

## Growing up in L'Anse au Clair

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**Ann O'Brien:**

Today is September 18, 2009, I'm at the home of Georgina Dumaresque Jones and she's going to share a story with me of growing up in L'Anse au Clair. Okay.

**Georgina Jones:**

*When I was growing up in the early 1930's, L'Anse au Clair was a very small community, there was twenty four houses and just over one hundred people in all. Life was very simple, living in our own little corner of the world was pretty much all we knew about.*

*People worked very hard, but seemed very happy and contented. The church was in the East end and the cemetery beyond. There was a one room school, the Orange Lodge, and the Post Office was located in a private home. The nearest medical help was the Grenfell Mission at Forteau, but L'Anse au Clair had a midwife, what more did we need.*

*You may have noticed, I didn't mention any shops, because there were none, and very little money. People went to the Hudson Bay Company in Blanc Sablon for everything they needed. Cod fishing in summer was the only work and in Fall and Spring there were the seal fisheries, Letto's, Boudious, and Dumaresque. The fishing season lasted for a couple of month. Then later the fish was cured and people who had cows made hay. Late Fall, everyone was cutting fire wood.*

*The church was very much the center of the community. Teachers and local lay readers, led the services, which were well attended. Canon J.T. Richards, was our clergyman, he lived in Flowers Cove and served both sides of the Straits. We saw him Spring and Fall, Canon Richards visits were very special. As children, when we knew he was in the area, we would watch for him coming over the hill near Crow Head. We would run to meet him and the boys would carry his belongings, he was always so pleased. We would take a chance on being late for school when we did this, but that was okay.*

*He usually spent a week fishing .... visiting, holding services and doing weddings, etc. Sometimes during the Winter months we would get a visit from St. Clements Mission across the border. These visits were very much appreciated by the people, too. Canon Richards served the area for forty one years. I have a private communion set that he used in all those years. His wife gave it to my late husband, Reverend Samuel L. Jones, when he was ordained. It was his most prized possession.*

*There were only about thirty children in our school, but we thought our school was a beehive of activity. The Christmas concerts, and Christmas tree, were second to none. mummering, janning up we use to call it, created a lot of excitement during Christmas both children and adults did this. We also went from house to house on Christmas Day wishing everyone Merry Christmas. Then on May 24<sup>th</sup> the school parade had a picnic that was really exciting.*

*The Church had a social, supper and dance sometime during the year. We use to call it a "Time". The Orangeman had a parade, there was a church service and supper to. These were two social events for the year. Sometimes there would be a variety concert and, of course, these were fun raisers. People came from miles around for these times. Someone made sure the news got around.*

*If someone was ill, or there was a death in the community, someone went by dog team or walked to let people in the next community know. I can remember the little church being overcrowded for funerals, the door would be open and people outside. After a death in the community, everyone seemed to be in mourning. Close relatives wore black and window blinds were kept down all day long. All blinds were down on the day of the funeral. No fun activities were allowed.*

*Children were never bored though, our in door entertainment was blowing bubbles with sewing cotton spool, playing a hide-and-seek, or playing button-button, who got the button.*

*Most houses had walls papered with catalogue or magazines, so we spent hours finding words. Outside we played hide-and-seek, hop scotch and copy house. In winter, we played in the snow and did a lot of randying, that's what we called sliding. There were no skates or hockey sticks and boys and girls played together. Catching snow birds was the highlight of a few days in Spring.*

*We learned about work at an early age, even while playing outside we would be asked to come in and wash dishes or baby sit. We always helped adults clean up the cemeteries and church grounds or whatever we were asked to do. We enjoyed berry picking in the summer and fall, and often picked berries for older people. Oh, I almost forgot, a lot of work went into cutting boughs for our bonfires. This was done evenings, after school in October.*

*This is just a jest of how life was back then, if I could write in detail, our young people of today could not even imagine how things were. Memories...memories.*

I didn't do a good job reading that, 'cause I made a few mistakes.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Oh that... that don't make no difference.

**Georgina Jones:**

Gonna finish the family tragedies.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Yes, you can.

**Georgina Jones:**

Well there were a lot of, you know, a few tragedies in our family.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Oh, Yes.

**Georgina Jones:**

Like, a couple that are not mentioned here, but... because they happened later in life.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Right.

**Georgina Jones:**

When I was home, this past summer, there was a lot of talk about the walking trail to L'Anse au Clair. Because of a foot problem, I was not able to walk the trail, but I thought a lot about all the trips, I made up that foot path to the fishing house when I was a child. This made me think about a lot of other things.

I heard lots of old stories. My father was one of eight children, by the time, we, his children, came along, he was the only one left. His parents also died young. When we were children, everyone around, had grandparents and uncles and aunts, we didn't. I heard my parents talk about the day they were married, it was in November 1924. My mother was from Buckle's Point, Forteau.

On the way to ... on the way to L'Anse au Clair from Forteau for the wedding, they crossed a pond on dog team but the ice was not safe and they went through. My father's younger brother was drowned. The wedding still took place, though. Canon Richards in his wisdom, helped them through the terrible tragedy. He would not be back any more until Spring. Uncle Herb and Aunt Emily Letto were married at the same time. They went ahead with the reception, too. The wedding supper was in the main room of the house, while the brother's body lay in the inside room. Then not a long time afterwards, another brother was shot while duck hunting with three other men. He left a wife and two little boys. They shared a home with my parents until the mother remarried.

In the meantime, my parents lost their first son at nine months old because of "hooping cough". Amos the oldest nephew did not leave, he was raised by my parents. My sisters and I called him "Ba". I thought of him as my brother, he was my idol. I followed him everywhere that I was allowed to go. I remember him teaching me how to tell time, we had an old seven day clock with roman numerals. We did a lot of berry picking together. One day stands out especially. We got caught in the rain and thunder and lightning and

found shelter under some bushes. I was afraid, but he kept me entertained. He could not sing, but he knew a lot of old songs, so he sang and sang.

To this day, whenever I hear thunder, I think of his rendition of “Wild Colonial Boy”. He also died tragically. He was caribou hunting, when both him and his cousin, Herbert Dumaresque died in March 1962. I will never forget him.

Amos and I were good friends. But now since, since those days Blanche had a little boy burned, hey.

**Ann O’Brien:**

Yes.

**Georgina Jones:**

And then Leslie was drowned, Jessie’s son...so.

**Ann O’Brien:**

Yes, you’ve had a lot of tragedies for sure.

Do you remember what you had for the picnic, when...before you was out... you would come out from school in Christmas?

**Georgina Jones:**

They’d have jelly, and custard, few buns, perhaps.

**Ann O’Brien:**

Did you have your picnic outside or in school?

**Georgina Jones:**

Well, in the summer we had it outside if it was fit. If it started to rain, we went in school.

**Ann O’Brien:**

Okay.

**Georgina Jones:**

If it started to rain, Alias use to sing, “Rain, Rain, go away, come again another day”. (laughs) You know Alias..... And that don’t seem like any time ago...you haven’t got that on yet if ya?

**Ann O’Brien:**

That’s okay. That’s fine. That’s nice though. You’ve got beautiful memories.

**Georgina Jones:**

I didn’t notice that was on then.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Did you ever hear your mom say what they had for their wedding supper?

**Georgina Jones:**

Well what they had for their supper see was cake and pie and tea.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Oh there was nothing....

**Georgina Jones:**

That's what everyone had around here in the old days, there was no salads or nothing then.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Oh no.

**Georgina Jones:**

But that's what... that's what they had.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Do you remember ah.... anyone getting married here in L'Anse au Clair that had breakfast, dinner and supper?

**Georgina Jones:**

No. No.

**Ann O'Brien:**

Well thank you very much, Georgina for sharing that beautiful story.