anniversary Committee, women and men were involved in maintaining the historical narrative of the town. They are creating a symbol from a past 'work' activity, by glorifying the history of trapping. These volunteer associations are preserving and maintaining the local work ethic.

9.3.5 Raising children is women's work

Having and caring for children has been a mark of female adulthood for women of all three generations in North West River. The majority of women in North West River were mothers and most young women (including fourth generation women) expressed a desire to have children. While most women

in North West River did want to raise children, younger women wanted fewer children than their grandmothers had had. Women of all three generations expected to be their children's primary care-givers. These are the aspects of raising children that have remained unchanged from one generation to the next.

Most first generation women clearly identified themselves as wives and mothers first and foremost. For instance, Jean stated at first that she had not 'worked'. She explained that when she got married, she stayed home to care for her children. Other women of the first generation, Doreen for example, said the same. But, both of these women had worked for pay prior to marriage. Anna, a woman who proudly stated that she had worked for a wage for most of her adult life, also emphasized how she had cared for others. She lived up to the cultural expectation that women care for others. Working hard to provide for herself and her husband and caring for others is what Anna takes pride in. Annie did not differentiate between wage work, child care, and domestic labour; they are all part of the whole that a mother must attend to. These first and third generation women were all expressing how raising children was a central aspect of their lives.

The demands of raising children have changed. The wage economy, consumerism and the increasing importance given to formal education have pressured parents, both mothers and fathers, to earn money. Meanwhile less is required of children. Many of the chores expected of first generation children have been dispensed with by purchasing modern appliances. Attitudes also have changed. Allowing a child the opportunity to enjoy their childhood, tending to their emotional and psychological needs, are perceived as important. Children are given time to play. Mothers are expected to carry out domestic chores and spend time with their children, as well as organize and take them to extra-curricular activities.

9.4 Women and the cultural notion of 'work'

The life stories of six North West River women (Doreen, Anna, Jean, Annie, Clare and Nancy) have allowed us to glimpse how women discuss 'work'. All of the women I interviewed would agree that their main priority has been to support their families. In North West River, raising children has always required that women work. Women of all three generations in North West River have ascribed to the local work ethic. Praise and respect are earned from both paid employment and self-provisioning activities, as well as from

presenting oneself as self-reliant and hard working. The ability to provide for oneself and one's family earns women and men respect in the community. For women, this has meant that they can take pride in their wage work, their domestic responsibilities, their self-provisioning activities, their volunteer community work and the care they take of their children.

In North West River, women of the first generation lived a materially poor life, but found dignity in hard work, in the cleanliness of their homes and in the expression of commitment to their town as volunteers. As noted in Chapter five the work culture of the I.G.A. fitted in well with that of first generation Settlers.³ All of these characteristics of the lives of first generation women have been praised by young and old women in North West River. Younger women in North West River do not wish to return to the lives of their grandmothers, but they admire their skills, their self-reliance and their stoic endurance. Women of the third generation are at a stage in their life cycle (most of them being mothers of young children) when they are 'working' continuously. They are providing an income to the household

³ The I.G.A. requested that employees work hard, accept low wages, were flexible in the assignment of work tasks and accepted the paternal authority of the resident doctor. Most first generation women readily accepted these conditions of employment.

and caring for their children. They aspire to a materially comfortable standard of living, interesting jobs at a higher wage, and, leisure time. Third generation women also wish to be seen as self-reliant and as hard workers.

Women of all three generations have participated in the creation of the local work ethic through their 'work activities'. As mothers and teachers, women have inculcated the value of working hard in their children and pupils. As volunteers, who have organized events to honour the lives and work of early Settlers, women have celebrated the ideals of self-reliance and stoic endurance.

9.5 Conclusion

This thesis has shown that despite dramatic economic and technological changes in the lives of women of North West River, the expectations placed on women are not dramatically different from one generation to the next. The tasks women are responsible for are essentially the same from one generation to the next. Nancy depicts herself as 'a modern woman' because she spends less of her time doing domestic chores. But she has not let go of the expectation that she is largely responsible for their completion. Women of all three generations have worked to provide for their families.

Porter's comments about the women of different

generations living in Grand Bank, Newfoundland offers a perspective on the women of North West River. For the lives of women in Grand Bank the importance of raising a family gave meaning to the lives of women:

One was the women's insistence on the essential continuity of the project they felt they, mothers and daughters alike, were engaged in, and which gave their lives and their work its meaning (1988: 557).

Mothers and daughters are engaged in the same goal, raising a family, and, they bear the same responsibilities in managing a household and caring for children. There is thus continuity in the lives of women from one generation to the next. The same is true of women of North West River. The task of primary importance to them is to raise their children, care for their families and manage their household. All this women have done for generations and has demanded much 'work' from women.

Young women work hard to provide for their households and to raise their families. They may hold different aspirations than their grandmothers did, but they strive to fulfill the same expectations that were placed on women in the past. For the past three generations in North West River, women have provided for, cared for and raised their families. Part of the cultural notion of 'work' for women in North West River is to work hard to raise a family. As defined by older

women this involves self-sacrifice and endurance, commitment and responsibility, self-reliance and versatility.

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Appendix A:

GENERATION I

THE WORK HISTORY OF GRACE

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1910	Born in Pearl River, Labrador.
1910	Plays organ, self-taught at age 10.
1920s	Employed as cook at Grenfell hospitals in NWR and at Indian Harbour, earns \$10 per month.
Circa 1930	Marries Joseph, a local trapper (trapped at head of Grand Lake). Marital household settles in NWR. Lives with husband's mother and brothers. Assists mother-in-law with housework. Husband builds log house, with help of brothers.
	Between 1931 and 1953 gives birth to twelve children, ten survive into adulthood.
1950s	Builds second log house. Grace hires the help of a young woman with household chores. Sews crafts for sale to IGA.
	Joseph traps in fall and winter, in summer employed as a fisheries guardian.
1970s	Joseph deceased.
1993	Lives in second log home, neighbours are children and grandchildren. Grandchildren keep her company, do their homework at her house after school, bring her meals and take turns sleeping in her house. Daughters and daughters-in-law clean house, drive her to Goose Bay. Children and grandchildren gather at her house for Sunday dinner at noon. Children place her on on waiting list for admission to the Senior Paddon Home, a nursing home in Happy Valley.
1994	Moves to Senior Paddon Home.

THE WORK HISTORY OF ANNA

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1915	Born in NWR. Lives across the river from NWR (where Sheshatshit is located). Four years of schooling from itinerant teacher. Quits school to help mother clean seal skins.
1920s	Natal family moves to NWR. At age 12 keeps house and cares for children for brother whose wife is in hospital. Helps care for younger siblings. Employed as cook at boarding house in NWR; as staff maid for IGA hospital; as cleaning staff at HBC; employed to clean Dr. Timmins' home. Quit work once married. Married Norman, a trapper and employee of IGA. Lives with mother-in-law and keeps house, cooks and launders clothes for husband and his four male cousins. Cares for sickly father, and mother and ill brother. Helps raise niece's granddaughter. Paid to care for a local boy when his parents travel. Returns to work for IGA as staff maid. Construction of new house (financed through Labrador Housing), construction contracted out to local workers.
Circa 1970	Husband suffers from stroke, cares for him, does housework and provides only income.
1980s	Retires and cares for husband and house.
1990s	Produces crafts for sale. Norman deceased.
1993	Pays off loan for second house and begins renovations to improve insulation and repaint exterior.

THE WORK HISTORY OF JEAN

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1920 1940s	Born in England Trained as nurse in London during Second World War. One year training as mid-wife. Employed by IGA as nurse in St. Anthony, NF; as head nurse in NWR and sole nurse in Harrington Harbour.
Circa 1950	Marries resident doctor. Works as nurse until replacement arrives, volunteers as midwife when necessary. Lives with husband and his mother. Offers hospitality to incoming volunteers and professionals.
1950s 1955	Birth of first three children. Construction complete on new hospital, organizes Women's Community Club. Participates in bake sales, church fair, mission sale.
1960s	Birth of fourth child. Child care: supervised children's homework, organized birthday parties and picnic or hikes. All children at age 9, sent to boarding schools in England and Canada. Household duties: hired local women to clean house. Dissolves Community Club. Assists in management of hospital.
1970s Circa 1980	Employed as housekeeper for IGA. Dr. Timmins retires as physician.
1993	Dr. and Jean Timmins spend summer and fall in NWR, winter and spring in England. Cares for husband, who suffers from Alzheimers'.

THE WORK HISTORY OF ROMAN

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1925	Born in Sandwich Bay (Labrador) Raised in Rigolet, Labrador. Employee of HBC in Rigolet.
1940s	Moves to NWR and employed by IGA for 38 years. Began as assistant to IGA station manager, sending telegraph signals and writing messages.
1950s	As employee of IGA - helps construct new hospital, brings down wood from Grand Lake, does repair work, maintains boat engines, "did anything and everything."
Circa 1965	Marries Nora (born in NWR)
1960s	Birth of two children, a son and a daughter.
1980s	Buys and assembles second house, a pre-fabricated house from Mount Pearl, NF. (First house built of logs.)
1983	IGA hospital in NWR closes, services move to Goose Bay. Is employed by Grenfell Regional Health Services (GRHS) as driver. Drives patients to and from NWR to Goose Bay for laboratory facilities and X-rays.
circa 1985	Retired from paid work.

THE WORK HISTORY OF DOREEN

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1925	Born at Grand Lake. Natal household moves to ocean coast in summer, inland in fall, and back to Grand Lake in winter. Household chores: trap, fish, wash, cook, scrub floors, clean oil lamps and haul water.
1930s	Three years of school from itinerant teacher. Family settles on North West Islands. Leaves school and accepts wage work. Keeps house for a father and his two boys. Duties include: cooking, cleaning, scrubbing floors, cleaning oil lamps, fetching water, doing laundry and ironing clothes.
1950s	Works for IGA in laundry for one month. Married Richard (a trapper) and quits wage work. Marital household established in Sebaskachu. Birth of two children. Marital household settles in North West River. Richard builds a log house. She earns extra cash from sale of crafts.
1960s	Volunteers for Women's Community Club, United Church Women, Parent-Teacher's Ass'n. Richard traps and works shifts operating cable car. They buy a trailer/house, considered bigger for children.
1980s	Richard dies of cancer.
1993	Receives Canada pension; earns extra money from sale of crafts; volunteers with Helping Hands; annually visits cabin built in Sebaskachu; having trailer/house better insulated.

THE WORK HISTORY OF JULIA

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1930	Born at Mulligan (a settlement on shores of Lake Melville). Household chores: bring in wood, carry in water, carry out dirty water, wash and fill kerosene lamps, scrub floors, clean wood stoves, wash dishes.
circa 1950	Paid employee of IGA Industrial Department (craft shop), duties: cut material, assign craft making, check quality of work and pay craft producers.
circa 1960	Married Cecil, a trapper and IGA employee (electrician and maintenance).
circa 1970	Quit wage work. Birth of two sons. Returned to work at craft shop when boys were in school. Volunteer of Women's Community Club, United Church Women, Parent-Teacher's Association.
1993	Volunteers for Helping Hands and the United Church board. Continues to work at craft shop: over-seeing quality of craft goods and paying craft producers. Grows vegetable garden, picks berries and bakes. Cares for husband and youngest son, who lives at home.

THE WORK HISTORY OF ARTHUR

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
circa	Born in North West River.
1935	At age 8, taught to trap by father. Is taught cooking and sewing to survive alone on trapline.
1940s	At 13 traps on his own. Traps along the Churchill River, past Muskrat Falls.
early 1960s	Ice fishing in winter. In spring chops wood for following winter's fuel. Owns commercial trout fishing license. Summers works at vegetable garden and employed as a guide at fish camps. In fall, harvests vegetables and prepares for another trapping season. Prospects for BRINEX for 9 years, surveying land from Nain to Straight of Bell Isle. Living common-law with Vicky, an IGA nurse.
1980s	Marries Vicky. Birth of son, Alexander. Domestic duties: regularly cooks suppers, fills wood box and fetches water; occasionally mops floors, washes laundry. Quits trapping full-time.
1993	In fall hunts caribou, partridge. In Spring trout fishing.
1994	Teaches college course in trapping and guiding and collects unemployment benefits.

GENERATION TWO

THE WORK HISTORY OF LINDA

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
circa 1935	Born in Nain, Labrador. Taught by mother to sew, bead, make sealskin boots, embroidery, work with duffel and hook mats, taught to bead tongues of moccasins.
1940s	13 years old sent to boarding school in NWR. Lives in dormitory. Is expected to knit one pair of socks and sews a new pair of slippers for herself once a year. Completed grade 11 (skipped gr. 8).
1950s	Attends Memorial College, two year degree in Education. Given bursary, included tuition and room and board. During summer employed as city welfare officer and as aide in hospital. Interrupts program to teach in Nain for one year. Completes Education degree and returns to Nain to teach. Marries, Gerald, IGA employee in administration. Bears five children, stays at home to raise children. Provides a pre-school in her home, takes in 8 children. Joins Women's Community Club, United Church Women and is president of P.T.A. Employed as a substitute teacher.
1960s	Youngest child attending school, employed full-time as teacher.
1970s	School principal for one term. Employed as programme co-ordinator with school board. Fights for establishment of curriculum centre in NWR to develop Inuit materials for coastal schools.
1980s	Elected as mayor in municipal by-elections. Hospital closes in NWR.
1990s	Retires from teaching and from school board. (Curriculum centre moves back to Happy Valley.)
1994	Researcher/reviewer for Royal Commission on Aboriginals, a board member for Northern Television, involved in provincial electoral boundaries dispute.

THE WORK HISTORY OF HUGH

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1935	Born in North West River. Learns to trap at head of Grand Lake, leaving on foot or by canoe. Between age of 7 and 14 attends IGA Yale School. Is taught embroidery from IGA Industrial Department employee. First occupation - trapping.
1950s	First uses outboard motor in boat at 17 years of age. Attends trade school - in forestry, in St. John's. Employed by provincial forestry department.
circa 1960	Marries Alice from Nain. Establishes marital household in Goose Bay. Raises five children.
1965	Snowmobiles are in use.
circa 1980	Family moves to North West River.
1990s	Sells crafts at NWR craft shop: carvings of miniature komatiks complete with snowshoes, parkas, bows and arrows).
1993	Retires, but continues to hunt and carve.

THE WORK HISTORY OF DICK

YEAR

WORK HISTORY

Circa 1935	Born in North West River. Graduates from IGA Yale school with grade 11 high school diploma. Employed by IGA: weeds, cuts hay and wood, unloads supply boats.
1950s	Gravel road to Goose Bay is built. Works for CN telegraph (IGA uses radio network to keep in touch with nursing stations). Employed by BRINEX as radio operator. Attends Memorial College, studies commerce, employed during the summers for BRINEX.
1960s	Joins BRINEX as full-time employee, working in NWR and Montreal, duties: radio operator, base camp manager, in charge of field operations. Marries Elizabeth, a Grenfell nurse. Birth of two sons. Marital household moves to Springdale, NFLD. Still employed with BRINEX.
1970s	Marital household moves to Churchill Falls. Return to NWR The road to Goose Bay is paved.
1980s	Laid off from BRINEX. Employed as business manager of school board.
1988	Regional College forms in province, becomes Director of Finance and
1993	Administration. Leisure time is spent: picking berries, goose hunting and travelling. Regularly cooks Sunday dinner.

THE WORK HISTORY OF ELIZABETH

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1935	Born in England. In grade school preferred subject is art.
1960s	Earns a degree in Nursing. Begins a two-year contract with IGA to nurse in Happy Valley clinic and NWR hospital. Chosen to work in NWR hospital because she could assist with Christmas choir. Employed as public health nurse in Sheshatshit. Renews her contract for another two years, hospital is under-staffed. Accepts marriage proposal from Dick. Retires from nursing. Married and moves to Montreal. Moves to Springdale, Nfld. Birth of two sons. Volunteer organizer for Girl Guides of Springdale. Moves back to NWR. Moves to Churchill Falls.
1970s	Returns to NWR. Volunteer organizer of "Boys and Girls Club" and Girl Guides.
1980s	Organizes and opens first NWR Public Library, run by a volunteer board. Library hires one summer student a year. Member of craft council. Well-respected craftswoman creates: quilts, paintings, gift cards.
1992	Volunteer activities include: Grenfell Centennial Celebrations, Annual Beach Festival, a member of United Church Board, and organizes music for church services and choir.

THE WORK HISTORY OF CLARE

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1940	Born in Newfoundland. Upon completion of high school, wins an entrance scholarship to Memorial College, completes a two year education degree.
1960s	Hired to teach in North West River. Arrival of residential telephone service. Active volunteer.
1961	Cable car installed to carry people over channel between NWR and Sheshatshit. Travels to Europe with a friend. Marries Christopher and quits teaching. They move to Twin Falls and later Churchill Falls, Christopher is employed as electrician. Birth of three children. Clare cares for children, manages housework and volunteers in town.
1970s	Return to NWR. Children all attend school and Clare returns to teaching full-time. Clare is also responsible for domestic duties: cooking, cleaning, supervising homework, driving kids to and from activities, and volunteers in town, budgets family finances and organizes family vacations.
Circa 1985	Resigns from teaching position. Volunteers with Labrador Heritage Society,
1990s	Grenfell Centennial (1992), 250th Anniversary Celebrations (1993), and Annual Beach Festival. Produces knitted goods for sale.

THE WORK HISTORY OF PEARL

YEAR

WORK HISTORY

Circa
1945

Born in Nfld.

Completes grade 11.

At age 15 learns to knit from friends.

Hired at IGA hospital in St. Anthony, Nfld.

Transferred to hospital in NWR.

Worked as both maid and nurse's aide.

1960s

Marries Kenneth from NWR.

Two unsuccessful pregnancies.

Adopts two girls.

1970s

Returns to paid work when youngest is two years old,

employed at IGA Infant's Home and at Craft Shop.

Produces crafts, makes clothes for daughters.

Takes craft courses when offered, sewing and caribou tufting courses.

Produces: "eskimo" wall-hangings, embroiders shopping bags, parkas for daughter with embroidery on pockets, rabbit-fur boots with duffel lining,

crochets, moccasins.

1980s

Attends a course in home care from LIHC.

1993

Employed by Grenfell Regional Health Services as a home care worker.

Household chores: Pearl works shifts, so family must cope: husband prepares himself dinner, washes floors, gardens, and does outdoor work.

Daughters prepare and serve evening meal for father.

THE WORK HISTORY OF VICKY

YEAR

WORK HISTORY

Circa

Born outside of Canada.

1950

Studies nursing and midwifery in Britain.

1960s

Employed by IGA as midwife.

Arrives in NWR.

circa

1980

Living common-law with Arthur,
a local trapper. Marries Arthur.

Birth of son.

Returns to full-time nursing when
son is six months old.

Decides to work part-time as nurse.

Enjoys craft work, namely quilting.

Sells two quilts and makes 3 for family.

1993

Nursing part-time at NWR clinic.

Household chores: Vicky prepares noon
meal and is chief care-taker for

Alexander, does accounting and pays
bills, goes shopping

and deals with mechanics etc...

Younger female relative temporarily

living with them helps out with cleaning.

(see Work History of Arthur for his share
of chores).

THE WORK HISTORY OF NANCY

YEAR

WORK HISTORY

Circa
1950

Born in Nova Scotia. Family moves to
Nfld.

Attends school in St. John's and Gander.
Completes high school in Eastport, NF.
Attends trade school,
earns diploma as clerk typist.

1970s

Natal family moves to HV/GB.
Meets and marries Michael.
Establishes marital household in NWR.
Quits paid employment when four months
pregnant.
Birth of three children.
Manages a day care centre in NWR.
Returns to paid employment when youngest
is two and half years old.

1980s

Employed as housemother with IGA.
Michael, without work, is full-time
househusband.
Michael finds paid work in Churchill
Falls,
family moves to central Labrador.
Summers spent in NWR,
with Michael commuting weekly.
Produces crafts for sale.
Volunteers part-time at
Churchill Falls library.
Part-time paid position at library,
until funding is cut.
Employed as secretary/book-keeper
at local hospital.

1990s

Michael finds employment in HV/GB,
marital family moves back to NWR.
Takes course in addictions.
Employed at Resource Centre of the LIHC.

1993

Volunteers for United Church NWR
parsonage.
Takes correspondence courses in
accounting,
journalism and creative writing.
Produces crafts as gifts to family and
friends.
Plans to take a degree in library studies
at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

GENERATION III

THE WORK HISTORY OF ANNIE

YEAR

WORK HISTORY

circa 1955 1970s	<p>Born in NWR, raised by grandparents. Attends Yale School until grade 10. Employed at age 13: as a babysitter, as a student at IGA hospital and at HBC store. Marries Al, construction worker from NF. They move to Labrador City. Birth of first child. Marital household returns to NWR. Employed as cook at IGA hospital. Mother-in-law cares for son. Al begins building their home.</p>
1980s	<p>Employed as cook for construction workers on bridge. Self-employed, runs day care service at home. Takes in first boarders. Second child is born. Al is "saved" becomes a devout pentecost. Cable television reception is available in town. Employed as home-care attendant for a bed-ridden woman in town. Birth of third child. Begins foster parenting. Employed as executive assistant for the Labrador Native Women's Ass'n. Annie is "saved", joins the Pentecostal church in NWR.</p>
Circa 1990 1993	<p>Wins a five-day Caribbean cruise as a successful Avon Lady. Birth of fourth child. Self-employed in her own home providing day care services. Cooks, bakes 12 to 18 loaves of bread a week, cleans, does laundry for husband, children, foster children and boarders. Does clothes and grocery shopping. Provides main care of foster children and her own children. Hires through social services a young woman to help care for foster child suffering from cerebral palsy and to help clean house. Attends Pentecostal Women's Association, foster parent and PTA meetings.</p>

THE WORK HISTORY OF JENNIFER
YEAR WORK HISTORY

Circa 1960	Born in Carbonear, NF. Family moves to HV/GB, where she completed high school. Attends one year programme as clerk typist. Volunteers in hospital. Applies for admittance in School of Nursing, is refused, applies for a job at Grenfell hospital in NWR.
circa 1980	Moves to NWR, employed as nurse's aide in NWR. Receives further training in St. John's. Buys house.
1983	Loses job when IGA hospital is closed. Relies on UI benefits. Employed as Life Skills Instructor in HV/GB. Employed as Group Home counsellor. Quits job after a year.
1990s	Begins a cycle of dependence on UI and welfare. Self-employed as seamstress, working from home. Quits business, suffering from repetitive strain injury. Depends on UI.
1994	Employed as bartender and janitor. Marries Thomas.

THE WORK HISTORY OF JOHN

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
circa 1960	Born in NWR Attends Yale School, graduates grade 11. Plays guitar in a band. Employed as summer student by BRINEX as assistant cook, planting trees. Works in construction. Attends trade school in St. John's to be an electrician.
1980s	Builds present house, a pre-fabricated house. Takes correspondence courses in architectural drafting. Marries Meredith. Birth of two sons.
1993	Employed as draftsman for Department of National Defence. Hunting caribou for first time.

THE WORK HISTORY OF CINDY**YEAR****WORK HISTORY**

circa
1965

Born in NWR, raised by grandparents.
Attends Yale School.
Cindy is 11 years old, when grandfather dies at age 69.
Taught to sew moccasins, clean sealskins and caribou hide.
Participates in extra-curricular activities: drop-in centre at church; ping-pong at school; gym nights and movie nights. She explains "We played as kids and drank as teenagers."

1970s

At 16 begins caring for elderly grandmother.
Attends trade school, receives diploma in Recreation.
Employed as Recreation Co-ordinator.

1980s

Boyfriend, Tom, begins building their present home. They live common law.
Grandmother requires more care: cleaning her house, buying her necessities, checking in on her.
Volunteers on teen recreation committee.

1990s

Marries Tom, who is seasonally employed for town and runs a sawmill (trapped until 1992).

1994

Grandmother dies at age 84.
Cindy is employed seasonally by Department of Fisheries and Oceans as Native Fisheries Guardian. Employed summers and in winter depends on UI.
Volunteers for Beach Festival, Labrador Heritage Society, 250th Committee.
Domestic labour: "90% of housework is mine." Tom helps when he can. She budgets their money and pays bills.
Summer is busiest time of year between house work and full-time paid work. She and Tom go to cabin and hunt or trap and ice-fish.

THE WORK HISTORY OF ELAINE

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1965	Born in Labrador City hospital, spends early childhood in Twin Falls and Churchill Falls.
1970s	Family moves to NWR. Employed as student at Northern Store.
1980s	Completes high school in NWR. Employed as accounts payable clerk for Northern Store. Birth of first son. Returns to work when son is 14 months old. Marries Garth (from NWR). Household chores: bakes bread once a week, makes dessert for every meal and house is spotless. Birth of second son. Returns to work when son is 10 months old.
1990s	Returns to school for a two-year course in secretarial sciences. She and Garth own and manage a local business, she is responsible for finances. She pays the bills and keeps the records. Garth is self-employed at family business. A list of Elaine's employment experience includes: employed as book keeper, as accounts payable clerk for business in HVGB; and as receptionist, secretary and office clerk for LIHC.
1994	Plans to continue education in accounting, to become an auditor.
	Volunteers at Annual Beach Festival, and at school occasionally.
	Garth gets kids to school, prepares noon-time meal and is main cook in household. He helps with cleaning. He attends school assemblies when she is unable to leave work. She cleans house for mother-in-law. She takes boys swimming, bowling and skating. Father and maternal grandfather take boys fishing and trapping.

THE WORK HISTORY OF NINA

YEAR	WORK HISTORY
Circa 1970	Born in Twin Falls, Labrador. Natal family moves to NWR. Completes school in NWR.
1980s	Takes cooking course at community college in HV/GB. Takes a one year Early Childhood Development course in St. John's. Returns to NWR is employed as cook for local restaurant. Employed as co-ordinator of local woman's group, Women of the Land. Employed by LIHC as field worker, as an attendant and as a cook.
1990s	Lives common-law with Peter. Marries Peter (born in NWR). He works in construction, in winter he hunts and traps.
1993	Studies full-time in HV/GB at community college. Plans to have children and work from home as crafts producer. Present income from UI.

