

## Teaching School in L'Anse au Diable during 1953 – 1958

**Collector:** Ann O'Brien

**Contributor:** Ruby Cabot

**Ann O'Brien:**

Today is September 2<sup>nd</sup>, ah... my name is Ann O'Brien, I'm at the home of ah... Ruby Cabot and ah... Ruby is going to share a story with me and it's 2009, year. Alright Ruby ah... you can go ahead.

**Ruby Cabot:**

Yeah, I'll tell you about the time now, I guess, when I was teaching school in L'Anse au Diable. It started of like this now, Father Tessier was here. See, he use to arrange the teachers for the different communities, so he arranged for me to teach in L'Anse au Loup, and he arranged for my sister Olive to teach in L'Anse au Diable.

So Olive came down to L'Anse au Diable, and I was teaching in L'Anse au Loup and I guess she taught for about a month perhaps a month and a half and this weekend she said to me "What about if we changed ah...schools? You come down to L'Anse au Diable and I come up here?" And I said, "Well you got to speak to Father Tessier about it, if he's satisfied with it, well and good." So she went and saw Father Tessier and sure enough, that he agreed with it. So that was in September 1953, so I guess I moved, I came down to West St. Modeste, I imagined it would be October or November.

And we had a one room school, at that's ah... time that's all we had in L'Anse au Loup too, one room school. It was a new school, shortly built, wasn't built very long and ah school was built like, for a church as well as, a school. Beautiful school, like it had curtains across, from inside the curtains was the alter and all the things for to... for to have mass with. Outside it was brand new...it was a brand new school. And I had about ah.. from anywhere from about twenty two to twenty five students, more then that... almost to some many as they got over here for three communities.

But anyway, about twenty five students, I think I had about ah... five or six from Capstan Island, at that time they didn't have any school in Capstan Island. I never had all the children, I had the ones in the higher grades and now I can remember it was Tom O'Dell, Joe Fowler, and Walter and Grace Fowler and Gilbert. I think that's about it. But anyway, so I'd go to school every morning, and the hardest I found or the hardest was to

go school every morning, the first thing you'd do you'd say the... you'd have to say your prayers.

In the Catholic schools at that time, you'd say your prayers when you go in school at nine o'clock and then you usually... you'd all sit around and first you'd have what you'd call a catechism class. All hands had to get their catechism out and you'd ask them questions and they'd have to answer. They'd have to study it at home the same as they studied anything else.

And then after that they you'd go on, mostly then it was math (arithmetic) but when twelve o'clock come, exactly twelve o'clock we'd have to say the Angelis – twelve o'clock – so. You'd see the children every now and then I believe it's twelve o'clock, so the time come for Angelis. We'd get up then... well we'd get out... they'd have their recess break too, at eleven for fifteen minutes but twelve o'clock they'd be out for lunch right, I guess they were anxious too...but we'd say the Angelis. And when they'd come back after school, one o'clock, there wasn't any prayers, but you'd have to say prayers before they'd leave. I think we use to leave then at four o'clock, but anyway they were always interested in getting the prayers said because they knew they had... they were going to go after that, right.

But I must say, I had a real good crowd, I can't say that I didn't, you know. They were very, very, a real good crowd, you know, sometimes you might have had it a little tough with bullying, like you know, of course, that use to be in schools too right. But you know it wasn't too bad I'd say.

But anyway, I taught school from September... October ... September I taught in L'Anse au Loup and then I moved to L'Anse au Diable, from 1953 to June 1959. Now Emile was born in '55 and I was living at the Cabot family then, so that was okay because his grandmother was there, or his great grandmother Aunt Lou, and she use to look after Emile for me, which was really good.

And then after that then, the next year, the next year after in 1957, Alonzo was born, I was still teaching, so I had to get a serving girl. So I had Ruby Glynn, she's Ruby Holt today, and Ruby Glynn came with me. So she stayed with me for a couple of year. So I kept on teaching school anyway until June '59 and I was pregnant again so I ... I was due in September. So I figured it was time for me to ah... to give up and look after the family.

But at that time, when I was teaching in L'Anse au Loup, before I got married... I'm gone ahead of meself here now. But when I first started teaching, I lived at Gert Marshall's and Gert Marshall had twelve or so in family. But the board... she use to charge me twenty dollars a month for board. Thought she had her fortune. I'll never forget her, God love her, she use to go to work and make a cake, she'd cut a piece off of it and she'd hide it away in her trunk for when I'd come home for a lunch.

If she had some custard or jell-o or something made, she would take a dish and cover it up and go in her bedroom and hide it away for me. Because if she left it out, well she knew it was gone. Anything important like if she opened a can of fruit or something and I wasn't there, she'd always take the dish of fruit and go in her room and cover it up. When I'd go home in the night time or sometimes, She use to say to me "your lunch, maid, is in the room, you knows where I got it hide away at, so go in and get it". Yeah, and that's what she'd always do, God love her.

But at that time our wages, now I only had grade eleven, by the way, but our wages was seventy seven dollars a month. Paid Gert Marshall, twenty dollars for board and I had fifty seven. Yeah. And you know what, that I banked money out of that fifty seven dollars. I wouldn't be able to bank it today just the same. (laughs)

I banked money out of that. Out of that fifty seven dollars a month, I put over three hundred dollars in the bank. And when I got married in '55 ....when I got married in '55, well I spent the most of it for me wedding... not all of it... but that's ... and you know that after that, some how or another, I never had much left there in the bank, take it all if I had fifteen or twenty dollars, that was in 1955. You know, I never ever went back for that money. I 'spose it was... you know, it was only fifteen or twenty dollars, and I didn't bother it but even so, regardless right.

Yeah, but anyway that's what I got, got seventy seven dollars a month and paid twenty dollars to Gert. And I gave it up in June of 1959 and then Margaret Buckle from L'Anse au Loup she came there that year and taught school and she stayed to the house. Yeah. But it was a great .... it was a great experience and I tell you that I enjoyed it, you know and more than that... I never told you the rest of it....

I guess the main point of it was ... when Olive asked me to move to L'Anse au Diable, that I jumped at the chance because I was going out with a guy from L'Anse au Diable. So that was right there for me, then, and the guy was Pat Cabot, so I married him in May 1955. So that caused me to end me school years in 1959. So God Bless ye all. (laughs)

**Ann O'Brien:**

Ruby ah.... how did the Capstan Island children get down.

**Ruby Cabot:**

Walk. Walk up and walk back.

**Ann O'Brien:**

And in the winter time ....

**Ruby Cabot:**

In the winter time, they came up on dog team.

**Ann O'Brien:**

And when would your school open in the morning.

**Ruby Cabot:**

Our school use to open 9:30..... 9:30 to ah... you'd get a fifteen minute break at eleven and 12 o'clock when I'd have the Angelis, that'll give him about ten or fifteen minutes and then it was out for dinner around twelve thirty. At one thirty use to go back and at four o'clock we'd come out.

**Ann O'Brien:**

And who was responsible for the ... ah... to kept the heat in school?

**Ruby Cabot:**

Every family. Every family was responsible. Now there was one... one... one fellow I pitied and pitied a lot and that was poor Tom Glynn because when he's time use to come to keep the stove going in the school, then he had his own house to keep going and his own house wasn't very warm, so he had to really really work hard in order to keep his fire going and the fire in the ... in the school. More than once, and more than twice that I use to turn to Jack Cabot and say bring some wood up, you know, because Tom can't afford it ... more than that he use to have all green wood, where they would have mostly dry wood. So many times I .. you know.

There was a stove in the middle of the floor and of course one of those little block heaters or whatever you call 'em. Joint heaters... use to call them joint stoves. Stove pipe up in the middle and sometimes he'd be blood red. All hands around him in the morning trying to get warm. Put the seats then, right around the stove, like that. In a circle.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Thank you ... thank you very much Ruby for that wonderful story.