

## Early Days at Forteau Nursing Station

**Contributor:** Gertie Fowler

**Collector:** Lily Dumaresque

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes today is July 7 and my name is Gertie Fowler and I'm here in the home of Lily Dumaresque and today Lily is gonna share some memories with me of early days of the nursing station in Forteau. So Lil, would you like to share some memories with me today?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

I will, what I knows.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

I worked over to the hospital, worked with Hattie for a good many years. I don't know how many, but a good many.

**Gertie Fowler:**

That's Hattie?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Hattie Buckle. And after that, I worked with Aunt Sarah Flynn.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Willis Flynn was over there then.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

That was the janitor.

**Gertie Fowler:**

So what did you do now, what was the difference in today .....

**Lily Dumaresque:**

We .....we had no electricity, we washed everything by hand, on a scrub board.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes, maid.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

And we ironed everything,

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

and we brought it in from outdoors, put everything outdoors on the line.... Summer and Winter.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes, maid.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

No odds how cold it was, you had to put it out.

**Gertie Fowler:**

You had hot water though, did you Lily?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

We had hot water, yeah. We use to pump it with a pump.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Hand pump?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Hand pump, yeah.

And we ironed everything. And after that we put it on the stove when we was washing and put it in a big boiler and couldn't get the stains out 'cause we never had nothing only sunlight soap.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

No soap suds or nothing like that. So we put it on and boiled it in Gillet's Lye, and after that we'd get done with that, well if it was a nice night we'd put it outdoors and leave it

all night, so that it would get right white. So we'd bring it in and hang it up, if it wasn't dry. We had all kinds of lines along the laundry. That's where I worked in.

So after that, I worked upstairs. Every Friday, I'd go upstairs and clean up all the floors, from ..... right from the top to the bottom, right down on your knees scrubbing.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Scrubbed everything.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Scrubbed everything, no mop.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes maid. Yeah.

What was the difference now, you think, back then and now?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

It was a lot harder then, than what it is now.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

To my mind.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Never had so much to do it with.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Nope, never had so much to wear, either.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Nope.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

It was cold enough down there to freeze ya, because you'd have to wear your ski pants or something like that.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Or stand up behind the sink for scrubbing on the scrub board.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Is that right?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah. Cold, my dear. Yeah.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah. So Lil now, so what memories do you have of your mother. Your mother use to work with....

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah, well mom.... that picture I give you, well they was called the garden group, or whatever?

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

So they worked in the garden, pulling out weeds and all that kind of stuff for \$0.50 an hour. That's what we got for laundry, certainly, \$0.50 an hour.

**Gertie Fowler:**

So what ah... what else would your mother and them, now?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Well they'd get ah.... they would get paid for that. Well they use to have clothes come, they use to have a clothes store over there. Anybody that worked over there, you'd go over and get the worth of it in clothes.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

At the clothing store.

**Gertie Fowler:**

So can you remember gettin' anything special for yourself?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah, well I use to get scarves and that kind of stuff, and clothes and boots and whatever you mind to. I know one time I got a pair of boots over there, and they was long.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

And I cut off the boots and made a pair of shoes out of it. (laughs)

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes, maid.

So what about ah... what about the baby clothes and that, now?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Well....

**Gertie Fowler:**

You was telling me about your baby....

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah, I know. I never had none when Johnny was born, because like I said, he come in the world too quick to ah have anything ready. I had to wrap him up in me apron.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes, maid.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

So I went over the next day or Aunt Sis did and got what they called a "fifty cent bundle".

**Gertie Fowler:**

And what was that now?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

And that was a little nightdress and a shirt and diaper.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes, maid.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

That's all was there.

**Gertie Fowler:**

That's all you had for your baby, to start off.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yes, maid.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

That was sixty four years ago.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

So do you think that ..... you think that by the nursing station and Grenfell, like coming in here helped your community?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah I think they did.

**Gertie Fowler:**

In what ways, now?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Because like ah... if the men went in the woods and cut .... what they use to call .... billets....

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

And they'd ah... give it to the women or they'd take it up ah ...for clothing

**Gertie Fowler:**

Oh. Okay.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

That was the payment they got.

**Gertie Fowler:**

For...

**Lily Dumaresque:**

They use to come here on and bring in loads and loads of ah... clothes in piles.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Is that right?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

For the clothing store?

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

It's unbelievable how many women use to go over there and get clothes my dear.

**Gertie Fowler:**

For sure.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah.

**Gertie Fowler:**

So they would cut the firewood.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah and bring it over there and cut it up.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Make, I think it was six or eight feet long junks and pile it up. Sometimes they use to pay a fee for getting it cut up, right?

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay. Yeah. So it changed the community or it changed the coast, I guess hey?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah. We use to have a green house over there too.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

That was not... that was late. That was when Ms. Taylor was over there.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay. Did you have any memories of Ms. Taylor and that now, that you'd like to share with me, or any of the nurses.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Ah... a Dr. Holsman over there, that's when Aunt Sis was working.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

....or Aunt Elizabeth her name was.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Sure.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

'Cause she got... we got a jug there and a plaque that they gave us for Christmas hey.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Is that right?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

They always had Christmas trees over there.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, yeah?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah. Use to have bails and bails of toys come for youngsters right.

**Gertie Fowler:**

When would they give this out now?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

In Christmas.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Any special time like?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

It was before Christmas.... around Christmas Eve, they'd have a party. Jack Buckle always use to be Santa Claus.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Is that right?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

I know poor old mom one time and we was going around in circles, I... that... when they use to say "sailing in the boat 'til the tide runs high"...

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

..."waiting for the pretty girls to come bun by".



**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

And mom fell down and broke her arm.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Is that right?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah.

**Gertie Fowler:**

How old was you then?

**Lily Dumaresque:**

I wouldn't very old then, maid. I might have been ten or twelve.

**Gertie Fowler:**

That's all.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

But they use to have nice gifts over there. Give out cocoa and have cocoa and that for the youngsters.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Yeah, so over all it was...

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah.

**Gertie Fowler:**

.... it was.....

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah.

**Gertie Fowler:**

.... really good for the community.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Yeah. They done a lot of good work, my dear. I guarantee you.

**Gertie Fowler:**

So anything you'd like to add to your story.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

I don't know, I don't think there's very much more is it?

I know, I told you about all the boilers and that we boiled and we use to work from 9 to 5pm .

**Gertie Fowler:**

Hmmm.....hmmmm.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

I don't think I worked any, after I got done working with Maud, I don't think I worked over there after that.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Oh. Okay.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

'Cause I never worked after Johnny was born anyway.

**Gertie Fowler:**

Oh, Okay.

Well I'd like to thank you for your memories, then. They were beautiful.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

Perhaps there's many more but right now I can't ah....

**Gertie Fowler:**

...think off...

**Lily Dumaresque:**

...think of any. Not to come up with.....

**Gertie Fowler:**

Okay. Well I'll thank you then.

**Lily Dumaresque:**

You're welcome.

