

The Marconi Station

Contributor: Julie Irene Ryland

Collector: Gertie Fowler

Gertie Fowler:

I'm here today with Julie Irene Ryland. Julie Irene worked at the Marconi Station in Point Amour and that, so today she's going to share some memories with me about being up there. So Irene, can you tell me today, about how come you get to go up to Point Amour.

Irene Ryland:

Yes my dear, I was home, I was nineteen years old then, and I was home with me mother. Me mother, just me and me mother and she didn't need me very bad and she knew Mrs. Barrett.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

The Marconi Station, she lived up at Point Amour in the Marconi Station, her husband was Marconi Station...

Gertie Fowler:

Operator

Irene Ryland:

Operator. She had two girls, two boys and in the summer she was very busy and they were gone away. So one day there was a man came down from up there, she couldn't phone down then, and ah she said mom, someone came to the door and gave mom a note, a letter, and when she read the letter she said to me, she said "ah...would you go up Point Amour with Mrs. Barrett for a month, perhaps longer then a month" she said. I said "I don't know my dear, I don't know."

"Well," she said, "she wants you to go up with her". Mrs Barrett was a good friend of my mother and dad. And I said "Yes," so that was a Friday evening and a Monday morning I went up, I walked up. John George Ryland use to go up there to work for Mr. Barrett, and he was going up there the next morning, so I walked up with him. Manys a times, I walked up by myself. Anyway, when I got up there, she came out, dear old soul, I knew her but she was a lovely woman. She put her arms around me, she said "Now"

she said, "I'm going to have you up here with me for a while." She said, "think you're going to like to be up here". I says "yes, my dear", and I said "you got cows". "Yes" she said, "I got two", and she said "you ever milked a cow before?" I said "No, my dear, but" I said, "me brother got a cow right next door to me." "Well," she said, "when the cows come home the night, now" she said, "you'll milk them". "Okay" I said, "I'll try."

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

So the next night, about six o'clock or seven o'clock, she went out be the door and the cows, she had a white one and a brown one. Nice, she was a beautiful cow. Her name was Dais and I didn't know what to think of it, she went out by the door and the cow was a long ways away. And she sung out to her, "Daise", and my dear she looked up and in she comes, walked right up to ... to the...

Gertie Fowler:

Come right home.

Irene Ryland:

Yes, come right home, she knew what she was coming home for. And she said "I wonder where the other cow is too," she said, "that's she's not home". The other ones name I think was Blossom. "Yeah, Blossom". So before I sat down on the bench, I got the bench with a tub of water, and a big cloth in to 'em, washed her utter, washed her and dried her. And then I sit down on the bench and took the bucket and milked the cow.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes maid.

Irene Ryland:

"My dear," she said, "you could do it excellent". "Never did it before?" she said. I said "No", "Well" she said, "you're able to do it". So then ...

Gertie Fowler:

So what did you do with the milk now after you ...

Irene Ryland:

Well now, when the other cow came home ... ah, I milked a bucket out of her too. Bucket a cow each, bucket of milk out of each cow, and brought it in the house and put it through the separator.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Irene Ryland:

You ever see a separator, milk separator before?

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah, I think I did.

Irene Ryland:

Yeah, but I put it through the separator, put the milk through the separator and then I put the butter through the separator for all the week, every day, and every morning and every night, and Friday evening after dinner, Friday evening after dinner, what we would do ... go out in the ... they had a store out front of the house, a beautiful, just as clean as here in the house, my dear. Beautiful, stove there and everything, I'd make twelve pound of butter every Friday evening, cows butter.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid.

Irene Ryland:

Yeah, a wash... that was a good job my dear, be always Friday evening that's what we would have to do, by the time we had it finished it was supper time. And that would be our evening, that would be our work for Friday evening.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Irene Ryland:

Our butter was made, 'til next Friday. Then Friday morning, we'd be washing up the floors and doing all the work like that, all around, everything. For every week, every Friday morning have to clean up but she was a lovely woman, my dear.

When you'd go washin' Monday morning, we'd get up she'd have two wash cloths for me and one for her. And she'd wash more then I wash either. For every Monday morning and perhaps Friday, we may wash again, but everything cleaned up Friday, then maybe Friday evening be someone come visit and

Gertie Fowler:

Every day you had something special to do, did ye?

Irene Ryland:

Yeah, every day we had something special.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

Then in the evening supper, after supper, she never want me to stay home, I could always go out Point Amour. I went over to Point Amour then. Over to the lighthouse and Bella.... a girl over there by the name of Bella Barney. Her name was Bella Barney, she

was a good friend of mine. She ah... was Bella Barney from Forteau, and she married Wilfred Flynn. That's who she married.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup

Irene Ryland:

And she was there to work, and one morning we went over, and, in the morning about eleven o'clock, she was in the pantry peeling potatoes and I went in certainly, ready to go in talking to her. Bun by, like we heard something coming, like something knocking, knocking, knocking, I looked towards the door and now they had two horses and Fred Davis and Mr. Wyatt, that's the only two was home that day. They were real good friends, Fred always worked there, he was a man that was there all the time, see. His wife was there too, Aunt May.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

And I looked out through the door, "my Bella," I said, "that's the horse." Well I was frightened to death of a horse, and I jumped up on the table and I won't say what Bella said, I can't say what she said. (laughs) Anymore than meself, I said a good bit. My dear, I didn't know what to do. And he brought the horse right in through the door, right in across the floor. Was a hardwood floor in it, up there.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

It was painted red.

Gertie Fowler:

Was it?

Irene Ryland:

And the two of them was walking behind the horse and the horse came right in. Right in the pantry, and I knows what Bella said to me, she said "My God" she said "she wants some peels now" she said. She grabbed up a whole handful of peels that she threw out on the floor, so the horse would turn around and eat the peels.

Gertie Fowler:

So what did he do it, just for devilment, or what?

Irene Ryland:

Yes, Fred... that was He knew I was afraid of the horse.

Gertie Fowler:

Yup.

Irene Ryland:

And this is what they did, now, the two of them went out and opened the door and drove let the horse walk in the pantry. Where me and Bella was too.

Gertie Fowler:

Torment ye. So what did you do in the night time for past time?

Irene Ryland:

Oh, my dear. Some nights we wouldn't have anyone and some nights we'd have a big crowd. Always go out in the flag house too and sing songs like that. We do whatever we want to when Mr. White was gone.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

When skipper was gone. And this....

Gertie Fowler:

When he was gone, what did you do?

Irene Ryland:

When the rat was out, the cat play. (laughs)

Gertie Fowler:

No, when the cat came out the rat would play, was it?

Irene Ryland:

Yes. And anyways, some nights Joe Barney use to be over there too, from Forteau. He use to be over there too. And lots of time, one night we was over there, we had nothing to do it was raining. Didn't know what to do, and they wanted to go playing cards, I said "No, my dear, I don't know anything about cards. Your always at me about playing cards but I don't know how to play cards. So okay, so we said we'd have a dance, and Uncle Bob Eb was there, and Joe Barney but Fred came in but he went out cause he was the work, he had to go to work. Aunt Beller and believe Greta Davis was here too I think, I'm pretty well sure, Greta was out there that night.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Irene Ryland:

Anyway, they use to come out from Point Amour some nights, L'Anse Amour some nights, and she said we'll have a dance. So up on the up on the wall when you goes

in, right along there, there was a shelf, what they call a mantle shelf and there was six stand lamps on that shelf.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Irene Ryland:

And anyway, we got out for a dance, and Uncle Bob grabbed a chair for a partner.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, Okay.

Irene Ryland:

We never had no partners, say, Uncle ... Uncle.... Uncle Bob, he grabbed a chair and when he grabbed the chair, he swung around, he knocked one of the lamps down and broke him. Well, now what's skipper gonna say when he comes home, now. Well I don't know what he would say but anyway, that... we didn't give him a chance to say anything, so Bob said, we was in a fuss now about the lamp, all the glass on the floor and everything and Beller said 'My Bob boy' she said "what's we gonna do now". "Now Beller" he said, "don't make no fuss," he said "I will soon get a lamp for ye" he said. "I'll clear up the fuss for ye" that's what he said to her. "Well" I said, "bye that's shocking, how many did you break," I said. He knocked down one, smashed him up, "don't worry now" he said, "Bob is gonna get a lamp", so he took off. He went down the whistle house and there was lots of lamps down the whistle house,

Gertie Fowler:

Yup

Irene Ryland:

and they were used.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Irene Ryland:

when Bob came back, he was gone about perhaps ½ hour, when he came back he had the lamp, the chimney, the burner and all that in his hand. But now he had to go and fill him up with oil, we all went again, when he came back he had it filled with oil. Put it right back on the shelf where it was to. Mr. White don't know the old lamp was broke, yet.

Gertie Fowler:

No. Never, ever told him

Irene Ryland:

Oh, no.

Gertie Fowler:

So I guess that was a big job in the morning too when you get up and had to clean the lamps.

Irene Ryland:

Oh yes, yes. Every morning you had to do that my dear. Yup, every morning you had to do that.

Gertie Fowler:

Clean lamp chimneys.

Irene Ryland:

And Gertie, something else Gertie, she ah... when the clothes was dry. Bring it in. You never had to worry about ironing the clothes, she loved ironing the clothes, although she I don't know how old she was then ... but you know what, I knows one evening she came out and she said ah... "How many white shirts do you think," she said, "I ironed this evening." I said, "I don't know my dear." She said, "I ironed five".

Gertie Fowler:

Yes, maid.

Irene Ryland:

Now she only had Claris, and Leyton ... well Leyton was the older boy, but Claris use to you know, he use to dress up and we'd go to Forteau, he ah.... had to be spotless.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Irene Ryland:

And he'd always ... when he'd go to Forteau, anywhere like that, he'd always have to put on a white shirt. And she loved ironing white shirt, she told me.

Gertie Fowler:

Did she?

Irene Ryland:

Yeah. Mr. Barrett was a nice man too maid. Oh yes, he was pretty reasonable. And another time, I tell you now, she went up and one evening she went up and she had some hens, she had hens,

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

They had pigs, they had cows. And she went up in the barn, they had The barn was nice all partened off and everything say. They had a rooster and he was saucy.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

I wouldn't go up.... I'd go in and feed the hens but I tell you now, I had my eye on the rooster.

Gertie Fowler:

That right.

Irene Ryland:

And this morning, she went up and she didn't mind feeding the hens. She'd feed the hens sometimes, and I'd feed them, and Mr. Barrett feed 'em, we'd all look out to them anyway, in our turn. And ah... she went in through this gate and there was two gates there, and instead of her going to one gate, she went to the other, to feed the hens, the rooster wasn't in her mind. What did he do, my dear, but flew on her head and picked her head right there.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

Picked her head

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

She had to go up to Forteau hospital, a couple times.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

Yes, my dear. Yup.

We use to torment her about that after.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah, the rooster didn't have much liken for her then.

Irene Ryland:

And they were good friends with mom and dad. Lots of time, I remember a time dad, we use to go up sometimes stay up there like Saturday nights. Stay up Saturday nights. And there's no televisions ... er ... radios there then, not even a radio here in L'Anse au Loup.

So this evening went up. Went up Saturday evening and stayed up all Saturday night and came down Sunday evening after dinner. Well when we was eating supper Sunday night, after he got home from up to his visit, he said Mom said to him "well" she said, she knew the radios was up there see, "well boy" she said "what news did you hear up there last night", she said "I suppose you and Mr. Barrett had a good time". "Yes" he said. He was a man that didn't say very much, you know, he wasn't..... He said "I'll tell you something silly mother, what I seen", he said. He said "he had the radio on". "Yes," she said, "I heard they got radios up there". He said, "you know what?" he said "there was a couple got married", he said and he said "I could even hear the door, where the door shut". Now he could hear where she puts her hand on the knob of the door, and shut the door. And we didn't know what to think of that.

Gertie Fowler:

Nope, because you could hear it on the radio.

Irene Ryland:

Oh he enjoyed heself, they said he was up until one o'clock.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Irene Ryland:

He enjoyed heself.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Irene Ryland:

He loved that. And mom use to go up sometimes too.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Irene Ryland:

Not very often. Mom didn't go very often. But dad use to go every now.... And I heard her say, that first time that ever Mr. Barrett came to L'Anse au Loup, he slept down home. Oh that wasn't in moms and dads house, but that was in Grandfathers house hey? And he slept on a feather bed.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes maid.

Irene Ryland:

First time he knew anything about a feather bed.

Gertie Fowler:

That right.

Irene Ryland:

And all throughout that it went pop... dad use to go up there now to visit him. He use to speak about the feather bed.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, Yeah.

Irene Ryland:

Yeah, she told me that.

Gertie Fowler:

So is that all you have to say today?

Irene Ryland:

I suppose, yeah, that's all I got to say.

Gertie Fowler:

Well, I'd like to thank you for your memories. Thank you very much.