

Helping the Sick

Collector: Ann O'Brien

Contributor: Elizabeth Mary Taylor

Ann O'Brien:

Today is June 18th and ah.. 2009, I'm ah.... my name is Ann O'Brien, I'm here with Miss Mary Taylor who was a nurse at the Forteau for ah.... 30 years and Miss Taylor is going to share a story with me. Okay Ms. Taylor, you can go ahead.

Miss Taylor:

Good morning, ah..... I first came to Labrador in 1953. At that time there were no roads, and if you had to travel, you had to travel by dog team, or in the winter and boat in the summer. And the story I'm going to tell you about happened in the Spring, before there was any roads.

At that time of year, you couldn't get around very well because the ice would come down from the north and on this particular day the ice was was set through the Straits and into the Bay. I got a phone call from, a message rather, from Pinware which is about 30 miles away, about a woman who was having problems.

How was I going to get there? She couldn't come, there was no snow. The land was all dry and barren and there was ice everywhere. Couldn't use a boat, couldn't use a dog team. So nothing daunting, had to walk.

So we set off and I got as far as..... walked as far as Buckle's Point, then went by boat to L'Anse Amour, across the Bay, in and out of the ice. And walked from there. Someone walked with me, carrying my bag. We walked all the way along the shoreline from Point Amour into L'Anse au Loup, where I stopped at Mrs Ann Barney's and had a cup of tea and a little rest, and then plotted on.

A man by the name of Lloyd Tracey, walked with me and we walked on, all the way down to Pinware. When we got to Pinware the emergency wasn't as bad as I thought it would be, which was fortunate, 'cause otherwise a lot of bad things could have happened.

How I got home, I do not remember, I presume I walked, the next day. But I don't remember. So just a little bit of story to tell you about what conditions were like in the early days in Labrador.

Ann O'Brien:

Do you remember who the lady was, Miss Taylor?

Miss Taylor:

I do, but I'm not suppose to say names of people.

Ann O'Brien:

Okay. And ah....

Miss Taylor:

Well actually, I'm not quite sure.....

Ann O'Brien:

Of course you had to walk back ah... the next day.

Miss Taylor:

Presumably, but I don't remember.

Ann O'Brien:

Okay.

Miss Taylor:

Strangely enough.

Ann O'Brien:

Well the ice was still in....

Miss Taylor:

Oh yes.

Ann O'Brien:

.... so presumably you had to walk back.

Miss Taylor:

Yeah.

Ann O'Brien:

Yes that was one of your trials for sure. And you had many more, that you..... did you ever have to walk again to another emergency.

Miss Taylor:

Not all that long distance, no.

I went around once, another time. Around the cliff on dog team and to get to somebody who was having a premature baby in West St. Modeste. And going around the cliff, ah....they driver lost his cap, so he went back to get his cap and while he was doing that, the dogs all turned around to follow him and took me out on the ice.

Hot water bottles, blankets, quilts and everything else. (laughs) But we sat and laughed, it was funny, you know.

Anyhow, then we got down to West St. Modeste and took the little baby, fortunately they were able to land the plane down there somewhere and we got the baby back to the nursing station.

Ann O'Brien:

Well, thank you very much for that sharing that wonderful story with me.