

First Set of Knitting Needles

COLLECTOR: **Gertie Fowler**

CONTRIBUTOR: **Sarah Normore**

Gertie Fowler:

My name is Gertie Fowler, and I'm here in L'Anse au Loup today with Sarah Linstead Normore, and we're gonna talk today about Sarah's first set of knitting needles at her age of six. So Sarah, where did you get your knitting needles?

Sarah Normore:

Mom bought my first set of knitting needles for me when I was six years old. And Mrs. Edith Pike sent them up from Red Bay.

Gertie Fowler:

Hmmm..... hmmmmm

Sarah Normore:

And two or three people because there was ... we use to use five in a set and 'twas only four... two or three people got together and just shared the needles. And I was six years old.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay. So how come you be involved with Red Bay, now?

Sarah Normore:

Well, I guess.... that's where mom came from.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Sarah Normore :

From Red Bay.

Gertie Fowler:

So where did you manage to get the wool and that when you was young, Sarah? To do your knitting?

Sarah Normore:

Well mom, had her own sheep and ah... we had plenty of wool..

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah

Sarah Normore:

Because she use to do her own thing with it from start to finish. 'Cause she had her own spinning wheel.....

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Sarah Normore:

So, did she use to ... well we'd shear the sheep in the spring of the year and then she had us involved ah... with ... we washed it, and dried it...

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Sarah Normore:

I remember her spreading it out on the paper upstairs. On the upstairs floor around the stove pipe, cause that's where quite a bit of heat was too.

Gertie Fowler:

Sure.

Sarah Normore:

And when we get it dried, we used to, what you'd call, pick it.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes. So what was that now?

Sarah Normore:

Ah....that was picked the dirt out of it.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, Okay.

Sarah Normore:

Like little picks of dirt and that in it. We use to pick the dirt out of it. Pick it. And then well mom use to card it, we use to help her sometimes but she use to card it, and then she roll it.

Gertie Fowler:

How did she card it now?

Sarah Normore:

With two ah... ah.... sort of cards but like ah... ah... awww steel ... ah something like a steel brush .

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, Okay.

Sarah Normore:

Only they were flat.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Sarah Normore:

Probably the things were only about... not an inch high.... not an inch high. And then ah...she'd take that bit of wool of that, and roll it and she'd lay that in her box, 'til she'd get her box full and then she use to start spinning, so she use to spin it with an old fashioned spin wheel operate it with her foot. And then she'd... when she'd get it all spinned into one thread ah... she use to double it then... like we use to call twist it. Use to twist it. Well now I guess, what you'd call the two ply, three ply.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Sarah Normore:

That's what I think it would be.

Gertie Fowler:

Hmmmm...hmmmm.

Sarah Normore:

And ah...then we'd ah....twist it and then we use to make it skanes. Like skanes of wool like you buys? But we use to put one chair on top of the other and cro....the opposite two legs ...

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Sarah Normore:

That was the way we use to do them. That was the length of the ...

Gertie Fowler:

So where did your mother get the spinning spinning wheel to now?
Do you remember?

Sarah Normore:

Well ah.... I don't really remember, but I think it was from her mom or a... another old lady in Red Bay. Passed it down to her....

Gertie Fowler:

Is that right? So who was your mother now?

Sarah Normore:

Ah....she was a Macey from Red Bay.

Gertie Fowler:

Rose

Sarah Normore:

Rose Macey. Mariah and John Macey's daughter.

Gertie Fowler:

So what kind of things did you make now from that wool?

Sarah Normore:

So we....

Gertie Fowler:

What did ya..... go ahead.

Sarah Normore:

Well we use to knit ah... mitts, I especially helped her dads mitts, 'cause he use to tell me I use to knit thick. He wouldn't say tight, I knit thick. And I knit his mitts, helped her and when he's socks and I'd help mommy knit a vest.

Gertie Fowler:

Okay. So ah...

Sarah Normore:

And we went on....

Gertie Fowler:

What did he mean by thick? What did he mean by that?

Sarah Normore:

Well it felt thicker hey? Because I use to knit tight.

Gertie Fowler:

So did he feel ... they were warmer, I 'spose?

Sarah Normore:

They were warmer.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh. Okay. So what about your sheep now, where did the sheep come from, that your mother had?

Sarah Normore:

I guess the sheep came from Red Bay. The sheep did, we had her called Julie, by the way.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh. Okay.

Sarah Normore:

We had a name on her.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Sarah Normore :

Because we all loved the sheep.

Gertie Fowler:

So how long did you have her?

Sarah Normore:

And, oh my, I'd say perhaps ten or twelve years. Because, well it in was middle 40's I would say, well I was born in 1942.

Gertie Fowler:

Hmmm.... hmmm..

Sarah Normore:

And ah.... I'd say it was the mid 40's cause I was three or four year old, I know and like I said I was six when she bought my needles so we was learning how to knit at an early age because mommy had plenty wool. So she ah.... that's where I think she got the sheep too, from Red Bay.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh, Okay. So did ye ah... ah.. color that sh... that wool and that now? Or dye it or anything?

Sarah Normore:

Ye...ye...yeah, we had mainly white, but I think Ma... she dyed her wool after a while and no after one or two years, she did send it to Newfoundland,

Gertie Fowler:

Yes.

Sarah Normore:

After our older sister got a pen pal from the pen pal from the newspaper, from Newfoundland?

Gertie Fowler:

Yes

Sarah Normore:

Port Rexton, actually. And ah... Jessie was six, she was two years older then me and then her pen pals mom and my mom got in touch....

Gertie Fowler:

Hmmm....hmmmm.

Sarah Normore:

She use to send her some wool and she did get it dyed or colored so when we got that, well then we were starting knitting fancy things, hey? Colored.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah.

Sarah Normore:

The blocks and the diamonds ...

Gertie Fowler:

That's what you...

Sarah Normore:

That's the first thing we started.

Gertie Fowler:

Oh. Okay.

Sarah Normore:

Yeah

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. Okay so was it anything else now, you'd like to add to your story and that?

Sarah Normore:

Hmmm.... Well bein' that dad didn't have neither boy either, on the first of it...

Gertie Fowler:

Okay.

Sarah Normore:

....ya know. We always use to help him too, get the hay and that 'fer the sheep.

Gertie Fowler:

Sure.

Sarah Normore:

'Cause we thought a lot about our sheep.

Gertie Fowler:

Yes

Sarah Normore:

Yeah and 'fer the winter like hey?

Gertie Fowler:

So that was about the only.... Was it any more sheep in L'Anse au Loup?

Sarah Normore:

Not that I remember, I think that was the only one.

Gertie Fowler:

Yeah. Okay. Well that's your story. I want to thank you very much for your story, it was beautiful.

Sarah Normore:

You're kindly welcome.