

OLD MEMORIES

Collector: Gertie Fowler

Contributor: Mabel Davis Oxford and Irene Ryland Belbin

Gertie Fowler:

I'm here today with Irene Ryland Belbin and Mabel Davis

Mabel Oxford:

Oxford

Gertie Fowler:

Oxford, okay. She's going to ... they're going to talk today a little bit about the ... ah.. what they know about the lighthouse and memories they have about the lighthouse.

Okay you can

Mabel Oxford:

When I was a small child...

Gertie Fowler:

Right.

Mabel Oxford:

I suppose 8 years old, or nine, we'd come to the lighthouse for little parties.

Gertie Fowler:

Right.

Mabel Oxford:

Jeff Wyatt was the type that enjoyed a square dance and he he really made us ah... happy didn't he?

Irene Belbin:

Yes

Mabel Oxford:

He ... he enjoyed everything we did and ah... we'd ah... we had all the operators over at the Marconi station like Ben Gosse was there, and Mr. Barrett, Mr. Hardy, we always called them Mr.'s

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Mabel Oxford:

There was no first names with them. Right? And you tell me you use to work there?

Irene Belbin:

Yes, I worked there for one summer.

Mabel Oxford:

One summer.

Irene Belbin:

Yup. And at the time, I was home with me mother and all the family was gone except me, I was the only girl and mom didn't really want me, in a way. So Mrs Barrett, they was good friends with Mr and Mrs Barrett. Always was.

Mabel Oxford:

Yeah.

Irene Belbin:

And one day she sent ah... to go to the phone then, very often. There was no phones then anyway. And she ah... this day this boy brought a letter down for mom and she to me she said, I was outside somewhere, and when I came back she said ah "I got a letter here" she said, "about you" she said ... "concerning you" she said this morning. I said "what's that?" she said " Mrs. Barrett, I got a letter from Mrs Barrett this morning, a note from Mrs Barrett ask me if you would go up with her, for a while because Hersceila was gone and Tina was gone and there was only Leyton and Claris home. And now Claris was out around doing his own work, she didn't they didn't, she didn't expect no help from them, and she had two cows to milk, she had hens, she had pigs, and it was all work.

Mabel Oxford:

Oh yes.

Irene Belbin:

My dear, she was a wonderful woman to work, you know.

Mabel Oxford:

Yes

Irene Belbin:

Oh, I loved her.

Mabel Oxford:

They were.... They were all workers, weren't they.

Irene Belbin:

Yes that's true, yup.

Mabel Oxford:

And you know even Jeff Wyatt with all his money, he was a worker.

Irene Belbin:

Yup

Mabel Oxford:

You know.

Irene Belbin:

True

Mable Oxford:

He was famous for the boats

Irene Belbin:

Yup

Mabel Oxford:

... he always wanted to be building something, didn't he?

Irene Belbin:

Yup

Mabel Oxford:

He he was, but he enjoyed the young people too coming around, you know? And I can remember we use to go up to the lighthouse and this was really special, he'd have a dining room table set right out, he had a bell on the side of the table where he'd call the servants in to take care of him.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Belbin:

That's right.

Mabel Oxford:

Everything was set out as if you were in a nice hotel.

Irene Belbin:

Hm...

Mabel Oxford:

Wasn't Isn't that right?

Irene Belbin:

That's true.

Mabel Oxford:

And ah... when he dined, he'd probably dressed for himself, he was ... he was special ..

Gertie Fowler:

Yup

Mabel Oxford:

Or we thought he was, you know.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay. Yeah

Mabel Oxford:

But it was a good life. We really enjoyed it. We We had a wonderful time.

Gertie Fowler:

So you was talking, now, about the square dance and that.

Mabel Oxford:

Oh yes.

Gertie Fowler:

So what was that ...

Mabel Oxford:

He prepared the the living room, I suppose it was. It was a famous room for a square dance.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Mabel Oxford:

And all the young people , came around , he had the music there and we put on the square dances and really enjoyed 'em. As a matter of fact, the other night when the guys were playing out there

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Mabel Oxford:

I thought so much about it, you know.

Gertie Fowler:

Brought back memories

Mabel Oxford:

Brought real memories.

Irene Ryland:

And did you know the The person that was there, that old man that was there named Uncle Jim O'Dell.

Mabel Oxford:

Jim..... Yes... Yes

Irene Ryland:

He was a sweet man too.

Mabel Oxford:

He was a great man. And Annie who ...

Irene Ryland:

Yup.

Mabel Oxford:

who ended up at...

Irene Ryland:

Annie Wyatt

Mabel Oxford:

The hospital in Blanc Sablon....

Irene Ryland:

Yeah

Gertie Fowler:

Yes

Mabel Oxford:

She was a fine person too, you know. But she, she was more ...

Irene Ryland:

Outdoors.

Mabel Oxford:

Yes, more masculine than feminine.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes

Mabel Oxford:

She was interested in the dogs and things like that, you know.

Gertie Fowler:

That's right. Yeah.

Mabel Oxford:

But still you know, she was nice to talk to and enjoyed our company. And we were only youngsters don't forget.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah, that's true.

Mabel Oxford:

But we made our own way around.

Irene Ryland:

And Joe Barney.

Mabel Oxford:

Yes, he was another guy that worked out there.

Irene Ryland:

Yup

Mabel Oxford:

But we found the Marconi operation, operators were wonderful men, weren't they?

Irene Ryland:

Yeah

Mabel Oxford:

Now they would there was one guy who lived with my mother and he would walk.... They had shifts like...

Irene Ryland:

Yeah that's true.

Mabel Oxford:

Twelve to eight – Four to twelve day shift

Gertie Fowler:

Yes

Mabel Oxford:

They in the night time they'd walk over the hill from L'Anse Amour right out to Point Amour to do their shift. Same thing in the morning, shift was over they'd walk back.

Irene Ryland:

Mr. Hardy, yup.

Mabel Oxford:

Mr. Hardy and Ben Gosse especially.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. Okay.

Mabel Oxford:

And ah... they really did well didn't they.

Irene Ryland:

I loved Mr. Hardy, was a nice man.

Mabel Oxford:

Yup

Irene Ryland:

Wouldn't have much to say...

Mable Oxford:

Nope

Irene Ryland:

But he was

Mable Oxford:

He was...

Irene Ryland:

He'd speak to you and talk to you, yeah.

Mable Oxford:

He was... he was strictly

Irene Ryland:

Yes, my dear.

Mable Oxford:

The kids had to be educated. They ... they there was no such thing as not going to school, that was out. And as soon as they got to the stage where ah, they had to have higher education, they were gone.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Mabel Oxford:

They'd go on to the mainland.

Gertie Fowler:

To get To get.....

Mabel Oxford:

Oh yes, he wanted those kids to be educated.

Gertie Fowler:

Sure

Mabel Oxford:

And we were very lucky, because from him we got some education.

Gertie Fowler:

True

Irene Ryland:

You know.

Mabel Oxford:

We always had a school teacher ...

Gertie Fowler:

Yup

Mabel Oxford:

And ah.... it was in the days when you only had the slate, you know one of those slates.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, yup.

Mabel Oxford:

With the slate pencil, and the black board, and we brought our own wood to school, lit the fires.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid.

Mabel Oxford:

But ah... and there'd be probably ten or fifteen of us in a little school in L'Anse Amour.

Irene Ryland:

That's right.

Mabel Oxford:

But ah... we went there for years and years until there was nobody to teach us anymore because we got up in the higher grades.

Gertie Fowler:

Right.

Mabel Oxford:

You know. The teachers came from all over Newfoundland.

Irene Ryland:

What about the Hardy family now. How many is left of the Hardy family?

Mabel Oxford:

Ah.... I don't think, Madeline who married a clergy.

Irene Ryland:

Was a Was a man living. I don't know whether it was Reg or ah.... because he's down to Battle Harbour or down there somewhere, down the shore.

Mabel Oxford:

That was Bert.

Irene Ryland:

Bert was it.

Mabel Oxford:

Bert did all the work down in Battle Harbor; on the island, in Battle Harbor.

Irene Ryland:

Yeah.

Mabel Oxford:

Bert was the main say, down there.

Irene Ryland:

Okay.

Mabel Oxford:

But ah... Bert passed away last year.

Irene Ryland:

Did he?

Mabel Oxford:

Yeah. So the only one of the Hardy's that I know now, is

Irene Ryland:

Reg?

Mabel Oxford:

Madeline.

Gertie Fowler:

Madeline. Okay.

Irene Ryland:

All the boys are dead.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Mabel Oxford:

Madeline married a ... I knew he was a clergyman, but ah... I know that she's still well and living in St. John's.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, that's good.

Mabel Oxford:

(Coughs) Excuse me. But for the rest of the Hardy's, I think we're ...

Irene Ryland:

Eb Humber is a man down home in L'Anse au Loup, his name is Eb Humber, he don't belong to L'Anse au Loup but he lives there, for years now. And he was down to Cartwright somewhere last fall, because he does electricity work and when he came home last fall, I ... I he met me he said "Irene, I got something to ask you" and "Yes" I said. He said "Did you know the Hardy's?" "Yes, my dear" I said, "I knew the Hardy's when

I was up to Mrs Barretts” I said. “Every night” I said, “they use to be out”. I told him. “Well” he said, “I met a Hardy down to Battle Harbor, last week, when I was down there” he said, “and he asked me” he said, “if you were dead”.

Mabel Oxford:

Well now that’s Eric’s, or Reg, not Reg... Bert’s son.

Irene Ryland:

Yeah

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, Okay.

Mabel Oxford:

He’s a doctor and he’s He’s sort of filling in his fathers footsteps, down there.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, that’s nice. So is there anything else you’d like to add to your story today?

Mabel Oxford:

No, I don’t think so. That’s about what we know of the Hardy’s and the Barretts and the lighthouse.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay

Mabel Oxford:

But it was ...

Gertie Fowler:

So it’s, yeah....

Mabel Oxford:

Good years.

Gertie Fowler:

Seems like you had a good time.

Mabel Oxford:

We ah.....

Irene Ryland:

Tell everybody we had a good time....

Mabel Oxford:

We sure did.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes

Irene Ryland:

(laughs)

Mabel Oxford:

We always had a place to go to dance ...

Irene Ryland:

Yes.

Mabel Oxford:

And enjoy ourselves.

Gertie Fowler:

And we're ah... also having a good time here today, as you can hear in the background.

Mabel Oxford:

This was wonderful. Last night, I enjoyed, especially when that music started. I was right back to the beginning of time.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, Yeah.

Mabel Oxford:

You know. The old fashioned music, you know.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay

Mabel Oxford:

It was very enjoyable.

Gertie Fowler:

I'd like I'd like to thank you very much for your memories, from both of you.

Mabel Oxford:

Okay.