

Life as a Fisherman's Wife (Part 2)

COLLECTOR: **Ann O'Brien**

CONTRIBUTOR: **Winnie O'Dell**

Ann O'Brien:

This is a continuing of Winnie's story. Alright Winnie

Winnie O'Dell:

In 1965 the electricity went through in L'Anse au Loup. Then I got an electric washer which was better then the gas one, but I still went up to Schnoorer Cove in the summer time. Ron sold his dry fish in the fall so did all the fisherman. All summer long, we would mark down our groceries or anything else. Also the salt for the fish, the gas and when he sold the fish, we would settle up as the older people called it.

Sometimes, very little coming back, because if the price for the fish was good, then we was okay, if it wasn't we wasn't very....we never had much coming back.

We bought our...when the price was good, you got a good price for what we called a cantle of fish. We bought our vegetables, cases of milk, flour, sugar, butter, salt beef, and a few pieces of salt pork. Mostly all rough food, but some years we got a barrel of apples. The children would be so happy. The smell from the apples would go right through the house. They were Macintosh and had a lovely sweet smell. They were put down in the cellar, which was a storage area under the house. I had no trouble to get a youngster to go down and get some vegetables, because they thought they would get an apple.

Ann O'Brien:

Where would you keep your vegetables and things?

Winnie O'Dell:

All in a cellar. Yeah, we had everything in the cellar.

I got family allowance for each child. That's the only check we would see in the summer time.

As years went on fresh fish plants opened. The fishermen sold their fish to the plants and every week they got paid. We thought this was a very good idea, so we were all well off. The children were older so I went to work with Joe Johnson and Son. I got a \$1.55 an hour. Sometimes I would keep the time, sometimes I would weigh the fish, but mostly

I'd salt the fish. A big change from our early years of marriage to about twenty five to thirty years after and I think it's been very good since then.

Ann O'Brien:

So Winnie ah... do you remember what time the family allowance was ah... come to Newfoundland?

Winnie O'Dell:

No but I think it was ah....1949, I believe.

Ann O'Brien:

And you got what five or six dollars a month.....

Winnie O'Dell:

Yeah, but I believe mom got six dollars for me but I got eight dollars I think for my first. But then a few years ago, now more than a few years, I'd say about twenty five years ago. The family allowance went doubled or went up really, really good. I can't remember now, what it was I got on that first check but I knows what happened to 'em. Ron had to buy an outboard motor.

Ann O'Brien:

And he had to have that?

Winnie O'Dell:

And he had to have that motor in order to go fishing, yeah.

Ann O'Brien:

And of course ah he had to take the family I guess for other things too.

Winnie O'Dell:

Yes, maid. Yes, you did. You didn't always spend it what you had planned for when he come.

But I did find it, in that year I went to work, I didn't get much unemployment but I believe I got twenty one dollars a week I believe. So I thought that was good.

Well it was good at that time right?

Ann O'Brien:

Hmmm..

Winnie O'Dell:

You could do more with twenty dollars then, then you can now.

Ann O'Brien:

Yeah. And most foods that you bought would be just rough foods or???

Winnie O'Dell:

Yes, well sometimes you bought...well all according to how much money you had to spend, we also use to like bologna. We use to have a lot of bologna and eggs or whatever you thought mostly that the children liked that you could get right.

Ann O'Brien:

Now eggs wasn't a thing you could get in the winter time, was it?

Winnie O'Dell:

Nope. But you'd also could buy them say at ...you'd have them come...the merchant...wherever you'd sell your fish, you'd make an order for you, you'd make a case for you too.

Ann O'Brien:

Hmmm.. big change in times, hey?

Winnie O'Dell:

Oh, a big change maid.

Ann O'Brien:

Well thank you very much Winnie for that story.