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THE MAGAZINE OF NEWFOUNDLAND

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Cover Picture: Newfoundland fishermen are looking forward to the 1957 season with more enthusiasm and hope than for some years. For one thing they had little trouble in disposing of their catches of codfish in 1956, and now at last they are going to be eligible for Unemployment Insurance in the off-season, starting next year. (The picture was taken at Twillingate by Don Ryan.)

G. W. JEFFERS,
FARMVILLE, VA.
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Out of The Past – A Song, and Memories

That rollicking ditty "The Squid Jiggin’ Ground", written by A. R. Scammell in his native town of Change Islands more than twenty years ago, has become far and away Newfoundland's best-known folk-song, and in the broad world of musical entertainment it is now recognized as one of Canada's folklore classics.

When the high and the mighty were foregathering on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on the morning of April 1st, 1949, to officially welcome Newfoundland into the Canadian family of provinces, the massive bells in the Peace Tower boomed out the notes of "The Squid Jiggin' Ground". And today Art Scammell's boyhood creation is a natural in the repertoire of such well-known Canadian singers as the C.B.C.'s Allan Mills.

Living and working—as a High School teacher—in the exclusive Town of Mount Royal suburb of Montreal, Art Scammell gets quite a bit of fan mail and is accustomed to hearing "The Squid Jiggin' Ground" on TV or radio, often quite by chance.

Sometimes too he hears his song on the telephone. One night this winter he answered his phone just when he was going to bed. Without greeting or explanation the caller tuned him in to "The Squid Jiggin' Ground" being lustily sung in the background by male voices. Later he found out that the song was coming from a room in the Windsor Hotel where a group of men from Corner Brook and Grand Falls, in the city for a Pulp and Paper Convention, were relaxing after the affairs of the day.

In late January the Mount Royal High School, where Art is one of the teachers, put on its Fourth Concert Festival. Included in the choral
section of the program were two Newfoundland folksongs—"The Squid Jiggin’ Ground" and "A Great Big Sea Hove in Long Beach".

Teacher-Author Scammell was invited to conduct the choir of 350 American and Canadian high school students in their rendition of "The

The first women to fly from Newfoundland to London, in June, 1928. (See page 5 for names.)
Arrival of S.S. Bellaventure in St. John's, March, 1914, with cargo of corpses from icefields. (See page 6.)

Squid Jiggin' Ground". Telling us about it, in his usual modest way, Art says that the regular conductor had the boys and girls trained to sing it, "So all I had to do was wave my arms rhythmically and perform various facial contortions". Characteristically he adds: "Any relationship between what I was doing and the effect produced by the choir was purely coincidental!"

Nevertheless it must have been a proud moment for Art Scammell and his wife, Rellie, who comes from Bonne Bay. Between them they have done a lot for Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders in their adopted province, and wherever they go the Scammells are fine ambassadors of goodwill for their native Island.

The Postman has been more than good to us at A. G. recently and, fortunately this month we have the space to catch up a little on the backlog of mail containing items of interest to readers at home and abroad.

Mr. T. L. Sheppard, who was born in Harbour Grace in 1887, writes from the City Club in Halifax, N.S., enclosing a photograph taken on June 14th, 1928, at the old Harbour Grace "airport". Mr. Sheppard says the picture was given to him by a Mr. McGrath, a travelling companion of his many years ago on the S.S. Portia. (See page 4.)

According to a rather faded but quite readable notation on the back
of this interesting photograph, these were the first women to fly from Newfoundland to London. Their names are given, from left to right, as follows: Mollie Penney, Mabel Bolt, Marg. McGrath, Anna Cohen. (The name Art Cohen appears at the bottom of the notation.)

Perhaps some reader may be able to throw further light on this historic photograph. Meanwhile, our subscribers of the fair sex will no doubt be much interested in the dress styles of 1928.

- From Framingham, Mass., Mr. R. M. Forward sends along an even older photograph—a grim reminder of one of the worst disasters of the Newfoundland Sealfishery. (See page 5.)

  Says Mr. Forward: "In youth I was an amateur photographer. The enclosed picture was taken by me early in March, 1914. It shows the S.S. Bellaventure arriving in the port of St. Johns with a load (perhaps about 50) of frozen corpses from the S.S. Newfoundland disaster".

  Survivors of the tragedy and crew members of the Bellaventure can be seen lining the decks of the rescue ship. Even though this grim episode took place 43 years ago, we have no doubt whatever that in due course a letter will be received from some subscriber who was on board the S.S. Bellaventure at the time this picture was taken.

- Finally, we have a picture that bears no date but in a sense is ageless as it is typical of what happens everywhere and all the time when Newfoundland coastal boats arrive at isolated harbours.

  Sent along by Mr. R. G. Smith of Levack, Ont., this photograph shows part of the population of Port Saunders on the North West Coast arriving on the wharf to greet the steamer that is their sole link with the outside world. (See page 7.)

  The circulation of Atlantic Guardian being what it is, even in the little out-of-the-way places of Newfoundland, we’re pretty sure that one of those days word will be received from somebody to the effect that he or she was there when that Port Saunders picture was taken.

- Quite apart from these letters and pictures which carry us back to days gone by, much of the content of this issue can be classed as reminiscent material. It happens that way sometimes.

  There is the article, “Night of Terror”, which vividly recalls the disastrous Tidal Wave of 1929 that brought death and destruction to sections of the Burin Peninsula. The author is Patrick J. Antle, Treasurer of the Newfoundland Federation of Fishermen, who writes out his own experience as he was living in Placentia Bay at the time of the disaster.

  Mrs. John J. Blythe of Southampton, N.Y. (nee Kate Peters of St. John’s), tells about a trip around Conception Bay in 1894, a trip that was made by bicycle and took nearly a fortnight to complete—and had to be finished by train from Whitbourne at that.

  Mrs. Blythe says that while she has made this trip many times by car
People of Port Saunders turn out to greet Coastal Steamer

since then during visits "home", she is always reminded of the 1894 jaunt over roads that in places were little more than grassy trails. In the light of today’s sleek automobiles and paved roads, "Around the Bay—in 1894" makes most interesting reading indeed.

Mr. Maxwell Plowman, who is British Vice-Consul in Boston, describes a boyhood adventure in his native town of Port Rexton, T.B. You’ll get a kick out of his little adventure story, "Marooned in Back Cove."

All in all it’s a lively issue—good reading for all generations of Newfoundlanders at home and abroad, and, as always, a souvenir that few will toss out with the garbage even when they have read it from cover to cover.

—E.Y.
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ATLANTIC GUARDIAN
Robert Moss’ article, “A Drive Around Conception Bay” (December A.G.) was indeed pleasant reading. I, too, have made this trip many times during my visits home. I never make the trip, however, without being reminded of the jaunt “around the bay” which six of us made in the summer of 1894.

Such a jaunt in those days was not to be lightly undertaken for it was to be made by bicycle. Miss Edith Allison, the preceptress of the Methodist College, later to become Mrs. John E. Peters, and I, were the proud possessors of two newly imported bicycles. She and I, my brother Charlie (Dr. C. A. Peters, D.S.O., of Montreal), Jim Ayre, a lad then of about sixteen, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Ayre made up our party.

Insofar as possible, reservations for our nightly stop-overs were made in advance. Yes, indeed they were, for this was to be a jaunt of about a fortnight, not a one-day trip. Strapped to our handle bars were the necessary articles for our overnight stops and a trunk was sent on by train to Harbor Grace where we hoped to spend the Sabbath.

Our first evening found us at Holyrood where we had reserved three rooms for the night. Our next day’s destination was Brigus. We made it all right but not until I had had an adventure. Just before reaching Brigus, a dog, not too well acquainted with bicycles I suppose, gave chase, and I just about flew down that long hill with my brother close behind me. At the bottom we had to wait for the rest of the party to join us.

Our host in Brigus was Mrs. Rabbitts. Our third night was spent at the home of Mr. Noseworthy at Clarke’s Beach and we made Harbor Grace on Saturday as planned. There I stayed with my aunts, the Misses Celia and Laura Peters, while the others went to the hotel. We all attended Sabbath services at the Methodist Church in Harbor Grace.

Monday we were off again, passing through Carbonear on our way to Heart’s Content. Here we were detained by a couple of days of rain, a circumstance that would not bother us these days. As to roads, all were dirt and unless my memory is playing tricks, after we left Heart’s Content for Heart’s Ease and Heart’s Delight we were travelling for the most part on grass for there were no roads. It was on this part of the trip that an old timer stopped me to remark, “Them’s the right kind of ’osses to ’ave, they eats nothing.”

Our cycling was to end at Whitbourne as Mrs. Ayre was not feeling well. We loaded ourselves and our bikes on the train and arrived home in St. John’s in just less than a fortnight.

—Kate Peters Blythe,
Southampton, New York.
Night Of Terror
The Story of the Tidal Wave of 1929
As Recalled by One Who Was There

By P. J. ANGLE

At seven p.m. on Monday, the 18th of November, 1929, a great Tidal Wave struck the Burin Peninsula on the South Coast of Newfoundland. The wave followed a violent earth tremor that had occurred at five o'clock.

In two hours the almost indescribable fury of the sea had done its worst. Twenty-seven people—men, women and children—were swept to their deaths; scores of homes, hundreds of fishing stages, flakes, stores, boats and dories, were smashed to pieces. Many thousands of dollars worth of food and fuel were lost; valuable fishing equipment, representing the life savings of hundreds of fishermen, was destroyed. Total damage was estimated at nearly two million dollars.

I was nineteen years old at the time, and every last detail of that terrible night stands out vividly in my memory, never to be forgotten. The people of Burin Peninsula, mostly fishermen and fishermen's families, had enjoyed a decade of prosperity. The cod fishery was the chief industry. From the end of World War I, until the year 1928, fish had been fairly plentiful and prices were exceptionally good. Earnings from fish sales were supplemented by growing vegetables sufficient for local consumption. Nearly every family owned a small portion of cultivated land, and kept a cow or two, some sheep and a horse. In winter men produced most of the year's fuel by cutting and hauling wood from the forest. They also secured timber for the construction of the fishing boats, wharves and stages. For years past the trend had been to build as near to the sea as possible.

The summer of 1929 had not been a successful fishing season. For the first time in many years the fish had not come to the shore.
Prices had taken an alarming drop in the markets. There was news of a world depression, of stock market crashes, of millionaires becoming paupers overnight. Newfoundland fishermen, however, had learned from bitter experience to expect and prepare for "lean years." Consequently, most had accumulated a nest egg and the depression of 1929 was not too severely felt.

The weather had been exceptionally good that fall. The usual hurricanes that in other years had swept up from the south to lash the coast of Newfoundland with fury, had not appeared that Autumn. The 18th of November was a beautiful cool, sunny day. The fishing communities on the Burin Peninsula were a bee-hive of industry that day; men were engaged in the usual variety of tasks, landing and storing fuel and food supplies, and securing small boats for winter. Most fishing settlements along the coast were long distances from centres of supply. As the only means of transportation was by sea, the custom was to lay in supplies of food in the fall sufficient to last until spring. Women called to each other from gardens where the last vegetables were taken and stored. Children returning from school romped and played, and plucked bunches of bright red dog-berries from trees along the road. The scenic beauty of the place could be described in two words "gentle tranquility." Little did those happy and progressive toilers of the sea know what lay in store for them at the end of that beautiful November day. Little
did they know that death and destruction lay poised to strike and, like some savage beast of the jungle, waited for the darkness that would add to the terror of its attack.

_The Earth Trembled_

The first shock was felt at five o’clock in the evening. I was returning from a shopping errand when I heard the first rumbling noise. It sounded like an airplane in the distance. In a few seconds the earth began to tremble violently as the noise increased to a deafening roar. People spilled from houses nearby. With hardly a single exception everyone looked towards their roofs; I learned later that householders were convinced that the noise and shaking was the result of a chimney fire or explosion. The shock passed as suddenly as it had come, leaving the people in a state of wonderment. Little groups gathered here and there and discussed the thing that had invaded the peaceful serenity. All sorts of ideas were expressed some bordering on the fantastic. What seemed to be the most logical explanation was expressed by a man who had been in Halifax at the time of the Mount Blanch explosion. He suggested that it might have been an explosion of a ship at Burin, seven miles distant, carrying a load of oil or other explosives.

Meanwhile, darkness settled. As was the custom, people gathered in each others’ houses to play cards, or discuss the day’s events. At the home of a friend a group of eight, including this writer, had commenced a game of auction forty-fives, Newfoundland’s most popular card game.

Suddenly, from outside, someone shouted that the place was sinking; there was a scramble for the door. As we reached the outside we saw the first giant wave sweeping in over the land. Like a great black monster it came, tearing in, sweeping everything before it. I judged it to be about thirty feet high. Words fail to describe the chaos of the next few minutes. Pandemonium, such as we had never before witnessed, broke loose. The wave tore boats from their anchorage, ripped buildings from their foundations, and flooded the ground floors of houses great distances inland. The noise of smashing timber, the roar of the sea, the movement of thousands of tons of rocks and beach gravel, the screams of horrified people, all blended into one indescribable crescendo. It seemed as if all the demons in Hell were let loose.

In the midst of tragic incidents and narrow escapes, heroism played its part. Men, with complete disregard for their personal safety, plunged into the roaring waters, in desperate attempts to rescue helpless women and children who were trapped in threatened houses. Daredevil bravery was responsible for saving many lives. One feature of the event, and I fear my readers may not accept this as logical, is that I am convinced to this day that the water was warm. Whether this feeling was the result of physical shock, I cannot say. With a friend, I waded waist high in the water in an attempt to rescue an old woman trapped in a house.
surrounded by water. It was then
that I experienced the strange feel­
ing that the water was warm.

Houses Carried Out to Sea

In an hour the worst was over. The water receded like some sly
monster creeping back to its haunts,
and it carried everything with it. When it was over, houses and
stores were floating around the
harbors, and some were carried far
out to sea. Precious supplies of
food were carried out to sea in
stores and stages. Fortunately, some
dories had been secured for winter,
safe distances from the sea and
were not lost. In a desperate
attempt to salvage food supplies, men took to the sea in those dor­
ies, and the work of salvage began,
and continued all night. To add
to the sufferings of the stricken
people, a howling northeast wind
accompanied by a blinding snow
storm sprang up. Nobody slept
that night.

When daylight came, on that
black Tuesday morning, the sight
that greeted the eye was shocking.

Every beach, cove and nook was
piled high with debris. Strangely
enough, some of the houses that
had been swept out to sea were
otherwise undamaged. In one such
house, half submerged in the water,
a kerosene lamp still burned in an
upstairs room, the windows bri-
liantly lighted, which lent a weird
touch to the scene of the tragedy.
As men in a dory reached this
house and broke the window, they
found a baby still sleeping in bed,
completely unharmed, and bliss­
fully unaware of what had hap­
pened. The mother and three
older children had been drowned
on the first floor.

For three days, in bitter cold,
men searched the debris and
dragged the harbor bottoms in an
attempt to recover the bodies of

---

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the dead. Occasionally, a dory would come to land and groups of people would watch silently as the battered body of friend or loved one was taken on shore. For three days the plight of the people remained unknown. For three days they took shelter where they could find it, treated their injuries as best they could, and ate what little food supplies remained. Wires were down all over the Peninsula and no news could be sent to, or obtained from, the outside world.

It was the 21st of November when the S.S. PORTIA arrived at Burin and through her wireless the news of the tragedy was sent to the rest of Newfoundland and to the world.

A very brief description of the news from the various communities along the Peninsula ran as follows:

Port au Bras—Six people lost their lives, 11 homeless, 14 boats and dories, as well as all waterside premises gone. All winter supplies of food, all fishing equipment and five hundred quintals of fish lost. Great boulders driven inland for incredible distances. Once a prosperous place, Port au Bras is now in ruins.

St. Lawrence—All flaks, stores and wharves completely destroyed.

Port au Gaul—Six lives lost, nearly a hundred buildings destroyed, three boats left out of thirty-five. A hundred tons of coal lost. Place destitute, survivors suffering fearful ordeal.

Taylor's Bay—Conditions terrible, four lives lost, fifteen families homeless. No vestige of waterside property left.

Lord's Cove—Three lives lost, many houses swept out to sea.

Lamaline—Twelve people lost their lives, whole waterfront in complete ruins.

Lawn—All fishing property destroyed, most of the boats, all provisions and coal. No lives lost.

Ship Cove—One house swept out to sea with all the occupants, but was swept back again and occupants managed to escape.

Kelly's Cove—Two lives lost.

Rock Harbor—Everything swept away.

(Continued on page 19)
NIGHT OF TERROR—Continued from page 14.

So ran the reports. Similar reports came from Stepaside, Fox Cove, Mortier and other places. Hardly a single community on the eastern side of the Peninsula escaped utter ruin.

In such a situation, no one would expect anything of a humorous nature, yet while Newfoundlanders live and breathe, one may always expect a humorous touch under any and all circumstances. Even this night of death, danger and suffering, was not completely without its humorous element.

Skipper John Was in “The Hole”

One fisherman, whom I will call Skipper John, and who, incidentally, is still alive and hale and hearty, is famous for his great sense of humor. Skipper John was a veteran of many storms and adventurous escapades of the sea. His humorous and witty remarks often bolstered the morale of younger and less experienced seamen when the going was tough.

On the night of the 18th, Skipper John and five other men sat in on the usual game of Auction. This was a regular nightly pastime and nothing was ever permitted to interfere with the game. John’s wife took her knitting and visited the home of a friend nearby where other women gathered, knowing that the men did not wish to be disturbed while the game was in progress. Shortly after the game got underway, the wave tore in, snatched the house from its foundation and swiftly carried it inland for some distance. By the time the players clambered to their feet the house touched bottom, and the men leaped through the door to safety. The backwash of the retreating wave again picked up the house like some toy, turned it over a half dozen times and smashed it to pieces. As John’s friends watched awe-stricken and not knowing what to say, John remarked dryly, “What luck! I was twenty-five in the hole, now the house is gone and no place to finish the game.” He had lived up to the letter of his reputation.

Another man in still another community was walking towards the house of a friend, about a quarter of a mile from his own home, when the wave came in. Racing frantically towards his
house, he ignored the old proverb "the longest way round is the shortest way home." Taking a short cut across a meadow he was overtaken by the swirling waters and first carried inland. Half drowned and stunned he seized something in the water. Above the awful din he heard the familiar cackling of hens. He was holding on to a chicken coop which housed about twenty chicken. Back towards the sea he was swiftly carried still clinging to the chicken coop. Suddenly a heavy log smashed the end of the coop, the water poured in and the cackling ceased. He then seized the log that had smashed the chicken coop. As he was carried further out to sea he noticed a house some distance away. The house had settled down in the water until the second storey windows were about two feet above the surface of the sea. As the house swung near the log he seized the window sill, smashed the window with his bare fist and climbed in. As he reached the inside a cat meowing pitifully leaped to his shoulder. It was his own cat, his own house and his own bedroom.

Three hours later he was rescued, to learn that his wife had been safe at the home of a neighbor. When relating his unique experience later he remarked "It is like the Biblical story of Mohammed and the Mountain in reverse—I could not get to the house, so the house came to me." The house incidentally was not damaged and was later towed to shore and placed on its original site.

Savings Lost, Then Washed Ashore

Another somewhat strange incident was that of an elderly woman who lost her lifetime cash savings from a house that was gutted, but did not leave its foundation. The savings amounted to $300.00 earned with her knitting needles—not, you will agree, the easiest or quickest way to earn money. She did not trust banks and had the money stored away in a jam bottle with the cover screwed on over a rubber ring. The doors of the little house were smashed in and the sea flowed through the house for an hour carrying everything movable outside. The money, kept in the drawer of a small cabinet, was among the missing. Two weeks later a young boy was playing near the seashore and noticed a bottle floating towards him. At first he tried his pitching skill to smash the bottle with rocks. Then he discovered that there was something in the bottle. Hooking it with a pole he discovered it was the old woman's savings. It was promptly returned.

Many incidents of a similar nature were reported after things settled back to partial normality.

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At no time in living memory had there arisen an emergency when the need of a combined community effort had been so urgent. At no time in living memory had such a combined effort been made more earnestly and sympathetically than it was following this great disaster. From Newfoundlanders at home and abroad, from people in England, Canada and the United States, from thousands of individuals and organizations, help came pouring in. In a few weeks the grand sum of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars was raised.

**The Fishery Was a Failure**

A relief committee was organized. Food, fuel and clothing were rushed to the scene. Later lumber and other materials for building was forthcoming. Men gave freely of their labor and eventually some semblance of order began to arise from the ruins. By spring of 1930, all had been rehabilitated and built anew. However, in 1930, the fishery was a complete failure. A long period of depression set in that was not to change until after the outbreak of World War II. Poverty and destitution prevailed on a scale never before witnessed. People had come to accept adversity as a way of life. Many people blamed the scarcity of fish on the tidal wave. Then came the war and prosperity boomed again. In spite of prosperous times, however, there are still some old folk who refer to "the good old days before the tidal wave."

Looking back on that fateful night of November 18th, 1929, one can see that the tidal wave did not only end a pleasant day and a pleasant summer; there was an end to many things—a chapter in the economic history of Newfoundland, a prosperous era, a unique way of life, all ended in one screaming night of terror.
The Warden of Middle Brook

A High School Student of 17, Tom Lush of Gambo
Is the Youngest Guardian of Our Salmon Rivers

By DON RYAN

ONE day last summer when I was in Gambo, I decided to have a look at some of the salmon streams that cut across the tourists' route. Needless to say I was somewhat surprised to find that a warden on one of the streams was a high school lad of seventeen. He is Tom Lush of Gambo—undoubtedly the youngest warden with the Game and Wildlife Service.

Last summer was Tom's first season as warden on the stream and he took his duties seriously.

He had just made a count of the salmon run and an inspection of the stream when I contacted him during the last evening I had in Gambo. There was less than an hour of sunlight left when we drove to within ten minutes' walking distance of Middle Brook which he guarded.

As we trudged along the muddy trail, skipping across rain-filled holes, Tom told me of his work on the stream and of the thrills and excitement that lay in its dark waters.

Early morning, noon, and night his warden duties took him to the top of a salmon ladder at the apex of an almost perpendicular falls some fifteen or more feet high. There in a trap at the top of the ladder, he would count the salmon that were trying to get up stream.

The ladder, as the photographer shows, is made of concrete and has a series of twelve steps up which the salmon leap without very much effort. At the top of the ladder, where Tom is standing in the photograph, is a trap made of plank. The salmon run into this trap when the door is lifted. When it is released they are held prisoner until the count is made and another door is lifted, giving them the freedom of the upstream. All salmon migrating up river via the ladder must pass through this trap. Some, however, do leap the high falls at the other side of the stream.

130 Salmon in One Day

Most of the salmon run in the late evenings. It is then that the largest count is made. Tom would tally the number that pass through the trap each day. His best tally, up to mid-August when I was there, was 130 for one day. That was July 31st.

When we arrived at the falls we were discussing the advantages of the stream as an attraction for sportsmen or the casual angler. That it possessed beauty was recog-
Youthful Warden, Tom Lush, on the job at Middle Brook.

The sportsman is not altogether attracted to a stream because of its visible beauty. He is attracted because of the invisible beauty that lurks in its dark swirling waters. And Middle Brook, Gambo, offers that invisible beauty, temptingly and excitingly.

It's an exciting stream for the angler and anyone who comes to Middle Brook between mid-July and mid-August, equipped with
rod, flies, and license stands an exciting chance of experiencing a taut line and a screaming reel. The excitement that streaks through the dark waters of the pool and bends the rod like a fish hook is a four to six pound silvery beauty.

The salmon caught in Middle Brook are not large but they are abundant. Even though their average weight is around five pounds, there is a lot of tough muscle beneath the silvery scales—enough to test the skill of even the well-experienced angler.

As many as sixteen, eighteen, twenty were taken by a single angler in one season. Encouraging indeed. The best fishing time, according to Tom’s observation, is the last week of July and the first week of August. Beyond mid-

August you may as well expect to catch a turtle in the stream as a salmon. The fish are indifferent to any lures then, and trying to catch them is solely an exercise for the development of arm and back muscles.

As for the time of day—evening is best or early morning for luring the salmon to a quiet spot on the river bank. During the other hours of the day, the salmon will not rise for the fly.

Moose Hair the Best Fly

Every stream seems to have a fly that above all others attracts the salmon. For Middle Brook, Gambo, it’s the moose hair. That is what Tom observed during the past season.

The salmon in Middle Brook are caught in two pools that are easily reached. With a little road improvement one could drive to the brink of these pools.

Last summer saw an improvement in salmon fishing on the stream. That’s because last season for the first time a full-time warden was appointed. And Tom Lush who became that warden was always on hand to offer anglers advice and supervise the fishing and the salmon run. I had no need to ask Tom how he liked his work as warden. The enthusiasm in his speech told me of a profound love for stream and forest. Right now he’s back in the classroom to finish high school. Upon graduating, he expects to pursue his wildlife interest. At least that was the desire he expressed last summer.
Marooned in Back Cove

When I was about twelve years of age and enjoying every minute of my wonderful boyhood in Port Rexton on the north side of Trinity Bay, one warm August day when apparently all of the tomcods, connors, seacats, flatfish, and sculpins were having their siesta in the deep water, my chum and I decided to discontinue our attempts to lure any fish near the stage head and to engage in an exploration on shore.

After searching our own cove from one end to the other and "skirring" flat rocks out to sea, we decided to travel farther afield and to explore the back cove as well which could be reached only when the tide was dead low. We accordingly stepped carefully over the slippery rocks which were exposed only at low tide and found our way to the back cove which up to that date we had only seen from the harbour or by looking over the cliff.

After about an hour of picking up various interesting bits of driftwood, shells and multi-colored stones we decided to return to our own cove, only to discover that the tide had risen at least two feet and it was quite impossible to return by the way we had entered the back cove. Since it was now about midday and therefore it was unlikely that anyone would have any need of visiting the stagehead until it was time to haul the trap in the afternoon, it looked as if we were marooned in the back cove for at least five hours. We accordingly turned our eyes to the cliff in the hope that it might be possible to scale it at some point although it must have been approximately one hundred and fifty feet in height at the lowest point.

However at that age I guess we did not fully realize the danger of such a climb. Selecting what appeared to be the easiest part of the cliff, in some sections of which grass, stumps and rocks protruded which could give a certain amount of footing, and holding each others hands during the more difficult parts of the ascent, we began our climb. It took us about twenty minutes to reach the top and on two breathtaking occasions we slipped about ten feet, saving ourselves by grabbing some overhanging roots. Finally, to our immense relief we reached the top of the cliff and lay for ten minutes on the grass to catch our breath, hardly daring to look over the cliff up which we had ascended.

We decided not to tell our respective parents of our escapade, first because we did not want to worry them and secondly because we felt that very possibly we would each receive a thorough licking. An hour afterwards we had forgotten the whole incident, being engaged in making plans for a trouting expedition. However our risky climb came back very vividly to mind late that Fall when our horse fell over the cliff at the very spot over which we had climbed and was killed instantly.

—MAXWELL PLOWMAN,
Boston, Mass.
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ATLANTIC GUARDIAN
Death of a Famous Guide

LOUIS JOHN, guide, outdoorsman and sportsman has left this world for greater rewards and enjoyment in the Great Beyond. The late Mr. John, loved by young and old as a teller of tales on the woods and folk lore of Newfoundland, has left many saddened hearts.

Louis was born in 1868, at Conne River, Bay D’Espoir, Hermitage Bay, son of another well known and respected woodsman, Peter John. The John Mic-Mac ancestry was worn as a proud banner.

Louis, during his late years of inactivity, was a familiar figure on town square in Grand Falls, where he made his slow methodical way each day, to relax and pass the hours away in quiet conversation with young and old. His appearance was noted each day, and many of his old cronies would sit with him, while they talked of the yesterdays. Youngsters, would sit with him, and listen with deep respect as he unfolded tales of the woods and animal lore of Newfoundland during the days of his own youth. His stories were told without embellishment, and unfolded simply as he saw Nature through the passing years.

He was a human encyclopedia of knowledge of the great herds of caribou, their habits and treks, of animal life, bird life, and water life. He was always called on to give his respected opinions of the productivity of a new year in Newfoundland game fields.

Many nimrods and woodsmen, would plan their yearly calendar of outdoor activity, ONLY after talking with Louis John first. His words of wisdom were jealously guarded and if any controversy arose over the choosing of a site for fishing, hunting, or camping, the person who chose the site or
area, would say simply: "Louis John said this was the best place," and the argument was settled.

As a guide, Louis remembered his early days in the woods with his Father, Peter, very well indeed. He was five years old when he first went into the woods with his Pa. That night, the sounds of wolves, of which there were quite a number in those days, (1873 to be exact) invaded their cabin. Louis and his father went out to investigate. They found the prowlers had killed a very large caribou, but the appearance of the humans forced the wolves to withdraw. The caribou carcass was brought home, and Louis' father, proceeded to make a coat.

The way Louis related it was that his Pa skinned out the front quarter legs to make sleeves, the head and mane made a hood, while the body of the coat was made from the rest of the hide. Buttons were fashioned from wood. This was Louis' first taste of native handicrafts, which in later years stood him in good stead.

A Guide at Age Eleven

He entered the guiding profession at the tender age of 11 years. During the six years before, he accompanied his father on all of his tours as a professional guide, and made general treks into the wilderness to acquire the experience needed to look after those who would want his services.

His first "sport" was Bob Maher, of St. John's, and though Louis was only 11 years old, Mr. Maher was so impressed with his ability as a guide, he contracted him to guide for two or three successive seasons. The results of his guiding enabled Maher to bag a big black bear, birds and caribou, one of the caribou carrying a total of 48 points—unusual, and to this day, one of the biggest caribou ever seen by the late Louis John.

One story he related to me went this way: "It was dark and foggy, lots of rain too. Mr. Maher was with us, and I had another guide fellow named John Barrington. We worked hard and had big packs. I fell down, and so I took a spell. John, he said, "Oh . . . Louis dead!" But I laughed hard, I was under the pack. It kept me down. I couldn't get up.

Then Barrington said, "I believe we astray." He was pretty worried.

Maher, he said, "We are lost. I won't see my wife any more." Mr. Maher was plenty worried. Dad, who was with us, laughed hard with me. We talked Mic-Mac language and had a great laugh at those two. After awhile we said, "Nope, we sure not lost."

A couple of years later, Louis was cruising timber in the Botwood area for the Harry J. Crowe Company. During his off season, timber cruising took up a great part of his early youth activities. Louis John made his way overland from his home at Conne River yearly to fulfill his obligations to the saw-mill company.

He was the personal guide of W. D. Reid, of the Reid Newfoundland Company, while that firm was building the railroad. He took him hunting and fishing and was his constant companion every-
where in the woods. This was over a half century ago.

He was the personal guide of William and Bert Job of the firm of Job Brothers, St. John's, and also guided for one Captain Perry of the same city. He has walked the entire length and breadth of Newfoundland, and on one occasion, he and a partner, Newell Mattis, guide and trapper, made a canoe of caribou skins, and paddled many hundreds of miles of interior waterways without a single portage.

**Killed Caribou With Rocks**

This particular incident happened on one trip where Mattis and Louis took a steamer to St. George's and weeks later decided to cross overland to Bay D'Espoir and home.

,"We left St. George's," said Louis, "and trekked along the Lapland River, over the mountains until we came to the base of the Annieopsquotch Mountains. Heading northeast, we came out at the head of Red Indian Lake by a place now called Lloyd's River. We made camp there for a few days. We built our camp between two old Red Indian houses and I couldn't sleep any good. Always wake up."

"Why," I asked.

"Well," he laughed, "in those days, I guess I was pretty scared of spirits and superstitions, because I think those Red Indians always after me."

"We built a raft," he continued, "and poled our way down Red Indian Lake until we came where it emptied out into Exploits River.

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We camped again near the beach. We had one stone (14 pounds) of flour and a pound of tea. Mattis, he liked tea, but I like spruce tea.

One Sunday, while we were out of meat, I said to old man Mattis, “Let’s shoot a caribou. Caribou are everywhere and we need meat.”

Mattis said, “No. No shoot caribou on Sunday” and he took the rifle and hid it under his bed.”

“I told him, we’ll have meat. I went down to the river beach, where a lot of caribou were, and picked up a heavy rock. One caribou looked over his shoulder at some others. I took three aims and threw the rock with all my might. I hit him hard, and he fell down. Quickly I leaped on him and cut his throat, dressed him, put him on my back and walked up to the camp.” The Old Man said, “Hey! Where did you get the gun. I heard no shot.”

I said to him, “Gun I used made no noise. In fact, I threw a rock so hard that I had to use my knife to dig it out, and Mattis, he chuckled and said that he would not go hungry when rocks were around.”

The two men decided to build a canoe out of the hide in which to continue their overland journey home. Louis said the method of making the canoe was simple and used by many guides and trappers of the old days. The method as described by him was as follows. The men cut a keel, tied a stem to the keel with roots. The other stem was part of the keel. The caribou skin was laid out flat, and the keel placed under it. Side timbers and ribs were cut from crooked spruce and tied together. The ribs were placed under the hide, which was punctured on one side to hold the frames. “We used spruce roots to tie the whole canoe together, and it worked very well. Tight and buoyant.”

The pair then paddled down river to Paul’s Brook, and made camp. While there, Louis John related, they made a pine tree dug-out to carry them in-country to the south and eventually home.

With the dugout, Louis John and Mattis, made their way up Noel Paul’s Brook and by hitting smaller tributaries, eventually reached Bay D’Espoir, covering a total of about four hundred miles of water routes.

Said Mr. John, “We never made one portage during the entire trip with the raft or boats.”

“Very Rich Mineral”

Mr. John told a couple of incidents, one where about two miles above the Exploits river on the Noel Paul Brook, he saw some strange colored rock. He knocked off a large chunk and carried it back to his partner, Mattis, who said, “That is good rock. Very rich mineral. We take it back and cover it.”

The two men retraced their steps to the ‘find’ and placed the rock back in its original location, covered it with moss and left it. Louis said that if he had been younger, he would have looked for the location again, because he felt that it would have been a rich mineral find. “As far as I know,” he said, “the location of that mineral deposit has not been found yet.”

ATLANTIC GUARDIAN
Referring to times gone by, he described how the Indians made their annual kills for meat. The Red Indians constructed two large high fences, with a very wide mouth. The fences narrowed down to a corral arrangement and caribou herds were driven to this area. The men killed the caribou as they came through the slot at the narrow corral opening, while their women would dress the meat and skin them out. He said that kills were made in enough quantity to supply their demands, and the rest of the herds were permitted to escape.

"In the old days," related Mr. John, "when an Indian killed a white man, the skull of the victim was stuck on a stake to mark the location of the kill and also to signify the deed. I ran across two such markers in a drove of woods near Star Pond one day. The skulls were side by side. I got out of there plenty fast."

The late Mr. John entered the service of the A.N.D. Co. in 1908 as a timber cruiser and then worked...
on the Badger Drive for nine consecutive years. In those early days he received $1.50 per 10 hour day.

A large, well built and husky man, even to the day of his death, Mr. John was a living example of hard work in the outdoors, and he believed that his long life of 89 years was a result of constant outdoor activities.

His deepest love was guiding. For years the name of Louis John was synonymous with hunting and fishing. There was no trek too long for him, and his guests were always willing to go with him, trusting him implicitly for their well-being and safety. He couldn't remember when he ever returned from a guiding trip where his "sports" failed to secure their limit in birds, fish or other game.

Those were the days of caribou by the hundreds, partridge by the thousands and rabbits for the taking. Moose were not known in his early days, but he did remember when the first moose were brought in, but they faded out of the picture completely.

"Foxes and lynx," he said, "are one of the reasons why there is so little left in the rabbit and partridge fields." "And," he said, "more and more men were going into the woods killing this particular game for markets. That has done a lot to deplete our resources.'"

Old Louis John, in one season, killed 50 caribou for meat and clothing. He estimated that he has killed over 1000 caribou in his lifetime. And he has packed every pound of meat out of the woods, leaving nothing for waste. As a wing shot, Louis was famous. He rarely missed a bird on the wing, and his skill was forever the source of conversation among sportsmen who had met and hunted with him.

Monsignor Finn His "Buddy"

Of all who have been with him, even for years, his favorite hunting and fishing companion was the late Monsignor W. Finn of Grand Falls—the two in the woods, a fishing pole between them, and a small grub pack on the back of Louis.

"He was my only real buddy," said the late Louis John, "and we loved to sit by the hour beside a trout pond or river and sleep, talk a little bit, catch a few fish, and then go home.'"

One of his favorite places to fish for trout was back of Grand Falls, to the south, behind Tumbler Lake, where a little pool was named after him. The pool to this day is known as "Louis John's Hole." Every man has his own favorite spot to fish, and this was Louis' and Monsignor Finn's.

Yes, the Island of Newfoundland has lost one of its most colorful and fabulous outdoorsmen in the person of Louis John, but it will be many years before he and his name will cease to be the nimrod's byword and "open sesame" to wonderful days afield.

After 89 years of a full and complete life, Louis John was laid to rest by his family and those closest to him January 28th, 1957.

—Evening Telegram.

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