



ED ROCHE
98

Beth's Story

THE FIRST 95 YEARS

Chapel Arm, Newfoundland
by Ed Roche — edroche.com

BY JUDY PIERCEY

For Mom,



*With love and gratitude for
all you have given us.*

1 Sarah Elizabeth Newhook was born July 18, 1918. Or so her mother said. The Newfoundland government disagrees. Officially, the records say Sarah Elizabeth Newhook was born on July 17, 1918.

Sarah Elizabeth only learned of the discrepancy when she was widowed on July 11, 1968, a week before her 50th birthday. As you can imagine, there wasn't much of a birthday celebration that

year, following the shock of her husband's sudden death. But the next year, when Sarah Elizabeth's family brought her presents and birthday greetings on July 18, she declared that they were a day late. Her birthday has passed the day before.

And, so, the confusion began. To this day, whenever her family discusses a birthday celebration, the question is: "What day? July 17th or the 18th?"

Sarah Elizabeth herself has long since

COMMON NOTES FOR THE YEAR 1918.

Golden Number	XIX	Easter Sunday	Mar. 31
Epact	17	Rogation Sunday	May 5
Solar Cycle	23	Ascension Day	" 9
Roman Indiction	1	Whit Sunday	" 19
Dominical Letter	F	Trinity Sunday	" 26
Julian Period (Year of)	6631	Corpus Christi	" 30
Sundays after Trinity	26	1st Sunday in Advent	Dec. 1
Septuagesima Sunday	Jan. 27	Christmas Day, Wednesday	Dec. 25
Ash Wednesday	Feb. 13	Birth of King George V., 1865	June 3
St. Patrick's Day	Mar. 17	Birth of Prince of Wales, 1894	June 23
Good Friday	Mar. 29		

ECLIPSES, 1918.

In the year 1918 there will be three eclipses, two of the Sun, and one of the Moon:

1. A Total Eclipse of the Sun, June 8, 1918, invisible at Greenwich.
2. A Partial Eclipse of the Moon, June 23-24, 1918, invisible at Greenwich; the beginning visible generally in South America except the Eastern portion; North America, except Northern portion; throughout the Pacific Ocean and Australia; the ending visible generally in North Western North America, Western and Southern South America, throughout the Pacific Ocean and Australia.
3. An annular Eclipse of the Sun, December 3, 1918, invisible at Greenwich.

SEASONS.

Spring commences March 21		Autumn commences Sept. 23
Summer " June 22		Winter " Dec. 22

resolved it. To her mind, her mother is a trustworthy source. The government, not. Sarah Elizabeth is not big on governments. The way she sees it, the government is looking out for itself. Now that she's a senior, she is even more firm in this opinion. As evidence, she can point to the recent increase in her Old Age Pension. It went up by a certain amount. And at the same time, her bill for Home Care was increased by the same amount. Clearly, the government gives with one hand and takes with the other.

Besides having two different birthdays, Sarah Elizabeth has two different names. Soon after she learned of the birthday discrepancy, which is also to say soon after she was widowed, she decided she wanted to be known by a different name. All her life people had called her "Liz" or "Lizzie." She never liked it. And after more than 50 years of not liking her own name, she decided she would be known as "Beth."

In her late 60s, Beth also changed her religion. She was born into an Anglican family, then known as The Church of England. Its rituals never resonated with her. When she married Bill Piercey, she adopted his religion, the United Church. After he died, she was drawn to evangelical preachings. And as she approached her 70th birthday, she joined a small group of people who were founding a Pentecostal congregation.

People at Faith Pentecostal Tabernacle call her "Aunt Beth" out of respect for her age and contribution as a founding member.

At the age of 73, she changed her last name, too. She became known as Beth Walsh after she married Lorne Walsh, a widower she met at church.

Beth also changed her country. This was not solely her decision. She was born in the Dominion of Newfoundland, which was then the oldest colony in Britain. But in 1949, when Beth was 30 years old, Newfoundland became part of Canada. Beth was among the 52 percent of Newfoundlanders who voted to become Canadian. And while she never regretted her decision, she always considered herself a Newfoundlander, rather than a Canadian. To this day, she still refers to relatives who live in other provinces as "living in Canada."

Beth is my mother. I've never given much thought to whether my mother is a woman who embraces change. I think she must be. She certainly has an adventurous spirit. Her life has been punctuated by many dramatic events, all of which forced dramatic changes. Some of them, I think it is fair to say, were traumatic, starting with the death of her father when she was six.

2 The story that Beth always heard about her father was that he perished in a snowstorm while walking through the country. This was in 1925, when it was common for both men and women to walk between Newfoundland communities to visit relatives.

In the case of Beth's father, John Newhook, there was a reason for his journey. He was preparing to leave home to find work in the lumberyards of Central Newfoundland. He needed a large quantity of warm socks and mitts to keep warm while cutting wood. And he walked the 15 miles from Norman's Cove to Chance Cove to buy them from his Aunt. It would take all day to walk that distance, so he stayed overnight with relatives. The next morning, he left to walk home.

He never made it. His body was found by men walking along the railway track a few days later on Jan 11, 1925. It seemed that John had died of exposure a few yards from the track. They brought his body home to his wife, Martha Rachel, and laid him out in the living room of their small home. In two weeks, on January 28, John would have been 38 years old.

Beth was the second eldest of his children. Mahala was the eldest. She was seven. Beth was six, Joseph was three and Julia was 16 months. Martha was now on her own with four tiny

children to feed.

And if the death of her husband was not enough, Martha also had to contend with the speculation in the community about how he died. The people of Norman's Cove were convinced that he was murdered.

The reason they thought this was because John was bruised. As the women washed his body and prepared to lay him out, they wondered how a man walking in a snowstorm could have become bruised. It didn't make sense. The rumours started.

Many people in the small community knew that John had taken a strong stand against his sister dating a Roman Catholic. When neither his sister nor the man she loved refused to stop seeing each other, John became angry. He and the man had words. It ended with his sister agreeing to break the romance. But the man never forgave John. He threatened that he would kill him, given the opportunity. And, so, people wondered and they talked.

As was the custom, the family sat with John, as his body lay in the living room. The family talked, too. Beth heard them talking about the marks on her father's body. She heard them talking about Martha and the children. The future.

Beth was old enough to understand the adults filling the room were worried.

Her father's brothers were talking amongst themselves. Even her favourite Uncle, Uncle Charles, whose nickname was Uncle Tot, seemed very serious. They were talking about splitting the children up and sending them to be raised by relatives in different homes, different communities. The conversation took a turn and the next thing Beth knew, her sister Mahala jumped up, screaming: "No, I won't go." Beth didn't understand what was happening. Uncle Will was trying to persuade her mother to let him take Mahala and raise her as his own daughter. But Martha refused to force Mahala to go against her will. "OK, then," Uncle Will said. "I'll take Liz."

Beth didn't really know Uncle Will and she shied away when he asked her to come to him. Uncle Tot held out his arms, "Come to Uncle Tot," he said. Beth climbed into his arms.

Uncle Will left to get the horse and sleigh. Uncle Tot wrapped Beth in blankets and carried her to the sleigh. He placed her gently down and sat beside her. Uncle Will cracked the reins. The horse moved fast in the cold night air. Beth snuggled into her blanket, with Uncle Tot sitting beside her, and fell asleep.

It was a change in the motion that woke her up. The horse was slowing down. She heard a whistle and the horse came to a stop. Uncle Tot jumped off the sleigh and the horse sped up

again. Beth was frightened to see Uncle Tot go. She lay there in her blanket, looking at the stars, trying not to be so scared. The journey seemed to be taking a long time. They came into the next community, Chapel Arm, and Uncle Will pulled up to his house.

Her Aunt Phoebe came to greet her. She took Beth inside to the warm kitchen. It was full of boys, her cousins. Clarence looked to be about Beth's age. There was three-year-old Frank. And a baby, Nath. Their mother warned them to behave and be nice to their cousin. When Beth finally went to bed and fell asleep, she had horrible nightmares. In her dream, she was surrounded by monkeys.

And so began her life with Aunt Phoebe and Uncle Will Warren.

3 They took her in because she was Aunt Phoebe's brother's child. She was the girl they never had.

The boys were to help with the fishing, hunting and wood cutting. Men's work. Six-year-old Sarah Elizabeth was to help Aunt Phoebe with the women's work. It would not be long before she was baking bread, hauling water, cleaning and sewing.



**Brian & Jennifer
Matier with Nan**

Jenn's favorite memory was when she came to Canada to meet the family and Nan was visiting. At the dinner table Nan was just looking at her and not saying much. Jenn was worried she didn't like her much, so Jenn just kept smiling at her. Well, when we were leaving Nan hugged Jenn and then stood there with her arm around her, clinging. Then she looked up at Jenn with a big smile and said, "I loves ya."

For me there are many, but whenever I think back to when Nan would visit, my favourite memory is of her making the little dough balls on the stove burner for me while she was baking bread. She would roll them in butter and serve them on a small plate. So tasty! Actually I even picture her making them in her own kitchen in Newfoundland while I sat at the table in front of the window.

All of a sudden I'm really hungry

Young Beth was eager to help out. When she expressed an interest in learning to bake bread, Aunt Phoebe pulled up a chair and said, "All right, if that's what you want to do, climb up." Her Aunt taught her to knead the dough, to punch it back down after it had risen and to roll it into the four rolls that were distinctive to Newfoundland bakers. People referred to it as "pans" of bread, rather than loaves of bread. Soon Beth was producing a dozen pans of bread.

Beth enjoyed working with Aunt Phoebe around the house. Truth be told, she much preferred it to school.

By Grade 4, Beth was starting to hate school. She couldn't seem to hold any of the lessons in her head. And she had seen the teacher beat children who appeared to be stupid or lazy.

Mr. Facey was the most cruel of all the teachers. He punished students who were stupid, or those who talked back, by ordering them into a separate room off the main classroom. There, he would give them a caning with either a strap or a stick.

Beth knew it was inevitable that she would get called into that room. And one day, sure enough, she was ordered in. She took the licking, determined not to give the brute the satisfaction of knowing he was hurting her. She was a

stubborn girl and there was no way she would cry or call out, no matter how much it hurt.

And she knew, too, that there was no point in complaining to Aunt Phoebe or Uncle Will. They, like other parents in Chapel Arm, considered the teacher's word to be law. Any child who complained would be asked what they did to deserve it. There was a good chance you'd get another licking at home for the same reason.

One day, Mr. Facey became very angry with a teenage boy named Sam Warren. He ordered Sam into the room for a caning. Sam refused to go. He ordered him a second time. Again, Sam refused. Beth watched in terror as the teacher's anger rose and he marched quickly to Sam's desk. He hauled off with his stick and began to strike Sam wherever he could. Arms, legs, face, head, back, chest. Mr. Facey just kept going with all his strength. Blood poured out of Sam's nose and all over the desk. But still the teacher kept hitting him. A couple of days later, Sam died.

As the teacher, Mr. Facey did double duty as the lay clergyman at the Anglican church. As such, he led the funeral service for Sam. On March 23, 1931, Sam was laid to rest in St. John the Baptist Anglican cemetery. He was 13 years old. It was believed that he died of a heart condition. No one seemed to want to question that belief.



Aunt Phoebe & Uncle Will

Beth did question it. She knew what she saw. And she wondered why no one reported the beating to police. Just as no one reported the rumour that her own father had been murdered.

At school, Mr. Facey would always mention Sam in their daily prayers. He would ask God to pray for Sam Warren's soul. Every time he said it, Beth would think to herself: "Yes, and pray for your soul, too, you brute."

When Beth finished up the school year, she decided not to return, even though Mr. Facey himself decided to leave the community. At the age of 13, with a Grade 4 education, Beth left school and applied her energy to helping Aunt Phoebe with women's work. It was work that never seemed to stop.

Beth won praise for her willingness to help out. One day, Aunt Phoebe had visitors and needed water to make tea. She asked Beth to go fetch a pail of water from the well. Beth happily rushed out to fetch the water. The visitors were impressed by her obedience and strength. They remarked to Aunt Phoebe that she was "some good girl." Aunt Phoebe agreed. Beth was thrilled with the compliment. A good word was rare.

Beth didn't get much praise because hard work was expected. But she saw that it was the same for the boys in the family. Uncle Will and Aunt Phoebe were not unkind. But their sons and niece were equally expected to do their share of the work.

The summer was an especially busy time. Like all the other families in Chapel Arm, the family grew their own vegetables and kept their own hens and a pig. They had a large root cellar insulated with a straw roof where all perishable food was kept over the winter.

They also kept sheep. After the sheep were

sheared, Beth and Aunt Phoebe would card the wool, then spin it into yarn. Beth would stand for what seemed like hours holding her little arms out for Aunt Phoebe to spool the yarn into skeins. When she became a bit older, she would sneak into the room with the spinning wheel to try her hand at spinning. She loved watching the wool turn into yarn. Aunt Phoebe would examine the work that Beth had carried out in secret. When it was good enough to pass muster, she let Beth spin the wool on her own. Later, when the weather cooled a bit, the two of them would knit the wool into socks and mitts.

No one in Newfoundland said "socks" or "mitts." Instead, socks were "vamps" and mitts were "cuffs". Aunt Phoebe taught Beth to knit cuffs with one ball of black wool and another of white. Uncle Will, Clarence, Frank and Nath needed their cuffs knit in a certain way. They, and all the other fishermen, need cuffs that left one finger and the thumb free to work their fishing lines. Beth quickly learned how to knit the cuffs with a partition between the index and fourth finger. She knew how important it was for the men to have good, warm cuffs for working on the water, birding, hunting or cutting fire wood.

The boys and men went fishing every day in the summer. In late morning and again in late afternoon, Beth would see the boats coming

MOM'S LIFE OF CREATIVITY

I remember from a small child watching my mother carding and spinning wool to make yarn for the families clothing. She knit all of our sweaters, hats, mitts, vamps (today called socks) and long beige stockings. I hated wearing those stockings to school because they didn't look fashionable but thanks to mom I was always warm.

Mom is a beautiful knitter and used patterns that most of us would consider complicated, but she had a talent for figuring them out and creating something special for all of us. She has made baby sets, dresses, sweaters, and socks for her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Now at 94 years old it is more difficult for her because of her eyesight and arthritis. She, however, never ceases to amaze me and she recently knitted cute little outfits for Chloe's dolls because Chloe was going to have a baby sister.

Mom was a great sewer and made our clothes including our undergarments and outerwear. She never gave herself the recognition she deserved. She always talked about how brilliant Aunt Ethel and Aunt Edith were because they were truly great creators. In my eyes mom was every bit as great. She made over old clothes and created dresses for us without a pattern. In my mind's eye I can see her cutting out the various parts and sewing them together. She always added something to make them pretty like lace or trim or embroidery.

Then there were things mom sewed to make the home and family comfortable. In those days food supplies were bought in bulk and flour came in 50-pound cotton sacks. Mom washed those sacks and bleached the print out in the sun. Then she used them to make sheets for the bed, pillowcases and tablecloths. She always embroidered the pillowcases and tablecloths and also taught Jennie and me how to embroider, so we did many together. Those items went into our hope chests and I received a pile of them as a part of my shower gift as did other family members. My cousin Wanda told me that she still has tablecloths that her Aunt Lizzie embroidered.

Mom made quilts for the beds. She generally used a flannelette sheet in the middle and from clothes that we had out grown; she cut blocks and strips and sewed them into beautiful quilts. In later years, she purchased fabrics and made quilts that the whole family still enjoys today.

Mom hooked mats to keep the floors warm. She used a homemade hook and frame. She saved the "brin" (burlap) bags used to hold oats or beans and used them as a backing for the mats. She then cut up old clothes into strips and designed colourful mats. When she was in her late 70's she made me a mat of a fishing village. Lorne drew the picture and she hooked the mat from it.

Mom, you are now 95 years old and I am 66. I know in those early days that these things were a part of your work and out of necessity to keep your family warm. And comfortable. You did it all with pride and love and you did a wonderful job. I treasure the memories and thank you for creating them for me.



Joyce Matier

into the arm of Trinity Bay, loaded down with fish. After the men cleaned and salted the fish, everyone got busy immediately, laying it out to dry. Every family owned a “fish flake,” a platform built up on poles and lined with boughs of spruce. Even the smallest children could carry an armload of fish from the “stage,” the house where they were stored and place them on the flakes. The fish were taken back to the stage every night to be brought out again in the morning to bleach and dry in the sun.

Beth knew that having lots of fish and making sure it dried properly was the most important job for everyone in Chapel Arm. But this was not something they learned in school. Yes, they had heard stories about when John Cabot arrived in 1497, to dip his bucket in the water to bring it back up, full of codfish. And the teacher did tell them that Newfoundland’s salt cod was sent all over the world. But no one told her that she was an integral part of an economy and that the way her family worked was the way her ancestors had worked for the past two centuries.

Nonetheless, Beth felt a strong sense of responsibility to do her best at this important job. It was not until she was a little bit older that she realized the fish was their livelihood. She only learned that lesson during the hard times that were ahead.

4Four years after she arrived with the Warrens, another baby boy came along. Levi was the seventh son to be born to Aunt Phoebe. Her first son died. Then Clarence came along in 1918, just a couple of weeks younger than Beth. The next son, Llewelyn, died. Next came Frank. The next son, born on St. Patrick’s Day was named Patrick James. He died. Then came Nath. The next son was Levi. The fact that he lived, breaking the pattern of childhood deaths, made him special. The fact that he was the seventh son made him even more special. The seventh son was believed to hold special healing powers. The seventh daughter or the seventh son was special to the community as well as the family.

There was a test to see if this child possessed the gift. A worm was placed on the child’s palm. If the worm died, the child had the special powers to “charm” away mysterious ailments. As he or she grew older, the entire community would be calling for help with sores, boils and all kinds of aches and complaints. In a time where people had to travel far to see a doctor and to pay for the service, the local healers looked after most sickness.

It was Beth’s job to rock this special baby, Levi, to sleep every day and every night. In between rocking the baby and helping with chores, Beth had little time to play with other children. But when they did get outside, what fun they had!

From Levi Warren, who will be 86 in October. The man he refers to, Ern Warren, was the local merchant, Ernest Warren. In Newfoundland, many people were in debt to the merchants, from whom they bought everything. This was the first time I actually heard about this kind of bartering within our family.

HERE'S LEVI'S STORY:

Liz and I always get a laugh over talking about the day I was born. I was a big baby and I was born in the morning. When Liz went to school that day, there was no baby. And when she came home at noontime, there I was. Back in those days, youngsters didn't know anything about sex or babies or anything like that. We were told that babies came from a stump in the woods. Liz and I still laugh about how she and her friends went up into the woods for days after, looking under the stump to see if they could see where I came from.

I remember as a little boy following along with Liz when she went berry picking. She was a wonderful berry picker. Back in those days, it must have been the 30s, Ern Warren had a big truck

and he would take people in over the road to go berry picking. Maybe 25 or 30 people would climb in the back of the truck. He would drop us off and we would start picking. I was only a boy so I don't think I was much help. But Liz was a wonderful picker. She would pick, I suppose, as much as 15 gallons a berries a day. Ern Warren would buy them for 11 or 12 cents a gallon. The berries would be packed into these big wooden boxes that were made to hold berries.

After all day of picking, you would have enough berries to buy a 100-lb bag of sugar from Ern Warren or maybe a sack of hard tack. Liz would always pick enough that she could buy a sack of something.

She might earn as much as five dollars a week. Back then five dollars was five dollars, not like today when five dollars is nothing.



Clarence & Levi Warren

She especially enjoyed playing with Frank and Nath. “Nat” as he was called, adored Beth, whom he thought of as his sister. Even though his sister claimed not to be good at school, Nat let her know that he thought she was the smartest person he knew. One of his favourite games was one that he dreamed up on his own, which he called “Court.” In it, either Nat or Frank would pretend to get caught committing a crime. When Nat was “arrested,” Frank would be the judge and Beth the lawyer. If Frank was arrested, Nat wanted Beth to be the judge and himself the lawyer. The way Nat figured it, Beth was the best lawyer in the world and he wanted her on his side. And his side, only. He loved to listen to her ask him questions before the judge, knowing that he would always get off scott-free when she was his advocate. And there was no way he ever wanted his older brother Frank to benefit from Beth’s lawyerly skill.

Beth loved being in the company of Clarence, Frank and Nat, even though she missed her own family terribly. She rarely saw her mother or her sister Mahala, who had managed to stand her ground and not be separated from her mother. Joseph also stayed with his mother and sister, perhaps because no one needed another boy. Julie was taken in by her mother’s brother, Uncle Will Smith and his wife Aunt Lizzie in Chance Cove. They had no children of their own.

Beth thought that her mother must have felt fortunate to have two children taken off her hands, leaving her with only two mouths to feed. Beth understood why her mother gave her children up. But it still hurt. Even as a small child, Beth understood that as kind as Aunt Phoebe was, she was missing out on the love of her own mother. She ached with that knowledge. Life with Uncle Will and Aunt Phoebe was as good as she could expect, and Beth tried very hard to behave well and not cause them trouble.

She also loved the new baby, the special seventh son who would grow up to be a healer.

One afternoon when she was sitting in the rocking chair, with Levi in her arms, the rocking chair started to shake. It was a strange sensation and 11-year-old Beth didn’t know what to make of it. A few days later, they would learn that it was a tsunami near Grand Bank. The disaster near the Burin Peninsula was about 200 miles away from Chapel Arm but people all the way to St. John’s felt the tremor. Beth would hear much more about “the tidal wave” in the days to come.

But, in fact, it was not correct to describe the destructive event as a tidal wave. It turned out to be an underwater earthquake that measured 7.2 on the Richter scale. The force was so strong it moved the ocean floor several yards and brought waves that sped at 500 miles an hour.

Beth didn't have any relatives living on the Burin Peninsula and her family didn't know any of the people affected in the 40 communities. But everyone was saddened to hear of the 27 people who died. The story touched people around the world and a huge fundraising campaign was started. Aunt Phoebe and Uncle Will, along with about 50 other families in Chapel Arm, contributed as much as they could afford. When the total from around the rest of Newfoundland, as well as Great Britain, the United States and Canada poured in, it added up to over a quarter of a million dollars.

In a place where sea tragedies were common, the Newfoundland Tsunami of November 1929 stood out as a disaster.

One of the heroes of the disaster was Nurse Dorothy Cherry. She risked her own life helping victims. Beth had no way of knowing it, but Nurse Cherry would later play a role in her own life. And the great tsunami was only the beginning of more tragic events. Newfoundland was in for a very hard time. The Warren family, despite their self sufficiency, would struggle. And Beth's own mother and siblings would have a harder time, still.

As Beth entered her adolescence, her country and her own family, would be entering a time of unprecedented poverty and turmoil.

5 Before the Depression hit, Beth's mother, Martha Rachel Newhook, had remarried. Her new husband, John Smith, was a widower with five children of his own. His three sons, Simon, Lesley, Ishmael and two daughters, Clara and Beatrice began living with Martha and her two children, Mahala and Joe. In 1928, the new couple had another child, Cherry, whom they named after John Smith's mother.

Beth didn't see much of the family. But as the Depression deepened, she heard that they were very poor. All across the Dominion of Newfoundland, families were on the verge of starvation. The entire country was in political turmoil.

When the stock market crashed on Black Tuesday in 1929, most of the world stopped buying Newfoundland's fish. By 1932, the price dropped from \$8.90 a quintal to only \$4.50. It worked out to less than two cents a pound.

Uncle Will and Aunt Phoebe were now feeding their family of five with an annual income that was cut in half. Around the rest of Newfoundland, unemployment was soaring. The colony's government was in bad shape because it had borrowed heavily to build a railway. Newfoundland was still reeling from the debt accumulated from World War 1, when its government made the decision to muster its

own regiments, instead of joining Britain's forces. The cost of training, outfitting and sending Newfoundland's own troops overseas racked up \$35 million in debt.

The decision to create its own regiments was not just expensive, it was proud. And justly so. Newfoundland's contribution to the First World War was considered outstanding, considering its poverty and small population. Only 240,000 people lived in the entire Dominion of Newfoundland, yet Newfoundland sent 8,500 men overseas to serve in the Newfoundland Regiment and Forestry Corps as well as the Royal Navy.

The Newfoundlanders impressed everyone with their skill and courage.

The Cambridge History of the British Empire says:

“The seamen of Newfoundland had long been known in the Navy as efficient and resourceful, but the end of the War left them with a greatly enhanced reputation. They readily undertook almost impossible boarding operations in wild seas which others would not face. Nothing but praise was accorded by the Fleet.”

The Battle of the Somme in 1916 took a heavy toll on the Newfoundland Regiment, with 85 percent of its soldiers dying for their country.

Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, Sir Douglas Haig, wrote: “Newfoundland may well feel proud of her sons. The heroism and devotion to duty they displayed on 1st July has never been surpassed.”

The next major battle to decimate Newfoundland's troops was the Battle of Arras in 1917. Part of that battle was the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux. Among the men killed was Beth's cousin, John Pretty. He was the son of her grandfather's sister, Sarah, for whom she is named Sarah Elizabeth.

Beth never knew her cousin, since she was born in July 1918, four months before the war ended in November. She heard about the bravery of Newfoundland's troops but she did not know that her country's decision to develop its own forces was directly responsible for the poverty of her own family.

Nor did she know that the government's decision to take over a failing railway was another reason people around her were going hungry. The Newfoundland Railway, which also operated steamships, had run into trouble even before the Depression. When the Dominion of Newfoundland took it over, both the railway and the government were heavily in debt.

The government also over-extended itself

building a highway. Little did 11-year-old Beth know that the new Cabot Highway connecting Chapel Arm to the rest of Newfoundland, was another expenditure her country could not afford.

What she did know was that they were living through very hard times.

One morning as she was sitting down to eat her breakfast, a relative dropped in to visit Aunt Phoebe and Uncle Will. They started to talk about the dire straits of people in the community.

Beth's heart stopped when she heard him say, "Black Jackie down on the marsh has nothing to eat in the house." Beth knew that "Black Jackie" was the nickname of her mother's new husband. And she thought to herself, "If Black Jackie has nothing to eat, that means my mother has nothing to eat. And my sister has nothing to eat. And my brother has nothing to eat."

Beth stopped eating and stared down at her plate of food. Aunt Phoebe looked at her and gently said: "Eat your breakfast, child. You not eating won't help them." But Beth couldn't touch the food. Her appetite was gone.

She heard stories all the time about people starving. One neighbour had no milk for her baby so she watered down some porridge and filled his bottle with the water, hoping to give him whatever nutrition she could.

Even the hardest-working men could no longer find jobs. Those, who like Beth's own father had earned money in the woods cutting lumber or trees for the pulp mills, found the work dried up. There was no demand for newsprint and the pulp companies laid off workers. The market for iron ore collapsed and the mining companies were laying off, too. The fishing boats that hired them to go to the Grand Banks or Labrador were no longer hiring because the price of fish was so low.

For the first time in Newfoundland's history, there was no way to earn a living.

By the winter of 1932-33, when Beth was 14, one quarter of Newfoundland's people were on relief. The government, so heavily in debt from the war, the railways and the roads, could do little to help its own people. In desperation, the government came up with a relief system called "the dole." The amount of relief was only enough to provide half a person's daily nutritional needs.

One historical record describes the dole in this way:

"Applicants did not receive money to buy what they wanted, and instead had to accept items from a list. For example, a single adult on the dole could receive in one month: 25 pounds of flour, almost four pounds of fat back pork, two pounds of beans, two pounds of corn meal, one pound of split peas, three-quarters

of a pound of cocoa, and one quart of molasses. St. John's residents also received vegetables, but people in the outports – where farmland was more plentiful – had to grow their own."

Many people resented the dole. They believed it did not provide them with enough food to live on and felt they should have the right to select their own groceries. The government, meanwhile, had little money to spend on relief because of a large national debt and shrinking income. It also worried that if payments were too large, the dole would become attractive and deter people from finding work elsewhere. Nonetheless, between one quarter and one third of the country's 300,000 residents were on the dole for each year of the 1930s; by 1933, the government was spending more than \$1 million on relief annually.

If people did manage to save a small amount of cash for medical or other emergencies, they risked disqualification from the dole. Some government officials and members of the country's elite believed people were receiving relief when they did not really need it. As a result, the government gave relief officers extensive powers to investigate dole applicants. This included the ability to search bank accounts. If a relief officer learned an applicant had money, grew vegetables, or poached rabbits or other animals, he or

she could reduce dole payments or cut them off entirely.

As historian James Overton notes, "*they could also force people to sell their possessions and live off any money earned before reapplying for relief, some even starved to death.*"

Uncle Will and Aunt Phoebe didn't need to go on the dole. Uncle Will was a careful provider for his family and he had plenty of food in storage. Every time he earned money, he would come home with a sack of provisions. Beth saw him bring in a sack of peas, another of beans, another of sugar and even prunes. They had plenty of flour, too.

During the Depression, white flour was hard to come by. People on the dole were given brown flour which was horrible for baking. They were especially angry about the flour because it was a constant reminder that they had no control over what they ate. The brown flour became a symbol of their government's reckless spending.

Aunt Phoebe always had white flour because Uncle Will had laid in such good supplies during better times. The family actually needed to buy very little. They had herring and turbot pickled in barrels, birds plucked and frozen in a corner of the house, and hens, lambs, calves and pigs to keep them fed. As a result, Aunt Phoebe never had to resort to using the brown flour that most people despised.

But Beth loved the taste of the brown bread created with the rough flour. One day, she asked her Aunt Maude if she could trade her a pan of brown bread for the white bread she had baked with Aunt Phoebe's flour. Aunt Maude was delighted and jumped at the chance. Beth thought they both got a good deal!

She knew how lucky she was to be living with Uncle Will and Aunt Phoebe. Unlike many of their neighbours, they did not trade fish to the merchants in return for credit. Many fishermen took groceries and household goods directly from the merchants. As a result, they were always in debt. During the Depression, merchants could no longer afford to extend credit and they cut the families off.

With the dole inadequate to provide proper nutrition and no food available from the grocers, people began to get sick from malnutrition, tuberculosis and beriberi. However, the brown flour, horrible as it was, helped prevent beriberi. And once the government added it to the dole list, beriberi dropped off.

6 As the Depression deepened, Beth heard stories about how angry Newfoundlanders were with their government.

Her own Uncle Alfred caused quite a stir in Whitbourne after the welfare officer refused to give him a note for the dole. The welfare officer's last name was Dyke and everyone referred to him as "Old Dyke."

Old Dyke and his assistant, a fellow named Mercer, told Uncle Alfred that they had no notes to give. Only their boss, a Mr. Budster, was able to give out notes. They told Uncle Alfred to go away and come back after Mr. Budster arrived.

Uncle Alfred refused to budge. He said he wouldn't leave until Mr. Budster got there, even if he had to wait for Christmas. When Old Dyke saw that he was serious, he went and fetched the Newfoundland Rangers to throw him out of the office. Beth was thrilled to hear the dramatic story, although it wasn't clear if Uncle Alfred ever did get his note for the dole.

The Rangers, Newfoundland's own police force, were kept busy during the Depression, trying to quell riots. Newfoundlanders were furious with their government and began to march by the thousands, demanding better relief.

One of the biggest riots was in 1932 when Prime Minister Richard Squires was accused of misusing public money. People marched on the Colonial Building on April 5 to protest. The crowd grew to 10,000 people and quickly turned into a mob. They threw stones and broke most of

the windows in the building, then forced their way in and tried to burn the place down. Police were able to put out the fires quickly. And even though they tried to hit every protester with their batons, they failed to control the mob. Inside the building they looted government offices.

A heavy police escort managed to get the Prime Minister and out a back door, but when the crowd saw him in disguise, trying to flee into a waiting car, they chased after him. The Prime Minister got away but dissolved his government and called an election.

During the election campaign, Squires paid a call to Chapel Arm, where he had strong supporters, including Uncle Will.

Thirteen-year old Beth was helping the family with the garden while the men were making hay. Squires pulled up his car and Beth decided to go up to the road to hear what he had to say. Amazingly, he reached into his pocket and gave her a dime. Beth couldn't believe her good fortune. Until now, she considered herself very lucky to be given a penny to buy some candy. But ten cents! Unheard of!

Beth headed back down to the garden clutching her 10-cent piece tightly in her hand. She was afraid of losing it, so she tried to weed the vegetable garden with her other hand. Nonetheless, the coin slipped from her hand

and into the garden. Beth was determined to find that dime. Every day for the next three days, she went back to the garden and sifted the soil.

On the third day, her hard work paid off and she found the dime. It was enough to buy a lot of candy and it left Beth with a warm memory of Richard Squires.

Her opinion was not shared by Newfoundlanders of voting age.

The voters booted him out and elected F. C. Alderdice to lead them. He quickly concluded that his government would be forced to default on some of the \$100 million it owed. This was very worrisome to both the British and Canadian governments. They feared that Newfoundland's debt might damage the credit of the rest of the British Commonwealth and even cause the stock market to drop again.

Both Britain and Canada felt obligated to step in. They agreed to help Newfoundland make its payments on the debt in the short term. For the long-term, they set up a Royal Commission to find a solution to Newfoundland's precarious economic situation.

In Chapel Arm, as in all Newfoundland communities, people were talking about the Royal Commission and what it might mean for



them. Beth listened to the discussion, hearing people use the term “Responsible Government.” She didn’t really understand that what they were talking about was whether Newfoundland really had the right to govern itself. If the Royal Commission concluded that there would be no ‘Responsible Government’, what they would really be saying was that Newfoundland would no longer be a Dominion of the Commonwealth, as was Canada and Australia.

One historical account put it succinctly:

“The British government appointed the chairman, Lord Amulree.

The Canadian government appointed C. A. Magrath, and the Newfoundland government Sir William Stavert. Both Magrath and Stavert were Canadian bankers. The commissioners were assisted by an official from the Dominions Office who was to have a long association with Newfoundland, P. A. Clutterbuck.

The commission held closed hearings in Newfoundland, starting in St. John’s and traveling across the island on the railway. The members then went on to Ottawa to meet members of the Canadian government. It was made very clear to the commissioners that many Newfoundlanders had lost faith in responsible government as a system, and in their political leaders.

They wanted help, and they wanted a change: but they did not want confederation, and neither did the Canadian prime minister, R. B. Bennett.

Officials in London had been discussing the Newfoundland crisis while the royal commission was on the other side of the Atlantic. When Amulree returned, he found that these discussions had produced a plan which he was expected to recommend. Newfoundland’s public debt would be rescheduled at a lower rate of interest, and guaranteed by the British government. This would prevent default, reassure bondholders, and prevent panic in the markets. But financial intervention and assistance of this type were incompatible with responsible government. Thus Newfoundland would have to agree to give up that system of government temporarily, and allow Britain to administer the country through an appointed commission.”

And so on February 16, 1934 Newfoundland fell under the rule of what was known as Commission Government.

Beth, who was now becoming a young woman, thought it might mean that hard times were over. But, even if it did not, she had other things to think about. Her mother had become sick and needed her help.

*Come all ye hardy fishermen who work hard for a bite,
While toiling on the deep blue sea morning, noon and night;
And those that get the profit they are snuggled in the warmth,
Eating up the luxuries which the fishermen have earned.
The reason we poor fishermen don't get no more fair play,
Too many of those long coat chaps are traveling 'round today;
And ask 'em for to help you, boys, which makes it all the worse,
So if you want to try her, friends, you'll have to try her first.
Commencing on the merchant, it is hard for me to tell,
The way they rob the poor man, you all know very well;
They'll carry away your earnings, boys, and you they'll overthrow,
And ask them for to help you, and they'll plainly answer, "No!"
We went to see a gentleman, the man that rules the dole,
We asked him for white flour, and he plainly answered, "No!"
We then did write a letter, as you may understand,
Addressed to Sir John Hope Simpson, the ruler in Newfoundland.
We stated our conditions, boys, and likewise many more,
About those hungry people, here on the Labrador;
If every man could catch a fox there would be none to breed,
And the way it is with customs, boys, they think you have fox seed.
Likewise the tea and molasses that you get with your bit of toast,
Next year 'twill be paid back again by the taxes on your coast;
This year they taxed the people's dogs to pay their polish next year,
To keep the buttons shining on the Newfoundland Rangers here.*

Author Unknown

Original Newfoundland song published as a broadside.

*Collected in 1951 from George Hatfield of Tors Cove, NL, and published
in MacEdward Leach And The Songs Of Atlantic Canada © 2004 Memorial
University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA).*



7 Beth's mother, Martha, started to become ill when she "was going through the change of life, as Beth was told. In those days, matters of women's health were kept private, even from family members. As a result, Beth wasn't sure exactly what was wrong with her mother. She only knew that at the age of 40, Martha had become weak and often had to stay in bed.

Besides having little energy, Martha also suffered from "bad nerves." And, so, Beth was asked to help out with her mother's housework.

Her sister Mahala, at 17 years old, was already out working. At the age of 11, Mahala was sent out to look for work in the community. She offered her services to women who were pregnant or who had just given birth. Mahala would help do whatever the woman of the household needed. She might look after the children. Or cook, scrub floors, wash a tub of clothes with lye soap or chip in with salting and drying the fish. Mahala would do whatever work was necessary, applying elbow grease and a dry wit, in the hope that she would earn a few cents or perhaps a dollar.

Beth hadn't had much contact with her sister but she loved her and admired Mahala's spunk.

When Beth arrived at her mother's house, she set to work right away. She was barely aware of little Cherry, her six-year-old half sister.

Beth applied her energy to cleaning her mother's house and preparing meals. She was happy to help and hoped her mom would soon recover. The housework also gave her an excuse to be around her brother Joe. At 14, he was growing to be a very tall boy. He reminded Beth so much of their father.

Her mother's family was still struggling to put food on the table. It crossed Beth's mind more than once that her mother's second husband was not a very good provider. Yes, times were tough, but Beth wondered how hard her stepfather tried to find work.

Beth observed him spending a lot of time sitting on the daybed that was a fixture of almost all Newfoundland kitchens. She silently made a harsh judgment, concluding to herself that neither her own father nor Uncle Will spent much time sitting around the house. Both men seemed to have plenty of work to keep them busy.

Beth never voiced her opinion. She strongly believed it was wrong to "back bite" and she made a point of refusing to gossip. However some years later, Mahala expressed her own critical assessment of their stepfather's work ethic. She told Beth that their mother had confided to her that her second husband "wasn't a patch on the first one's ass."

It hurt Beth to see her mother and siblings living in such poverty. It broke her heart, especially, to see what an unkind existence her mother had lived. First, to be widowed at age 29 and left with four little children. Then, forced to make what Beth knew was a heart-breaking decision to give away two of her girls. And then to marry in the hope of a better life, only to end up destitute and in poor health.

Seeking medical help was out of the question. Doctors were expensive and too far away for poor people like her mother to even think of visiting. Beth herself relied on local “healers,” the people in the community believed capable of curing most ailments.

When she had a toothache, she would simply ask young Levi to “charm” it for her. Ten-year-old Levi was happy to comply. He was proud of his perfect success rate. Only once had he refused to help. Beth had developed a wart on her face and went into the yard, looking for Levi to charm it for her. He was mortified at the prospect of someone walking by and seeing him. “Yes, now,” he said. “I allow that’s what I’m going to be doing out here in the yard so that anybody going by will think I’m picking your nose.” Fair enough, said Beth. She waited until they were inside the house. “OK, Levi, come on now, charm that thing off my face.” With no passersby as his excuse, Levi

had no choice but to touch the wart. He rubbed it back and forth a few times with his finger. Sure enough, a couple of days later, it fell off.

But times were changing. There was talk of a hospital being built in Markland, about 12 miles away. The new Commission Government had set health care as one of its top priorities. It was an ambitious plan. Labrador had a few doctors at its famed Grenfell Missions, but across the rest of the Dominion of Newfoundland, there were only 12 hospitals. Six of those were in St. John’s. Given the poor health of Newfoundland’s people, the beds were always full.

With up to one third of its 300,000 people on the dole, the Commission government tried to improve their health through dietary reform. The dreaded brown flour helped reduce beriberi but people complained that it tasted bad and spoiled easily. And, Beth’s own opinion to the contrary, almost everyone complained that it didn’t bake decent bread.

The brown flour continued nonetheless to be included in the dole note, along with pork, split peas, corn meal, molasses and cocoa. To boost children’s nutrition, the government started to distribute a drink called Cocomalt, which was high in Vitamin D and calcium. But it would take more than free Cocomalt to address the dietary needs of families who couldn’t afford to

buy groceries. The government had to admit that dietary reform could only play a small part in tackling poor health, especially diseases such as tuberculosis.

And, so, despite the high costs, it looked at building hospitals and hiring doctors and nurses.

By 1935, the Commission had developed a plan to build an innovative health care system, which included “cottage” hospitals. The small hospitals would have a doctor, a few nurses and a dozen or more beds. They would provide affordable medical care to people from several communities. The nurses would also help with public health education and midwife training.

Markland was on the list. It would serve people from all over the southern part of Trinity Bay, including Norman’s Cove, where Beth’s mother lived. And Chapel Arm, three miles away, where Beth lived with her adoptive family, including Levi, the seventh son and resident healer.

8 Beth’s relatives had lived in Chapel Arm since it was established in the early 1800s. Chapel Arm was a young community, compared to most in Newfoundland. The early settlers were mostly Newfoundlanders who moved to Chapel

Arm from other communities.

One of the most respected women in the community was Sarah Pretty, Beth’s great Aunt. Sarah was the midwife for the whole area. By the time Markland hospital was being planned, Sarah had delivered about 500 babies. Sarah was Beth’s grandfather’s sister and she started her career as a midwife in 1901.

Beth loved her Aunt for her kind and loving nature. Sarah helped mothers with their new babies, staying with them for over a week whether they could pay the three dollars she charged or not.

She retired in 1938, a couple of years after Markland Cottage Hospital opened. Not only was Markland’s new hospital based on an innovative idea, but so was the whole community.

It came about after a group of private citizens went to the new Commission government and asked for some land for ex-servicemen and their families. The Commission heard them out, eager as it was to get people off the dole and also to diversify the economy.

The Markland Experiment began in 1934 as a farming community, in which fishermen were assigned plots of land and taught to farm. Soon, the Commission expanded it as a “social regeneration” project. Six communal farms were set up, as

well as a sawmill, a store, two schools, a furniture-making shop and, of course, the cottage hospital.

Houses were built for 120 families, including the 10 First World War veterans, and a manager was hired to oversee the project. It was a bold new idea, based in part on philosophy originating in Britain at the time.

The plan for the cottage hospitals came from Scotland, where a similar system helped provide medical care to people in remote communities. When Britain took over Newfoundland in 1934, it appointed seven people to run the colony and instructed them to get the economy back on track. For the next 15 years, Newfoundlanders lost the right to vote or to have a say in how their country was run.

Those decisions were made by seven people appointed by the British government. The three senior departments, *Natural Resources*, *Public Utilities* and *Finance*, were held by British Commissioners. Three Newfoundlanders were given the portfolios for *Justice*, *Public Health and Welfare*, *Home Affairs and Education*. The governor acted as chairman. Together, these seven people developed plans and voted upon them. The only input from outsiders came from advice the commissioners might seek, usually from the merchant and business elite of St. John's and the churches.



First St. John the Baptist School, built circa 1915.

The churches, especially, had a lasting influence on the education system. The churches ran the schools and clung to their right to do so, even though the duplication of a Protestant and Catholic school system was ridiculously expensive.

Despite the sway of the churches, when Markland was set up, the two schools established there were inter-denominational. One was a “folk” school, another of the Commission’s measures. These schools taught several academic subjects but also included courses on carpentry, gardening, civics and natural history. In Chapel Arm, the schools continued to be run by the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church.

Beth had dropped out of school three years before the Commission took over. She

was not alone. About one in four children in Newfoundland did not attend school. The history books would later describe the education system this way:

“When C. A. Richardson, a school inspector from England, surveyed Newfoundland and Labrador schools in 1933, he was shocked to find underfed teachers instructing children who in many cases had nothing to write on but brown paper bags. Two years later, a government-sponsored survey of the education system revealed that half of all schools lacked basic school equipment, while 85 percent did not even have a single book on their shelves.

School attendance was another problem. According to the 1935 Census, about 25 percent of Newfoundland and Labrador children between the ages of six and 14 did not attend class regularly. Some lived too far away from schools; others left to work in the fishery or other occupations; still more remained home because their families could not afford to pay school fees. Although the fees were not compulsory, many parents were too embarrassed to send their children to class without paying.”

Aunt Phoebe and Uncle Will could afford to send their children to school, although supplies

were lacking. When Beth started in Grade One, she and her fellows students wrote on a slate.

And in Norman’s Cove, her mother could not afford to send her children to school at all. Both of Beth’s sisters, Mahala and Cherry, were bright children. Their obvious intelligence was most often expressed through a wicked sense of humour and astute insights about the people and world around them.

Beth knew it was a shame that neither of her sisters even had the little bit of schooling that she herself had received. It was clear to her that both Mahala and Cherry were smart as a whip, whereas Beth considered herself quite stupid. Only Nath seemed to think she had any brains and he was so besotted with her that she didn’t trust his opinion.



9 During the period when her mother was sick, Beth would walk between Norman's Cove and Chapel Arm, a distance of about two miles. She preferred to walk during daylight hours, but if she was delayed, it meant walking alone on the deserted rural road in the dark.

Beth had grown up hearing stories about ghosts, fairies, and premonitions. The road between Chapel Arm and Norman's Cove, in particular, was famous for the "*White Lady*."

The apparition of a woman in white would appear at different points along the road, go directly up to the person walking, and walk, side by side with the terrified person. And, just as quickly as she appeared, the *White Lady* would disappear. Beth had heard countless stories about the *White Lady* and it was hard to keep the apparition out of her mind, especially as she walked past the Anglican graveyard on the edge of Norman's Cove.

Beth knew many people, including trusted friends and relatives, who shared harrowing stories of encounters with the *White Lady*. One of them was a relative walking with his toddler, a boy named Will. The *White Lady* appeared beside the boy and he started to cry. His father picked him up and wrapped him tightly in his arms, switching Will to his other side to hide his face from the *White Lady*. It didn't stop the brazen

thing! She simply crossed to the man's side and walked directly beside the child.

Beth would shiver at the thought of it.

There were also stories about jack-o'-lanterns bobbing along the water, where ships had gone down with passengers buried at sea.

And then there was the story of the man who came walking in the opposite direction, from Chapel Arm. He would approach with a cigarette in hand, gesturing that he wanted a light. Once the cigarette was lit, he would cross the road and disappear into the ditch.

Beth had seen premonitions of death, called "tokens" many times in her life. When she was about 10 or 11, she saw an apparition of a horse pulling a dray, a large cart with no sides used to pull heavy loads.

Not realizing it was a token, Beth watched curiously as the horse approached the Anglican church and turned toward the cemetery. She realized then what it was and became frightened. A few days later, an epidemic of scarlet fever hit the community. Several people died and were buried on the same day. Beth watched sadly as a horse and dray conveyed them to their funeral service.

Sometimes the sightings were intended to teach a lesson, or so it seemed.

There was Nelson Warren, a young man a

couple of years older than Beth, who boasted to his buddies that he was not afraid of any of this foolishness about ghosts, spirits, *White Ladies* and what have you. Nelson declared that if he met the Devil himself, he would just keep walking and pay no attention.

That night, Nelson awoke in the middle of the night with a terrible cramp in his stomach.

He ran for the outhouse. But just before he reached the toilet, he saw something blocking his path. It was a big thing in the shape of a man, with huge tassels around his waist. He was so tall that Nelson only came up to his waist, right at eye level to the tassels. The cramp in his stomach disappeared as he looked up, way up into the bearded face of the Old Feller, Satan himself.

Nelson was humbled by the experience. He told everyone about it and said he would not be taking chances by tempting the Old Feller like that again.

Walking the road between Chapel Arm and Norman's Cove, Beth would be happy if she encountered a person she knew enough to stop and have a chat to take her mind off the other creatures she might meet instead. One time, walking in the dark, she saw a man walking toward her with a cigarette in his mouth. She could hear his footsteps and was sure it was a person, not a

spirit. So she called out cheerily, "Hello sir, how are you tonight?" The poor man just about jumped out of his skin. He let loose with the biggest kind of swear word, letting her know in no uncertain terms she had given him quite the fright.

Well, it could have been worse, thought Beth as she continued on her journey.

10 The road between Chapel Arm and Norman's Cove was well traveled. Chapel Arm had gotten its first motor car in 1928 when Anthony Power bought a 1928 Ford. But legs and feet were still the most common way to get around. And there was a lot of visiting between Norman's Cove and Chapel Arm.

Walking the road between the communities was also a rite of passage for young men, hoping to court the women in the neighboring community. Sometimes, Beth and her girlfriends would also walk to Norman's Cove. Along the way, they would meet young men going in the other direction. Sometimes they would chat briefly. And sometimes they would meet up later in their own communities to begin courting in earnest.

And so it was that Beth met Bill Piercey, a man from Norman's Cove. Bill, like Beth, had also lost his father at a young age. And he was

sent away, too. He was raised by his grandparents in Norman's Cove. His mother had remarried and his brother, Joe, and sister Susie, lived with her in Chapel Arm. Bill's mother had married Albert Warren and started a new family with him. They had three children, Edith, Lizzie and Sam, the young man Beth believed murdered by the teacher, Mr. Facey. Beth shocked Bill when she told him how his half-brother was beaten in the classroom.

Bill was quiet but nonetheless, he and Beth had a lot in common and it was easy to talk with each other. They walked the road together a few times and Bill told her the story about the man asking him for a light, then disappearing into the ditch.

But even though they liked each other, they didn't really start courting. Bill was 10 years older than Beth. He owned his own home, even though he had never been married. And he was about to sign up for war service.

It was 1939. Newfoundland was preparing to send men overseas.

Beth's adoptive brother, Frank, who was three years younger, was also planning to sign up.



Bill Piercey (standing)

11 Beth was 21 and still living with Aunt Phoebe and Uncle Will. They needed her. Aunt Phoebe was becoming increasingly crippled with arthritis. The illness ran in her father's side of the family. His youngest brother, Beth's Uncle Jim, was in a wheelchair and unable to provide for his family.

His wife, a raven-haired beauty named Gladys, had won the respect of the community when she chased the welfare officer, Old Dyke, out of her house. In her opinion, he crossed a line when he asked to look in their bedrooms to see if she had made the beds. Aunt Glad, brown eyes snapping with rage, ordered him out of her house. Just to show him she meant business, she chased him down the steps and through the gate, giving him a piece of her mind along the way.

Beth was very fond of her dad's brothers and sisters, all of whom were good-natured and good-humoured.

Their own father, Beth's grandfather, had married a woman whom they despised for her cruelty. They had heard of many mean stepmothers, but Johanna was so horrible to them they thought she was practically evil. Johanna met an untimely death when she fell down the stairs and broke her neck.

Her dad's brother, Nath, was away working in the woods when Johanna died. His brother Charles was eager to bring him the news. "He got her, Nat, the Old Feller finally got her," Uncle Charles said. "Who did the Devil get now, Charl?" asked Uncle Nat. "Old Johanna, boy. He had to trip her down the stairs and crack her neck, but he finally got her," said Charles with great satisfaction.

Beth couldn't even begin to imagine how barbarous their stepmother must have been for her kind and gentle Uncles to talk about her in that way.

12 The War broke the terrible cycle of poverty that many Newfoundlanders had learned to accept during the Depression. But the prosperity had come too late for Beth's mother. Before the war broke out, her eldest son Joe became sick with a terrible fever.

Beth's mother had no real food to give him as he lay in bed. She made Joe a cup of tea and brought him a slice of unbuttered bread. As she brought the poor meal to his bed, she apologized for not even having a bit of butter, tears streaming down her face.

When Beth came to visit, Cherry told her their mother was terribly upset because she had no decent food for Joe. But it turned out to be the least of her troubles. Joe was very ill. So ill that he had to be taken to Markland Cottage Hospital, which had opened three years earlier. There, he was diagnosed with meningitis. They couldn't save him. On June 11, 1937 Joe passed away. His 16th birthday had passed just 10 days before.

Martha had no money to pay for her boy's

medical bills or his burial. The only way she could raise the money to have a coffin made for Joe was to sell a piece of land left by his late father, John Newhook.

Nineteen-year-old Beth had now lost her father and her only brother.

13 Beth's own life was bracketed by two World Wars. She was born just months before the First World War ended. And she reached the age of majority just before the Second World War started.

Beth turned 21 on July 18, 1939. She wouldn't be able to exercise her right to vote for another 10 years because no elections were held under Commission Government.

On September 3rd, Britain declared war against Germany. Newfoundland was automatically drawn into the Second World War.

One day earlier, on September 2nd, her friend Bill Piercey had celebrated his 31st birthday. Both Bill and her adoptive brother Frank were eager to sign up. Frank was just two months shy of his 18th birthday. The Commission government quickly put together a home militia to defend Newfoundland's strategic location on the Atlantic Ocean.

In Britain, there was a problem not connected to military strategy. There wasn't enough timber to keep the coal mines operating and the mines were crucial to Britain's economy. The mines were built with wooden supports called pit props. Until the war cut off supplies, British mining companies had imported their wood from other countries, such as Newfoundland and Canada.

Two months into the war, the wood was running out and the British economy was on the verge of crisis. There were lots of trees in Britain but there were no loggers to cut them down. But Newfoundland had thousands of experienced loggers like Bill and Frank. They spent their winters working in the woods of Central Newfoundland, cutting wood for the pulp mills and mines.

Their chance to serve came on November 17th, 1939, just four days after Frank's 18th birthday. The British Secretary of State requested Newfoundland governor Sir Humphrey Walwyn to recruit "2,000 men, capable of good work with an ax and hand saw, be sent to Britain to work in its forests."

The British government suggested making the unit a civilian one, arguing that there would not be enough time to recruit, equip and train a military company. In a radio address broadcast on November 17, the Commissioner of

Natural Resources appealed for volunteers from all over the island. Recruiters reported an abundance of applicants eager to assist in the war effort overseas – aside from a previous call from the British Royal Navy for 625 recruits, this was the first opportunity Newfoundlanders had to serve abroad. As a result, the problem quickly shifted from finding enough men to determining which were most suitable for the job.”

The Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit was formed, with men as old as 55 lining up for the medical exam and interview.

“Upon acceptance, recruits agreed to six months’ labour in the United Kingdom and signed a contract outlining the terms of employment. They would earn \$2 per day (the then minimum wage local paper companies paid), but had to send half of that home to relatives in Newfoundland. Wages were further reduced to \$1 per day for any work missed due to illness or accident.”

Bill and Frank were both accepted, as were eight other men from Chapel Arm. But it would take several months before they were posted because Britain wasn’t ready for the loggers it desperately needed. In August 1940, they sailed for Liverpool, where they boarded trains for Scotland.

It was a good thing they were not chosen for

the first deployments. Those men had to build their own camps or settle for cutting small stands of timber while the government haggled with private woodlot owners to gain access to their forests.

When Bill and Frank arrived in the Highlands, they got to work. They had both signed up for a six-month stint with the Forestry Unit and were determined to make the most of it. When March came, Frank and his friend Kenneth Gosse decided to join the Royal Navy. Bill decided to sign up for a second six-month stint, continuing to serve as a civilian with the Forestry Unit.



Kenneth Gosse and Francis Warren



Back in Chapel Arm, Beth and other families didn't worry too much about their boys in Scotland. Little did they know that the logging was both back-breakingly hard and dangerous as well. The men cut all wood by hand with an ax or buck saw, then lifted each log onto trucks or trains.

Besides supplying pit props to keep the coal mines going, the Newfoundlanders cut wood for building bunks for air raid shelters, repairing bombed-out buildings, telegraph poles and ships.

Their work was crucial to the war effort because Britain didn't have to buy wood from

overseas. Nor did the country need to risk losing more ships bearing lumber.

The Newfoundlanders were used to hard work and they were having an adventure. From all reports coming back to Chapel Arm, they were enjoying both the beauty of Scotland, which reminded them of home, and the Scottish people.

Frank wrote home to tell his mother he had met a wonderful Highland girl. She was a Roman Catholic and he was giving his staunch Anglican parents fair warning. Frank planned to marry her and bring her home after the war.

14 All over Newfoundland, things were booming. It seemed like the horrible poverty disappeared almost overnight.

There were plenty of jobs for men in Chapel Arm. Just a few miles down the road in Argentia, the US military was building a Naval base. The Americans were paying well and among the men to get hired at the base was Beth's adoptive brother and biggest fan, Nath Warren.

He was thrilled with the music, swimming pool, bowling alleys and all the exciting new things no one in Newfoundland had ever experienced. In Chapel Arm, Beth was living her life in much the same way her mother and grandmothers had before her. After all the work was done around the house, she would hook rugs, or knit, or perhaps go for a walk to visit her relatives.

Everyone was talking about the "Yanks" and the amazing stuff you could buy on the base. Cigarettes were very cheap and there was no end to the variety and quality of its stores. And for the first time, people didn't have to scrimp on every penny.

Lots of girls were dating Americans and even marrying them. Newfoundland men were not happy with the competition from the glamorous American Naval men. But neither Beth nor Nath fell in love with an American. Nath had met

Ethel, a girl from Central Newfoundland, who was glamorous in her own right.

Ethel worked on the base herself and used her money to buy gorgeous clothes, jewelry and shoes. She was always beautifully turned out. And while she was happy to buy outfits, she used her own creative talents to sew and crochet. Beth admired the way Ethel could turn her hand to anything and create something beautiful. Ethel was also an accomplished organist. Much of her sophistication was developed even before Ethel came to work at the Argentia base.

Ethel was from a town near Gander, which had also boomed before and during the war. Gander was the largest airfield in the world and was used as a jumping off point for aircraft flying across the Atlantic. During the War, Gander was an integral pit stop for refueling Allied planes. The town was set up in a unique way with both Americans and Newfoundlanders living on opposite sides of the runway. Anyone wanting to visit had to cross a live runway to get to the other side.

It may have been the exposure to the worldliness of Gander that gave Ethel her confidence. But even though she dressed to the nines, she had no airs about her. Ethel was one of the sweetest people Beth had ever met. She was such fun to be around, always smiling and laughing. Beth adored

her. Nath, who always wore his heart on his sleeve, doted on Ethel. Big sister Beth had been replaced as his best girl.

She couldn't have been happier for Nath.

Eileen Doucette



When we were small and lived in the orphanage, we used to come out to Chapel Arm for our holidays and we would visit all our relatives. We went down to the house to see Uncle Bill and Aunt Lizzie and she was nice to us. I remember how kind she was and she made good bread and she he gave us whatever she had to eat. I remember her looking nice and her beautiful dark hair. She was pretty and I always said that she was a pretty woman and she still is attractive today.

15 In September 1941, Bill arrived safely home from the war. He was 33 and ready to settle down. He wanted Beth for his wife. He teased her about his reasons for wanting to marry her, saying it was because of her beautiful hair. The way he figured it, Beth's jet-black curls would never require expensive hairdressing and he would be financially ahead, at least on the hairdressing front.

Beth wasted no time accepting his proposal. Less than two months after Bill came home from Scotland, they got married on November 10, 1941. Beth was too practical to consider a white wedding dress, so she headed to the ladies dress shops of Water Street in St. John's.

She found the perfect outfit. A blue taffeta dress with a fitted bodice and flared tail for \$2.98, and a pair of gorgeous patent leather shoes for \$3. Beth loved the design of the shoes, with their blocks of darker blue leather woven against a lighter blue. True to her word that she wouldn't buy a wedding outfit that could only be worn once, Beth wore the dress and shoes until they wore out.

The newlyweds moved into Bill's house in Norman's Cove, just a few houses down the road from Beth's mother. At 23, she was in her own home for the first time since her dad died 17 years earlier.

Bill had also been raised by relatives. His grandparents took him in when he was eight

years old. Three of their sons had never married and still lived with their parents. Bill's bachelor Uncles, his grandparents and his married Uncles all lived within a few houses of each other.

Bill didn't say much about his childhood. It made Beth suspect that his life had been far from easy. But he didn't appear to bear any bitterness. Bill was a very hard-working man with a soft heart. Softer than Beth's own, she sometimes thought. They settled happily into married life, surrounded by family.



In June 1942, seven months after they married, Beth became pregnant with their first child. She and Bill were overjoyed to be starting their own family. Beth was delighted to be living so close to her mom.

She wanted her baby to grow up surrounded by the love of a mother, father and grandmother, an experience that neither Beth nor Bill had ever known.

16 Beth was also spending a lot of time helping out Aunt Phoebe, who was nearly crippled with arthritis. On one of her visits to Chapel Arm, Beth learned that Frank was coming home for a visit while on leave from the Royal Navy.

His plan was to arrive in Nova Scotia and then take the passenger ferry from North Sydney to Port aux Basques, then board a train for Chapel Arm. He was due home around the middle of October. The whole family was looking forward to seeing him for the first time in more than two years.

However, they were a little apprehensive about him sailing. German U-boats had been prowling the Atlantic since December, 1941 when the US was drawn into the war following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Once Germany had declared war on the United States, the fight heated up in the Atlantic.

The head of the U-boat arm of the German navy, Admiral Karl Donitz, launched his assault in January 1942 when U-123 torpedoed a British steamer just south of Cape Sable, Nova Scotia. In the next few months, the Germans sank another 43 ships in Canadian waters, losing only two U-boats themselves.

The Germans claimed not to target passenger ships, but to be on the safe side, the ferry between

North Sydney and Port aux Basques only sailed at night, escorted by a Canadian naval minesweeper. The ferry service was Newfoundland's vital link to the mainland of Canada.

Frank, along with 236 other passengers, boarded the ferry, *SS Caribou* at North Sydney on October 13 to begin the nine-hour trip to Newfoundland. The *SS Caribou* set sail at 9:30 pm with 73 civilians, including 11 children, and 118 military personnel. There was a crew of 43, all of whom were aware of the U-boat threat, especially since the *Caribou's* escort had spotted a U-boat on its previous trip.

The captain of the Canadian escort ship, Lt. James Cuthbert, was not happy with the way the night was shaping up. For one thing, the *SS Caribou* was sending out too much smoke for his liking. And he was frustrated that British naval procedures forced his ship, the *HMSC Grandmère*, to stay behind the ship. Cuthbert thought it was ridiculous to try to screen for U-boats from behind, with the ship he was trying to protect preventing him from getting a clear field in which to probe for the sound of U-boats. Nonetheless, Cuthbert followed the rules. The history books prove his instincts were correct: He was correct, for in the *Caribou's* path lay the U-69.

Kapitan-leutnant Ulrich Gräf had actually been searching for a three-ship grain convoy

heading for Montréal when at 3:21 am he spotted the *Caribou* “belching heavy smoke” about 60 kilometres off the coast of Newfoundland. He misidentified the 2,222-ton *SS Caribou* and the 670-ton *Grandmère* as a 6,500-ton passenger freighter and a “two-stack destroyer.” At 3:40 am, according to *Grandmère's* log, a lone torpedo hit the *Caribou* on her starboard side.

Pandemonium ensued as passengers, thrown from their bunks by the explosion, rushed topside to the lifeboat stations. For some reason, several families had been accommodated in separate cabins and now sought each other in the confusion. In addition, several lifeboats and rafts had either been destroyed in the explosion or could not be launched. As a result, many passengers were forced to jump overboard into the cold water.

Meanwhile, *Grandmère* had spotted U-69 in the dark and turned to ram. Gräf, still under the impression he was facing a “destroyer” rather than a minesweeper, crash dived. As the *Grandmère* passed over the swirl left by the submerged submarine, Lt. Cuthbert fired a diamond pattern of six depth charges. Gräf, meanwhile, headed for the sounds of the sinking *SS Caribou*, knowing that the survivors left floating on the surface would inhibit the *Grandmère* from launching another attack. However, U-69's manoeuvre went unnoticed by the *Grandmère* and

His Scottish fiancée sent a long letter to his mother telling her that Frank had dreamt that his ship would go down and that he would drown. When he left her in Scotland, he told her of his dream and said goodbye in case he wouldn't be back.

Beth was distressed by Frank's death and developed a hatred for Germans that lasted for a long time. Whenever someone mentioned a German in her presence, she would retort: "The only good German is a dead German."

She and other Newfoundlanders did not take much comfort in knowing that U-69, the U-boat that sank the SS *Caribou*, was still carrying out its stealth attacks in Newfoundland's waters. Nor did they feel much sorrow when the U-69 was sunk by the British the next February. All 46 of the German crew were killed in the attack.

After the war, Hitler's Naval chief, Karl Donitz, was tried and convicted as a war criminal.

17 Beth was five months pregnant when Frank was lost on the *Caribou*. Her baby was born March 19, 1943. She named him Francis, in memory of Frank.

Francis was a beautiful baby boy. But from the beginning, Beth worried about him. For

one thing, when he cried, big beads of perspiration would form around his mouth. The sweat disturbed Beth. She couldn't help but think of the only other time she saw beads of water like that. That time, it was on her skin and it brought back terrifying memories.

The incident had happened the summer before when she was just a couple of months pregnant. Beth desperately wanted to go berry picking. But Aunt Phoebe didn't like the idea of a pregnant woman going off into the woods by herself. Beth tried to find a friend to go with her but no one was available. So, despite Aunt Phoebe's concerns, she headed into the woods on her own.

Along the way, she ran into Bill's mother, Martha Power who was working in her yard. Beth chatted with her mother-in-law for a few minutes and then headed berry picking.

But, before she realized it, she was being chased by Martha's dog, which had gotten loose from the yard.

Beth tried to shoo the dog away, but the dog kept chasing her. It was panting wildly. Beth picked up some rocks and started to throw them at the dog. Suddenly, she felt very weak. She sat down on a rock to rest. She felt very clammy and these enormous beads of perspiration broke out on her skin. Beth stared at the sweat, thinking the

beads looked like split peas.

Now, when she looked at the same pattern of perspiration on her newborns skin, Beth grew afraid. She feared that her frightening experience had somehow harmed the baby in her womb. When Francis cried, his mouth would turn blue and the beads of sweat would form.

Francis was just four days old when Beth had a terrible premonition. She saw three stars fall from the sky, one after the other. For some reason, she looked at her baby and said: “Are you going to live?” When she told her mother the story, her mother asked why she believed Francis would die and not Beth herself. Beth replied that she didn’t think she was good enough to warrant three beautiful stars, but that Francis was.

Three months later, Francis caught a cold. Beth was visiting Clarence and his wife, Hazel, when she realized Francis had become sicker and thought she had better get him home. Along the way, she met up with the midwife who had brought him into the world, Emily Smith, and an elderly neighbour whom everyone called Aunt Carol.

Emily asked to see the baby and Beth went inside her house to unwrap his blankets for Emily to have a look. The two older women said nothing, but Aunt Carol observed to Emily after Beth left that the child was much sicker than Beth realized.

The next day, Beth’s mother asked her youngest daughter Cherry to go out to the gate and be on the lookout for the doctor who would be passing through on his regular visit. But it wasn’t long before Martha called her daughter back into the house. It was too late. Francis had died. He was three months and four days old.

He died on June 23, 1943, exactly three months to the day after Beth saw the three falling stars.

18 A couple of months after Francis died, Bill’s brother Joe came to see Bill with a proposition. He wanted to know if Bill would be willing to come to Placentia Junction to work with him cutting wood. Placentia Junction was a small railway outpost and several families had moved there to log and trap. Among them was Bill’s sister Edith and her husband Will Hynes.

Joe and his wife Clo, were living there with their three children, Eileen, Robert and their newborn, Bernard. Joe invited Bill and Beth to move in with them for the winter to see if the two brothers would make a good team.

Bill and Beth decided to take Joe up on his offer. In the fall of 1943, they took the train into Placentia Junction to begin the first adventure of their married life.

Beth loved “the Junction” because it was such

a peaceful and scenic setting. There was an excellent trout pond, good hunting and berry picking. Beth also loved living among Bill's family.

His sister Edith was a brilliant seamstress and Beth never ceased to marvel at the gorgeous clothes she would create, simply by looking at a picture.

Edith also became a close friend. Like Bill, she didn't dwell on the extraordinary hardship of her childhood. Edith was Bill's half-sister from his mother's second marriage to Albert Warren. After Albert died, Martha, their mother, placed Edith and the eldest daughter Susie, in an orphanage. She gave Edith's brother Sam away to his Uncle Ben. Martha kept Joe and her baby Lizzie, who was born a couple of months after Albert died.

Soon after, Martha remarried Jack Power. Martha converted to Roman Catholicism and she and Jack started a new family.

When Edith was 15, Martha came to the orphanage to bring her home to Chapel Arm. When Beth heard the story, she wondered if her mother-in-law was looking for a babysitter and household helper, as much as a desire to have her daughter back.

Except for Bill, who was the oldest and living with his grandparents, all of Martha's children

became Catholic. They lived on the Catholic side of Chapel Arm, which was separated by a bridge from the Protestant side. There were separate schools and churches but relations between the two sides were friendly enough. It was more difficult for Catholic and Protestant children to become close friends when so many of their activities revolved around school and church. There simply wasn't enough common experience for them to get to know each other well.

This made Beth all the more grateful that she was given an opportunity to live side by side with Edith in Placentia Junction. Had they remained in Chapel Arm and Norman's Cove, the two women would have only been able to get to know each other by making the effort of walking an hour each way to each other's houses. And with all the work they had to do, it was highly unlikely either of them would have had the time.

Edith's company was truly a gift for Beth after she lost baby Francis. Beth also enjoyed Edith's five-year-old daughter Rosie and two-year-old son, Maurice. Edith had recently taken in a baby boy, Alan, who was supposed to stay with the family for a few short months. But Alan stayed and Edith was raising him as her own.

About a year after Beth and Bill joined Joe and Clo in the Junction, Joe took a job in St. John's.

PLACENTIA JUNCTION

There were no stores in the Junction and I remember that we took the train to Whitbourne to purchase supplies. It was a big deal and we got ice cream and Mom bought treats to bring back to the Junction. The treats were rationed because they had to last until our next trip for supplies.

Mom was isolated living in the Junction but she seemed to enjoy her life. It wasn't complicated living in our small two-bedroom house. We had a wood burning stove to heat the house and to cook on. We had an oil lamp for light and the battery-operated radio was our only source of news and entertainment. I remember Mom listening to music, stories and talk shows.

Dad would leave in the morning and row his boat across the lake, go to the mountain to watch for and report any forest fires. He often stopped and fished on his way home and Mom was delighted to cook them for our dinner. She often told us the story about one evening a severe thunder storm came on and Dad did not come home at his usual time and it was getting really late. She walked the floor with worry, expecting that Dad was lost in the boat on his way home.

She had given him up for dead when he arrived home with a string of fish in his hand. She told him about her worry. However, he was unconcerned. He was excited as told her about the fish biting. He was catching them one after the other while the lightening was flashing off his rod.

I remember Mom taking Jennie and me berry picking with her. We feasted on fresh berries and Mom made delicious jams. We lived off the land and Mom cleaned and cooked rabbit which dad slipped. We had a potato garden up behind the stable where our horse Nellie lived and Mom planted and harvested the potatoes. She told me that when she was seven months pregnant with Jennie, she dug the potatoes in the garden and gave a man a sack of potatoes to bring them to the cellar for her.

Jennie and I have a special love in our hearts for the junction. I am quite sure it is because of the life and security mom created for us there. We are very fortunate that mom was a woman who could live this lifestyle and I will always treasure the foundation and memories that she set for us.

Joyce Matier



But Beth and Bill stayed on and eventually owned a cozy little home of their own.

Bill was extremely hard-working, with several different jobs on the go at one time. He trapped muskrats, drying and stretching their pelts until he had enough to sell in St. John's.

His main wage-earning job was to man the fire tower, watching for wildfires in the forest during the summer months. The fire tower was a three-mile walk from their cabin, so Bill bought a small boat to take him across the pond. This cut one mile off his walk. He would dock the boat and walk the remaining two miles, then climb the five stories to the top of tower. There, he would keep his eyes on the wilderness around him, watching for forest fires. If the risk of fire was low, he would leave at the end of the day and trek home to Placentia Junction. If the weather was dry, he would sleep overnight in the tower.

In the winter, Bill would cut wood to sell to the pulp and lumber companies. He and other loggers in Placentia Junction each had a flatcar, specially designed to carry a heavy load of timber. After Bill had cut enough wood to fill his boxcar, he would hook it up to the train and ride with it to St. John's to sell it.

As time passed, Beth realized that Bill was much more than a good provider. He was a tireless worker, always looking for a way to earn a dollar.

Wanda Tulk Petcoff



I was recently visiting a friend and we had a cup of tea together. Her dog was hanging around me and after the tea steeped in my cup I took the tea bag out and offered it to the dog. Needless to say the dog didn't take it and my friend thought this was strange and wondered why I did it. I laughed and told her that my Aunt Lizzie used to do this to our dog Pinki when she came to visit.

And he had a tremendous head on his shoulders to look after their money. Beth was impressed with her husband's head for figures. Even though Bill had less than a Grade Six education, he could calculate almost to the penny how much wood he cut on any given day. She was always skeptical about Bill's calculations. But he was always right.

19 Beth and Bill were eager to have another child.

They had spent the first years of their marriage spending their summers in Placentia Junction, then returning to their home in Norman's Cove for a couple of months in the fall.

Bill would spend the winter logging with his cousins on his father's side, Dave and Norm Piercey, at a camp they set up near the Junction.

When Beth finally did get pregnant, she miscarried. She happened to be visiting her mother at the time and her mother called for the doctor.

Doctor Newhook was away and Nurse Cherry came instead. Nurse Dorothy Cherry was by now a very experienced midwife. She was in her early 40s and had come over from England in 1929 to serve with Newfoundland Outport Nursing and Industrial Association, or NONIA.

NONIA was set up by the governor's wife, Lady Elsie Allardyce, in 1924 to recruit nurses for outport communities. Lady Allardyce's plan involved having outport women knit and make crafts that could be sold to help pay for the nurses' salaries.

Nurse Cherry was born in 1900 in northern England. She was widowed during the First World War and became a nurse after her husband was killed in action.

She arrived in Newfoundland and was stationed in Lamaline on the Burin Peninsula just months before the Tsunami of 1929. After the underwater earthquake hit, Nurse Cherry traveled by horse, or walked when the roads were too damaged, to help the sick and grieving. She was considered a hero.

"It must have taken a superhuman effort for her to make her way from one stricken community to another through icy wind, snow, rain and mud," Dr. Mosdell, Chairman of Newfoundland's Board of Health, wrote about her.

When Newfoundland's Commission Government set up its cottage hospital system and decided to try the "Markland Experiment," Nurse Cherry was brought on board. She was placed in charge of the public health education offered by Markland and was responsible for training midwives.

One of the midwives she trained was Emily Smith of Chapel Arm, who delivered Beth's first baby, Francis.

Beth had never met Nurse Cherry until after her miscarriage when the nurse arrived in Norman's Cove to examine her. Nurse Cherry realized quickly that there was a problem with the afterbirth. She told Beth to come into the hospital to see Doctor Newhook as soon as possible.

When Beth was well enough to travel, she

hired a car to bring her into Markland. Doctor Newhook told her she would need a D & C but that he couldn't do the simple surgery that day. He wanted her to wait in the hospital for two days until he returned from his regular travels to the communities. But there was no bed available and she would have to make do with a cot.

Beth didn't really want to hang around Markland Hospital with no personal items, not even a nightgown or a toothbrush. She asked him if it would be okay to go home and come back two days later, on Thursday when he came back.

Doctor Newhook thought this was a great idea. He expected two patients to be discharged and their beds to become available. He told Beth to explain to Nurse Cherry that this was the plan they had come up with and to ask her to make up a cot for Beth if, for some reason, the other beds were still occupied.

On Thursday, as agreed, Beth hired a car to take her into Markland again. There was a terrible snowstorm with strong winds. As soon as the driver dropped her off, he drove away in the hope of making it safely home that night. Beth went into the porch of the hospital and knocked on the door. Soon, Nurse Cherry appeared. When Beth explained that Doctor Newhook had asked her to come, Nurse Cherry said that was impossible because he was away.

Beth told her about her conversation with Doctor Newhook. Nurse Cherry replied that she had no beds. When Beth came to the part of the story where Doctor Newhook had suggested Nurse Cherry make up a cot, the English nurse turned on her heel and slammed the door.

Beth didn't know what to think. She had no idea if Nurse Cherry would come back or if she was expected to leave. She stood there for a good while, trying to figure out what to do.

The thought running through her mind was that she could not go back out into that snowstorm. But what if she had no choice but to leave and try to find shelter? As Beth stood in the porch, she couldn't stop thinking about the fact that her own father perished in a snowstorm. She wondered if this was to be her fate as well. If it was, Beth was determined to hold Nurse Cherry responsible. She was planning to write a note to carry with her, just in case she perished, to make sure that people would know how and why she was walking in a snow storm.

Eventually, the housekeeper came out to the porch and let Beth in. She made up a cot and Beth was admitted to hospital. Nurse Cherry didn't speak to her. The next day, Nurse Cherry continued not speaking to Beth, although she was quite friendly to the other women on the ward.

When Doctor Newhook began his rounds, Nurse Cherry walked from bed-to-bed with him, explaining the medical condition of each patient. Walking up to Beth's bed, Nurse Cherry said: "She's just in for a D & C."

Doctor Newhook was pleased to see that Beth had followed his instructions. He stopped to chat. He and Beth talked for a good half hour, much to the curiosity of the other women on the ward. They wondered what was going on, with the nurse not speaking to Beth and the doctor spending so much time chatting.

Beth explained what had happened between her and Nurse Cherry. But no one knew if Doctor Newhook had heard the story of Beth being left alone in the porch or whether he just wanted to chat.

As for Nurse Cherry, she may very well have been at her wit's end. She was on her own in the hospital, doing a job for which she was poorly paid. She may have thought that she was doing the work of a doctor and being paid much less.

The health of Newfoundlanders had improved since the hospital opened a few years earlier. But their medical needs were far from being well met at a regional cottage hospital with too few beds and too few staff.

Newfoundland was also in a huge social and

political turmoil. The War and the Americans had brought new attitudes, especially about money. It may have seemed to Nurse Cherry that the tiny place she had chosen as her new home was becoming strange.

There was change in the air. Politics were just part of it.

20 Nurse Cherry and Doctor Newhook had improved life for people in Trinity Bay and surrounding areas.

Beth's miscarriage was a good example. The simple medical procedure to remove the afterbirth could have been life-threatening had an infection developed. If it were not for Nurse Cherry, despite her bad mood that night, and Doctor Newhook's sensible approach, Beth might well have died.

The improvement in health care was a direct result of Commission government. The seven men found it easy to get things done without having to bother getting input from the public or to sway various political factions.

But as the war was coming to an end, Newfoundlanders were getting fed up with the Commission government. The war had brought great prosperity. Anyone who wanted a job could get one, especially in construction of the

military bases. The American bases at Argentia, Stephanville and St. John's, totaled \$105 million in construction.

Nearly 20,000 Newfoundlanders had jobs in construction. The money was good: \$1,500 a year on average. Five times more than a fisherman earned. That was the good news. The bad news was Newfoundlanders earned less than their American civilian counterparts. The reason was not that the Americans wanted to gouge them. It was their own government that did so. The Commissioners were concerned that Newfoundlanders might grow accustomed to a higher standard of living and be less content with their lot in life than they had been before the War. So, they ordered the Americans to pay the Newfoundlanders less.

Britain was hoping to return democracy back to Newfoundland within 10 years and was saving for that day by keeping a tight fist on Newfoundland's treasury. Despite the progress, Britain also feared that Newfoundland would slide back to economic dependence if they were allowed to govern themselves.

They also worried that even though Newfoundland and Canada had worked closely together during the war, Newfoundlanders seem to get along better with the Yanks. In 1943, Gov. Humphrey Walwyn reported back

to the Dominions Office in London that Newfoundlanders "were so dazzled by American dollars, hygiene and efficiency that many of the public rather play up to America in preference to Canada."

Britain, for all of its talk about a 10-year economic plan, simply could not afford to invest in Newfoundland's development. It suggested Newfoundland join Canada. Both Britain and Canada were worried about the U.S. influence on Newfoundland.

Newfoundlanders themselves wanted a say. Many of them wanted a return to Responsible Government, as they had before 1934. Others were as skeptical as the Brits about whether Newfoundland could make it on her own.

In kitchens across Newfoundland, the political debate raged.

Beth and Bill paid close attention. Beth remembered well the time during her childhood when Richard Squires gave her a dime during an election. As it turns out, that was the last time Newfoundlanders had a chance to vote.

Beth also remembered an election slogan that went: "Mark your X for Bradley boys and he will take the Humber."

The slogan from her childhood referred to Gordon Bradley, who had returned to the

political scene and was now suggesting union with Canada. He had been very active in the Loyal Orange Lodge, to which most of the men in Beth's family belonged. He was very critical of the Commission government and people listened to his opinions.

It sounded as if the matter would be put to the public for a vote.

Now, as a married couple with their own home, Bill and Beth would have a chance to vote for the first time.

It was a decision they would not take lightly.

The stakes were high. Bill and Beth were about to have another baby.

21 Nurse Cherry was in charge of the mothers-to-be when Beth was admitted to Markland Hospital. Under the new health care system developed by Commission Government, mothers were encouraged to have their babies in the hospital. Midwives in the communities were still available and many had been trained by Nurse Cherry herself to deliver babies more safely.

This time when Beth arrived at Markland Cottage Hospital, Nurse Cherry was kinder

to her. Beth thought she must have forgotten her from the earlier unpleasant encounter, but whether this was true or not, Nurse Cherry was friendly enough.

Beth, like all pregnant women, was admitted to hospital a day or two before the baby was expected. On the morning of April 30, Beth had a feeling today would be the day her baby would come.

As the day wore on, she was so certain of this that she remarked upon it to the other women in the maternity ward.

Nurse Cherry overheard her and came in to say, "Let's take a look."

She brought Beth into an examining room and checked on the progress of her labour. "You're right," she said. "You will have your baby today."

The baby was a healthy girl. As Beth held her, she wondered what her name would be.

Beth and Bill had made a deal about how they would name their children after Francis was born.

Beth wanted to name their son in memory of Frank, so she asked Bill if he would mind if she chose the name for their first born. Bill agreed, as long as he could choose the name for the next one.

Beth thought that was fair and she agreed.

Now, holding her daughter, she was hoping her name would not be Annie. It seemed a natural because Bill's Aunt Annie had helped to raise him. But Beth didn't like the name, a fact that she had never disclosed to Bill.

Bill was tight-lipped on the name he would choose, telling Beth he would let her know when the baby came.

In Markland Hospital, Beth waited for Bill to get word of their new daughter and to come to the hospital.

In the meantime, the baby was known to Nurse Cherry and the hospital staff as "Baby Piercey."

The babies were kept in a separate room and brought to their mothers for nursing. Beth was amused to find that her baby needed a diaper change as soon as she finished nursing. Every time. The other moms and hospital staff would joke about it. But Nurse Cherry was her usual no-nonsense self. "Yes," said the English nurse, "Baby Piercey is certainly the healthiest of the lot."

When Bill arrived, he looked at his daughter. Beth waited to hear what he called her. All she could think was "Not Annie." But a deal was a deal and if her daughter was going to be called Annie, Beth would have to live with.

Finally, Bill spoke. "Joyce. Her name is Joyce."

Beth loved it! It was something different. Until now, everyone in their circle was named for a relative. But Joyce had a new, modern name.

It was April 30, 1947.

The biggest change in Newfoundland's history was in the air.

22 Bill and Beth returned to Placentia Junction with their thriving baby girl.

Bill was making a good living as a logger, trapper and fire tower observer.

Their connection to the outside world was through the radio. And the airwaves were consumed with one topic: The future of Newfoundland.



One voice on the radio captivated Beth and Bill. His show was “*The Barrelman*.” His name was Joey Smallwood.

How that man could talk!

Joey was a small man. But he had big dreams. He saw a future for Newfoundland that would free its people from poverty and the humiliation that came with being poor. He appealed to Newfoundlanders to start thinking beyond their reliance on the fishery, which was still carried out in the traditional way that it had for three hundred years.

He wanted Newfoundlanders to dream with him, to forget their own dreams of returning to independence and governing themselves as a Dominion.

They looked to their neighbour, Canada, a nation as Newfoundland once was. Joey wanted them to forget thoughts of being an equal once again. He wanted Newfoundland to join Canada as a province.

Joey told them what he saw as a bitter truth:

“We are not a nation. We are a medium-sized municipality ... left far behind the march of time.”

Newfoundlanders were conflicted. On the one hand, they saw the truth in Smallwood’s words. On the other, they were fiercely proud of their own country.

*A popular folk ditty summed it up:
 “Hurrah for our own native isle, Newfoundland!
 Not a stranger shall own one inch of its strand!
 Her face turns to Britain, her back to the Gulf.
 Come near at your peril, Canadian wolf!”*

Beth and Bill didn’t see Canada as a predator. They liked the idea of joining a prosperous country with a stable government.

It seemed that many of the Newfoundlanders who were against Confederation with Canada were buying a bill of goods offered by the rich merchants of St. John’s. What had they ever done for Newfoundlanders, except grow rich by keeping the fishermen in debt to them?

Joey was part of a delegation sent to Ottawa to explore how Confederation might work. He became even more convinced that Newfoundlanders would prosper as Canada’s 10th province.

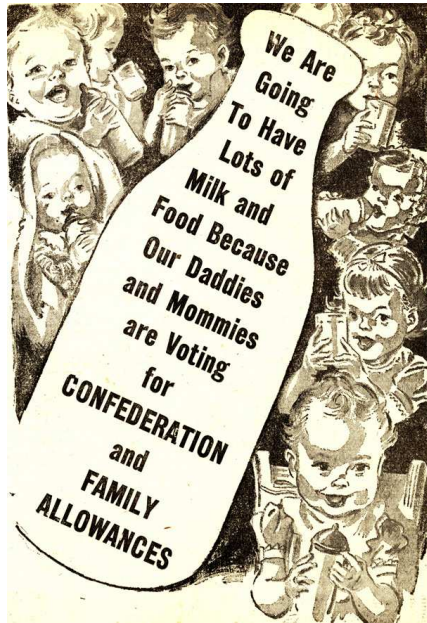
One aspect of Canada that he knew would appeal to poor people in small communities was the notion of a Family Allowance.

Canada had started the Family Allowance program in 1945 giving money to all children born in the country, regardless of their parents’ income. The more children a family had, the more money they would get. It was a political move designed to appeal to Quebecers with their large

families. And also to take the wind out of the sails of the political left-wing.

Joey knew it would be a winner with Newfoundlanders in small communities, especially now that they had experienced wartime prosperity. He knew they would not want their children to experience the same kind of poverty they had known before the war.

Smallwood began to preach the benefits of Canada's Family Allowance, or as it was commonly called "the Baby Bonus."



Each child under age five would receive \$5 a month, those between 6 and 9 years, \$6, 10-12 years, \$7 and 13-15, \$8.

Newfoundlanders were given two chances to vote on Confederation with Canada.

For the first time in their lives, Beth and Bill would have a chance to vote. They would voice their opinion in a ballot that included a choice for *Confederation, Responsible Government* or to keep *Commission Government*.

More Newfoundlanders voted for *Responsible Government* (44.6 percent) than for Confederation (41.1 percent). But Commission Government was favoured by 14.3 percent.

The politics turned nasty, pitting Catholics against Protestants because the Catholic church favoured Responsible Government.

The Loyal Orange Lodge planted the idea that to vote against Confederation would be anti-British and disloyal. The anti-Confederates responded by plastering posters around St. John's reading "Confederation Means British Union with French Canada."

And so it raged until a second Referendum was held on July 22, 1948.

Beth had celebrated her 30th birthday just four days earlier. She was pregnant and due in December.



She was eager to join Canada to get that baby bonus of five dollars a month for each of her two children. Ten dollars a month would be a boost to their income. It might add up to as much as 10 percent, depending on the price of logs that Bill cut.

Beth got her wish.

She and Bill were among the 52.3 percent of Newfoundlanders to vote with Joey Smallwood to join Canada.

Beth's new baby girl was born on December 2, 1948. It was Beth's turn to name the baby. She named her Jennie Louise, two names her mother suggested.

Beth, Bill, Joyce and Jennie became Canadian citizens a few months later when Newfoundland joined Canada on April 1, 1949.

The anti-confederates called it a fitting April Fool's joke.

ODE TO NEWFOUNDLAND

BY GOVERNOR SIR CAVENDISH BOYLE IN 1902

When sun rays crown thy pine clad hills,
And summer spreads her hand,
When silvern voices tune thy rills,
We love thee, smiling land.

*We love thee, we love thee,
We love thee, smiling land.*

When spreads thy cloak of shimmering white,
At winter's stern command,
Thro' shortened day, and starlit night,
We love thee, frozen land.

*We love thee, we love thee
We love thee, frozen land.*

When blinding storm gusts fret thy shore,
And wild waves lash thy strand,
Thro' spindrift swirl, and tempest roar,
We love thee windswept land.

*We love thee, we love thee
We love thee windswept land.*

As loved our fathers, so we love,
Where once they stood, we stand;
Their prayer we raise to Heaven above,
God guard thee, Newfoundland

*God guard thee, God guard thee,
God guard thee, Newfoundland.*

23 With Joyce and baby Jennie in tow, Bill and Beth returned to their routine of living in Placentia Junction and Norman's Cove.

Beth loved being so close to Edith and her children. Edith soon had another child, Betty. The two women carted their babies and children along as they went berry picking or troutng. The children played well together. Edith's son Willie was especially fond of Joyce, much to the entertainment of their parents.

They chuckled at the memory of Willie asking if he could pick up baby Joyce and hold her. His Aunt Beth said that would be alright, as long as he was very careful. Four-year-old Willie sat down and held out his arms for the infant. He stared at Joyce, holding her perfectly still. Finally, he declared: "I loves her. I'm going to take her home and keep her and then I'm going to marry her."

His father applauded this idea, saying this would guarantee that Willie would get a properly trained wife. Life in Placentia Junction was peaceful and quiet. Beth had never enjoyed herself so much in her life.

Her children were free to run around and play with their cousins. She and Edith kept each other



Willie and Jean Hynes

FROM WILLIE: Aunt Lizzie was like a mother to me and she treated me like a son. I always felt at home at her house. Her house was a place to go when I wanted a slice of jam bread or an extra cookie. She always had a little treat for me. I remember when my sister Betty was born, when I was around four years old. The other kids and I stayed at Aunt Lizzie's house while the doctor tended to delivering the baby.

I also remember my Mom and Aunt Lizzie taking all the kids berry picking up over the barrens in the summer time and selling the berries. I spent many hours at Aunt Lizzie's house. It was so close that I could walk there all by myself and I had a little playmate: *Joyce*.

When I was a little boy I spent a lot of my time chasing my Granny around doing different things like berry picking, cutting wood and trouting. Looking back now I think that at such a young age I must have been more of a nuisance for her at times and this leads me to believe that she is a woman with lots of patience for the things she loves.

One example of this would be that time we were berry picking up on the transmission line and I decided the best place to stand was in a nest of Red Ants, so she spent most of her time brushing them off me. And then there was that time I cut the top of my finger off with my axe. It was a tomahawk and I think it was a birthday present from her.

She wrapped the finger piece in tissue and put it in her pocket and off we went to the doctor. The scar I have on my finger reminds me everyday and I'm thankful for it. So as you see so far I haven't told a lie, I was a nuisance and she is a woman of great patience.

Now for anyone who knows my grandmother, and even for those who don't, I can honestly tell you that one of her greatest loves in life has always been trouting!

So here we were once again me, only 4 or 5 years of age, and my Gran, bamboo in hand, going fishing. She had Mom drive us out and drop us off on Old Little Harbour Road for the day with plans to pick us up later. I remember the road being blocked by big rocks so we had to walk a fair distance to get to our fishing hole. But not to worry, it was me and my Gran and I think in those days we would have walked forever with the promise of wetting a line.

On the way, there was a little stream with minnows, which she let me play at while she had a rest. After a while I would hear "Come on, Sonny, time to get going." The weather was pretty good when we arrived at the pond but the trout were not biting. This, as you may know, is where patience is required. Not only for fishing but for the weather as well because in Newfoundland they say if you wait a few minutes the weather will change and change it did: RAIN, and with the rain TROUT. I hooked one! Me being a little boy, Gran would have to put down her pole, take the fish off my hook and put a fresh worm on my line every time I caught one. What happened next was a sight because before she even had a chance to pick up her pole I had said the words "got another one Gran" so back she came: fish off, worm on and turned back for her pole. "Got another one Gran" only after she had walked a few steps. No word of a lie, this happened six or seven times in a row "got another one gran" I kept saying as I pulled 'em in. What a day for fishing. After I caught six or seven or eight fish and she hadn't even had a chance to pull her line from the water, it was decided that the best place for a little boy to be was under a small tree so I didn't get too wet from all that rain which in turn gave her the opportunity to catch a few of her own.

Gran....I Love You and Thank You. Thank you for giving me all the days that we shared together and thank you for being there for me throughout my life. Happy 95th Birthday!



company while their husbands were away cutting wood, trapping or working at other seasonal jobs.

She and Edith shared a joy of creative pursuits, such as hooking mats and sewing. Both women loved “going in the country,” and would think nothing of walking for hours to find the best spots to fish for trout or pick gallons of berries.

Beth, who had always walked between Chapel Arm and Norman's Cove, would now walk out from Placentia Junction to visit family. Often she would walk along the railway tracks for up to three or four hours.

One time, she heard a train coming and realized that there was hardly any space between the trees and the track. So, she stepped off the tracks and forced her body into the trees. She could feel the air moving along her back as the train sped past, just inches away.

When Beth arrived in Chapel Arm, the first people she would stop in to visit were Bill's relatives, who lived closest to the main highway. Another half a mile down the road, she might stop to see Clarence and his wife, Hazel, the first of the Warrens in this section of the community.

Next would be Aunt Phoebe, who was by now confined to a wheelchair, and Uncle Will. When Levi married, he and his wife Irene, moved in with them. And just a couple of houses down

from them, Nath and Ethel lived in a house that Ethel had decorated beautifully.

Beth knew she could count on a good meal and a cup of tea with her Warren relatives after her long walk, although the same might not be said for Bill's people. Even Bill himself knew that showing up at lunchtime at his own mother's house, having walked for half a day, might not result in being offered as much as a glass of water.

After a catch-up visit with her relatives, Beth would continue walking to her mother's house, another three miles. Her mother's life had improved tremendously under Confederation and the whole family was very grateful to Joey Smallwood.

Cherry had grown into a young woman who was very attached to her parents. She far preferred their company to that of people in the community and really didn't seem to want to leave the house much. Beth was always amazed at Cherry's intelligence. Every time she saw her, she wondered what Cherry might have become if she'd had an opportunity for an education. There would be no limit to the success of a girl like that.

The whole family was delighted when Mahala came to visit. She had left home in her early teens to work as a servant for wealthy families in different parts of Newfoundland. On her

visits back to Norman's Cove, home, she regaled them all with stories about the people rich and poor alike, that she encountered.

Just as the war was breaking out, Mahala had married Max Tulk, a man from the logging area of Millertown. His family was not rich, but his father had a supervisory job at the local pulp mill and the Tulks were of a higher class than Mahala's own family.

Mahala was not phased in the slightest by this. Her own poverty and work in the homes of rich people had given her extreme self confidence. She had a presence about her. Good-humoured, compassionate and gentle, but a toughness that made it clear that she was nobody's fool.

Max was Mahala's biggest fan. He renamed her "Ella," and encouraged other people to do the same. But her own family called her Mahala. No one seemed to find it odd that Mahala's father had named her for his first wife, Mahala Warren, who died soon after their marriage.

Mahala and Max had started their family before Beth and Bill. Ron was seven years older than Joyce. Pearl was two years older. Mahala was very gentle with her children. Beth was struck by her sister's patience. She was happy to see Mahala enjoying her life with Max and her children, after working so hard for so many years for strangers

who were often unkind.

Their sister Julie had also married a fisherman named Jake Smith and moved across Trinity Bay to Dildo, where there was a fish plant. Beth was not impressed with Jake's work ethic but Julie was clearly very much in love with Jake. And Jake was with her. They were having babies in quick succession. Like Beth, Julie had named a son Francis in memory of Frank. Then there was Doug, Joe, Delphine, Dot, Cynthia and Solomon, and eventually Daisy.

After 30 years of very hard times, it seemed that all of Beth's family had settled in a period of prosperity and stability.

24 One day, Aunt Phoebe asked Beth if she would be willing to come and stay with her for a few weeks to help her out around the house. Beth and Bill agreed. When Beth finished up her work, Aunt Phoebe and Uncle Will paid her for her labour with a piece of land.

The land was about half a mile down the road from the Warren's family home, but across the road on the ocean side of Chapel Arm. Uncle Will used it for pasture and to house his barn. It



Chloe Elizabeth Matier

Outside my bedroom, there is a painting of a Newfoundland village. Every time I see it, I point and say "Nan." My dad told me that the picture is of the place where Nan lives and one day we will go visit her there.

I want to meet Nan. She sends me nice presents. She knits some outfits for my dolls. She also knit a tiny blanket. I thought it was the perfect cloth for cleaning, so instead of wrapping my doll in it, I used the blanket to clean the floor!



Mia Grace Matier

My sister told me that Nan knit some blankets for her dolls. I feel very special because Nan actually had a blanket made for me. I promise I won't use it to clean the floor!

was a beautiful piece of land, which sloped gradually down to a cliff and then to the ocean. At the bottom of the cliff was a little cove with a rocky beach.

Beth and Bill realized that at some point they would have to leave Placentia Junction. There was no school. The government had tried educating the children of the few families who lived there by sending a train car, with a teacher and books, through the community. But after a few years, it proved impractical.

If Joyce were to get an education, she would either have to live with relatives in Chapel Arm or Norman's Cove or the family would have to move.

Around this time, Beth's mother's health started to fail. Beth and the children started to spend more time at their house in Norman's Cove to help her mother out. Beth's sister Cherry had married William Newhook, but the couple did not have children. Cherry loved Joyce and wanted to be around her as much as possible. When Martha died, Cherry asked Beth if Joyce could come to live with her because she was so lonely. Cherry missed her mother unbearably. And her husband, Will, worked for the railway. He was away for weeks at a time. Beth and Bill agreed to let Joyce live with Cherry for a few months.

But they also began making plans to move

out of Placentia Junction. Bill realized that he would not be able to continue working in the fire tower, trapping and cutting wood if they moved away.

In 1954, Beth became pregnant with another child. Joyce would have to start school the next year. It was time to move out of the Junction, where they had spent so many happy years.

They decided to build a new house in Chapel Arm on the oceanfront land that Uncle Will had given Beth.

25 Bill was very careful with his money and he was determined not to go into debt. He decided to tear down his house in Norman's Cove and use the lumber to build the new one. He started to build the house, one room at a time. After he framed in the new house, the family lived in one huge room. As he earned enough money to build a room, Bill would finish it off. Then, he would save up again to move on to the next room. In this way, slowly but surely, he constructed a snug little bungalow with three bedrooms for his family. It was a pretty house, with a veranda on the front and a platform on the side.

Now, he would have to find a job. In 1955, he saw an opportunity. Some acquaintances of his worked for the Avalon Telephone Company. Bill asked them if there were any jobs available. One of the men, Clarence Morgan, knew Bill's work ethic. He hired him immediately.

Bill started traveling around Newfoundland, digging ditches and erecting telephone poles for Avalon Tel.

On March 9, 1955, Beth gave birth to another girl. By now, they had abandoned their tradition of taking turns naming the children. For this baby, they really didn't have a name in mind. When she was a few days old, a little girl in the community came into the house to see the new baby, as was the custom for girls to do.

The girl, Edna Reid, told Beth that her cousin in another part of Newfoundland had named her baby "Judy Belle."

Beth liked it. Judy Belle it was.

As the girl grew up, Beth would ask herself constantly what was she thinking when she chose names that started with "J." It led to such confusion when she yelled at them! And Beth only had herself to blame.

I remember Christmas and how Mom would always cut the tree herself.



Jennie Piercye

She would take a walk a day or so before to see what trees were out there. Her favourite spot to look for Christmas trees was up in the hills across from our house. She would climb up the hill and walk along the trail which had been trodden down by the many feet of people berry picking and cutting firewood.

She never invited anyone to come along. It was her thing. She wanted to find her tree, cut it and bring it home herself. She was very particular about her Christmas tree and would only cut down one that was very full with perfect branches. Then she would drag it down the hill.

She wouldn't decorate it right away. She always waited until Christmas Eve and only after we three girls were in bed. Part of the surprise on Christmas morning was seeing the tree for the first time.

The tree was always perfect. Each bird, each icicle, each ornament was placed exactly as Mom wanted it. Her beads were just so. I wonder if she started with the beads, the way I always do. But I never knew because I never saw her do it!

On Christmas morning, we weren't allowed to see the tree right away. First, we had to remember who's birthday it was. Mom would come into our bedroom with a book of Bible stories. She would bring us our stockings and we were allowed to eat the grapes, which were a treat, and the orange while Mom read us a Bible story about the birth of Jesus. She wanted us to understand the reason we had Christmas.

After that, we were allowed into the living room to see the Christmas tree and open our presents. It was always so exciting to see the tree for the first time. Almost magical.

Now Christmas is so commercialized, it's a completely different experience. Maybe Mom kind of spoiled it for me by making it so special that it can never be the same. But I'm so glad to have those happy memories.

Mom still loves Christmas. I'm sure that if she could, she would still go up over the hill to cut her own Christmas tree.

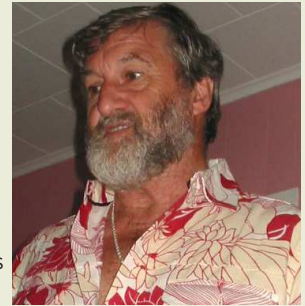
26 When Judy started school, Beth was free to enjoy some leisure time. She and her friends would try to go berry picking or trouting as much as they could. Even in the country, the women were all fiercely competitive with one another over who could pick the cleanest bucket of berries, who could pick the fastest, who could catch the biggest and most trout. With their homes, it was even more heightened. Chapel Arm is full of house-proud people, all trying to outdo each other with the prettiest yard and best-kept home. The women all took note of who was out first on Monday morning to hang the wash on the line. And so on.

In 1962, this very competitive community became caught up in a radio contest aimed at homemakers. The radio station would play a sound from everyday life in the home. Contestants would identify the sound, mail in their entries, which would then be picked from a drum and read aloud on air. Each time the answer was wrong, more money would go into the jackpot.

All the women in Chapel Arm were discussing the sound of the current contest. It was baffling. So baffling that the jackpot was up into the \$900 range. One day, as they were scrubbing the floors of the school, as required by mothers of all students, a woman guessed at the answer. She thought the sound was that of “opening and

Ron Tulk

Aunt Lizzie and I went trouting a couple of times after Lorne died. I parked the car and we walked in over the bogs to a pond. She outdid me with catching the trout, as well as in the walking. We also went berry picking. Her berries were clean. But my container had lots of leaves!



closing a refrigerator door.” Many of the women scrubbing the floors didn’t own refrigerators. And some like Beth, didn’t even have electricity. But they knew that it had to be correct answer. With the lack of refrigerators in Newfoundland, no wonder the contest was so tough!

The women of Chapel Arm wrote “opening and closing a refrigerator door” onto slips of paper and submitted their entries.

Imagine their reaction when the announcers, Bob Lewis and Sally West pulled the entry of Mrs. William J. Piercey of Chapel Arm. Everyone listening in the community knew the answer. Yes, it was correct!

Beth heard that she had won \$950. She needed air. She walked out onto her veranda and fainted.

When she came to, the neighbours had descended on her house. If they were envious, they kept it to themselves.

It was an enormous sum of money, almost as much as Bill earned in four months. Beth used it to upgrade their house. It was enough to install a bathroom, electricity and new kitchen cupboards.

The renovation made their lives much more comfortable. And Beth hung onto the newspaper photo of picking up the cheque from Bob Lewis and Sally West.



Kira Alexis & Taya Faith Piercey

When we visit our Great-Nan she makes us the best Sunday dinner ever, even if it's not Sunday. We love you.

27 Bill was making a good living working for Avalon Tel and every Friday night when he came home, he handed over his paycheque to Beth. Bill didn't own a driver's license and never owned a car. For his commute to work, he would get up every Monday morning at about four o'clock and walk into the highway to hitchhike. Sometimes, he would have to walk for a couple of hours, but it always worked out and he would get a ride. He did the reverse on Friday nights, catching a ride to the highway and then walking or hitching a ride for the last three miles from the highway.

Once home on Friday night, there was a lot of catching up to do. Beth raised the children on her own during the week, and on the weekends, Bill's children wanted their father's attention. He usually invited them to tag along as he cut wood to heat the family home, or did yard work.

Bill had built a boat to fish for cod to supplement the family's diet. When the weather was nice in the summertime, the boat was also used as the family vehicle. Beth and the girls would dress up in their Sunday best and Bill would ferry them down the arm and deep into Trinity Bay to visit relatives.

The children loved visiting Aunt Julie and their cousins, who seemed to have a lot of freedom. They were clearly poor but full of fun.

Often, the cousins would show off the presents Aunt Mahala had sent.

Mahala and Max had left Newfoundland to move to Toronto. Beth knew that Mahala worried about their sister's poverty and was always on the lookout for clothing for Julie's family.

Mahala and Max were doing well in Toronto. Max had a good job as a carpenter and Mahala was working at The Morgan Company, a high-quality department store. She was in good position to find bargains for the whole family back in Newfoundland and she was very generous with everyone. Beth's family loved receiving their boxes of Oatmeal Monster soap, an exotic bath soap much better than anything they could buy in Chapel Arm.

Mahala and Max would come back to visit their families in Newfoundland as often as they could, usually every second summer. Their visits home were bittersweet for the couple because part of their journey was to visit the graves of the two children they had lost. The two boys, Joseph and Russell, drowned in a boating accident in June 1951. Mahala and her friend had taken their children on a picnic. The weather changed on the way back and the boat capsized. Mahala was only able to rescue her youngest, two-year-old Allan. Six-year-old Joseph and four-year-old Russell, were lost, as was Eugene Mayo, her friend's infant.

It was a terrible tragedy that Beth learned of while listening to the radio in Placentia Junction. She hurried to catch the next train to be at Mahala's side, knowing that her sister would be devastated. Mahala was certainly traumatized by the loss of her two boys. She and Max had two more children, Wanda and Sandra, who were just a year apart. The family decided to leave Newfoundland with its painful memories and make a new life in Toronto. They bought a house at 18 Laurier Avenue, a small side street in Cabbagetown. Beth would look forward to receiving letters and packages from that address.

She would look forward even more to the visits from her sister and their family. The Newfoundland cousins loved taking their Toronto cousins down to the beach behind their house. Mahala and Beth would go berry picking and troutng. Bill would take everyone out in the boat. The two families were extraordinarily close, considering how little they saw of each other.

One year when Mahala and Max were getting ready to drive back to Toronto, Joyce asked her parents if she could go with them. She was 16 and eager to have the kind of life her cousins Pearl and Ron had described.

Bill and Beth decided to let her go. They trusted Mahala and Max to take good care of their daughter.

28 Beth's life changed forever on July 11, 1968.

Bill suddenly had a heart attack and died. Mahala and Joyce flew home from Toronto to deal with the crisis. Within two weeks, Beth's house was packed up and rented to a local teacher.

The whole family moved to Toronto.

29 Life without Bill was an adjustment, to be sure. And so was life in downtown Toronto.

Mahala took the family under her wing and helped them settle into a high-rise apartment just a few blocks from her home at 18 Laurier. Beth could not have been more grateful to her sister and Max for helping them out. And she loved being in the company of Mahala, a streetwise city woman who tried to transfer her own confidence to her sister.

The two of them would walk for miles, bundle buggies in hand, hitting the best bargain stores. If worse came to worse, they could always take the streetcar. But why pay money when you could

walk and perhaps come across another bargain on the way?

Beth adjusted quickly to city life. She made friends in her high-rise building. One of the women, Anita, offered her a job babysitting her two children, Kevin and Brian. Beth was 51 years old. She was earning a wage for the first time in her life.

30 The Toronto years had a huge impact on Beth's outlook. Her family was growing up. Joyce and Jennie had children of their own. Judy moved to Ottawa to attend Carleton University. When Jennie and her family decided to move back to Newfoundland, Beth decided to move to Ottawa. She rented an apartment to help Judy with her education.

Ottawa was a beautiful city and Beth loved the flowers, especially the tulips in the spring.

But after one year, Beth was offered a job in Toronto. Joyce's brother-in-law, Mervyn Matier, had suggested to some fellow teachers that Beth would make a good nanny for their children. One of their daughters had Down's Syndrome, and Charlie and Barbara Hopkins weren't comfortable with the idea of a stranger looking after her.

They were relieved to find Beth. She was intelligent, hard-working and trustworthy.

By now she had three grandchildren of her own, Russell, Billy and Stephen. Beth was an experienced babysitter! Furthermore, Beth was well known to the Matiers. She was practically family.

Beth happily moved back to Toronto, this time to the gorgeous High Park area. It was within streetcar distance, or a subway ride, from Mahala's house.

31 As wonderful as Toronto was, Beth was longing to be back home in Newfoundland. Judy had graduated from university. Joyce had two children, Russell and Brian. Jennie was back in Norman's Cove with her three children, Billy, Stephen and Jeff. It seemed like a good time to move back.

When Beth got to her little house that Bill built, she wasn't expecting the wave of loneliness that hit her. Every night as she sat down to eat supper, she would look at the empty table and remember each face at each spot. It took

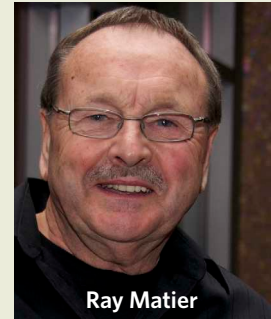
Mom always liked fishing, and in more recent years when she was unable to trek through the country, we took our rods and decided that we drive until we found a level spot near the road. We went up towards Argentia and stopped at a bridge overlooking a river. Mom decided that she could make it down beside the bridge in a dry area where she could be closer to the water. The next thing we know she is standing in the water with her shoes and socks soaking wet, throwing out her line.

There was another time at Russell's cottage when we went to a pond. She couldn't get close enough to the water and she went in with her shoes and socks, soaking wet and she couldn't care less about them.

When we were out for drives and would pass a river or pond, her favourite saying was "drop me off and pick me up on the way back."

I also remember when Mom stayed with us for the winter. She loved to cook supper for the family. She would start preparing around 3pm and had it ready before "Joycie" got home.

Every Sunday morning she would watch her prayers on TV—Jimmie Swaggert and 100 Huntley St. I could hear her praising God while she watched.



Ray Matier

everything she could muster to get through the lonely period.

Mostly, she relied on her faith.

Beth had met up with some Pentecostal people who were starting a new church. She liked them. In their company, she felt a strong sense of fellowship. Beth became a founding member of Faith Pentecostal Tabernacle in Norman's Cove. She declared her faith by becoming saved.

Her life changed dramatically. Now she was part of a thriving community, with all kinds of social activities, trips to Bible camps and new friends.

She was also helping Jennie with her three boys, as Jennie and her husband built up their business.

Now in her 60s, Beth was a busy woman! Beth's faith became the focus of her life. And even though none of her daughters was especially religious, they respected their mother's decision. It was clear to the family that Beth's new church circle was enriching her life.

Beth loved to travel and was really enjoying the excursions with her church. She also made frequent trips to Toronto to visit her family there. She would spend a lot of time at 18 Laurier with Mahala, who was now a widow, Max having died around the time Beth moved back to

Allan Tulk

I remember, more than 30 years ago Aunt Lizzie was up to the cottage with us. I was going fishing in the boat and Mom asked me to take Aunt Lizzie with me. I was reluctant at first because it was unusual in those days for women to go fishing and especially an older woman. Anyway, Mom insisted and I agreed to take Aunt Lizzie with me. I can't remember if we caught any fish but I remember how much Aunt Lizzie enjoyed herself and my amazement at her fishing. I had fun, too, and it is a wonderful memory of our time together.



Newfoundland. Beth and Mahala had become even closer, now that they were both widows and their children grown.

For her 70th birthday, Beth's children asked her to come to Toronto to spend it with them. Beth loved going to Toronto. However, when possible, she tried to arrange her travel around

trouting and berry picking season. Her idea of a perfect summer was to go trouting as much as possible, then go to Toronto for visiting and shopping, returning to Chapel Arm in time for berry-picking and end-of-season trouting. But if her children were offering her a birthday present of an airline ticket, she had to go.

To her great delight, the airline ticket was just a small part of her birthday present. Her children had bought her a trip to the Holy Land, organized by one of her favourite TV preachers, David Mainse of 100 Huntley Street. Better yet, Mahala was coming with her. The trip would turn out to be an unforgettable experience. A highlight of her life.

One of the memorable moments was when a mugger approached Beth and Mahala to demand their money. Mahala had never taken any guff from anyone. And she sure wasn't going to start now, at age 72, with some punk in Jerusalem. She looked him right in the eye and said "No, get lost." He seem startled. But he evidently decided not to rob them. He just turned and walked away.

Beth felt very blessed, especially for having such a streetwise sister.

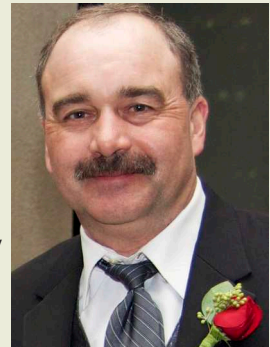
When Bill and I were small, we were very bad. I don't know who was worse, Bill or me. I do remember Nan chasing me with a stick!

One time I set a trap for Bill in the basement. I put a pencil with a nice sharp end in a clothes-pin and set it up to see what would happen to Bill. But Nan came along and stepped on it. The lead from the pencil went into her foot.

I think it's still there. Who knows, maybe that's why she's lived so long. Ha, ha! I know I can get away with saying anything I want because I am her favourite grandson.

Later, by about 35 years, Nan would come to our cottage on Red Stone Lake in the Haliburton region of Ontario. Every night after supper she would demand that we take the boat out fishing. She would also tell me to head straight up the line to the mouth of the lake, saying that's where the fish would be biting. She was right.

After an hour or so, she would bring in her catch, clean the trout and we'd cook them on the BBQ or fry them. Nan would never listen to me when I'd tell her to throw the small ones back in. She always thought there was plenty of meat on any trout, no matter how small.



Russell Matier

32 Beth had also remained close to Nath and Ethel. The three of them would spend hours in the summer, looking for the best spots for berries and trouting. They were equally matched in energy and enthusiasm and would not return home until they had caught their limit or filled their buckets.

But Ethel was becoming forgetful. Beth watched sadly as her dear friend, whom she considered a sister-in-law, lost her memory. Nath took over the household chores but it was becoming hard for him to manage as well. Their family doctor gave Nath an ultimatum: Put Ethel in a nursing home or kill yourself trying to look after the both of you. It broke Nath's heart but he admitted he had no choice. Ethel went into the nursing home, which fortunately was well within their financial means, thanks to Ethel's pension from the US base at Argentina.

Nath could no longer travel because he made a point of visiting Ethel twice a day to feed her lunch and dinner. Long trips to the country for trouting and berry picking were also out.

His compromise was to pay to go trouting at a pond stocked with trout. It was easy to reach, easy to catch fish and he could still make it back to the nursing home by supper time. Nath would invite Beth to join him whenever he could. He would always for the trout that Beth caught and

insist that they eat his, letting Beth take her trout home for later.

Quite often Beth would go back to Dunville with him and spend some time with Ethel. As hard as it was to see her suffering from Alzheimer's, it was good to see that she still had the dignity of being well looked

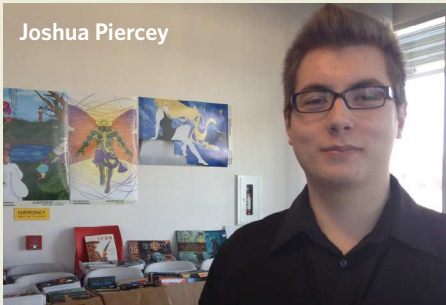
One time before Russ and I were married (I think) we went to Ray and Joyce's for a visit. It was in the summer and Nan was visiting. As we arrived and were saying hello to everyone, Russ noticed that Nan was sitting at the kitchen table. She was hulling strawberries and had a large bowl of finished berries beside her. Russ kissed Nan on the cheek and then reached over to grab a berry. All I saw was a flash of metal followed by the sound of Russ' exclamation

of "OW"! Nan had clipped him on the back of the hand with her knife and said not to touch her berries. She then turned to me with a smile, said hello and offered me a berry!!



Jennifer Matier

Joshua Piercey



Behind Nan's home was a small hill leading down to a rocky beach that would always have smoothed glass from the water. As a kid I always thought this was the coolest thing, and it was always a great time grabbing a bunch of them and heading back up to show them to that always enthusiastic Nan of mine. That's just how she is: a beautiful person who makes it obvious when she loves you, and you can't help but love her back. She's a woman I've grown to respect a lot, and for as long as I've known her she's had a sharp mind and a wonderful personality. Whenever I think about Newfoundland or see smooth glass on the beach, the first thing that comes to mind is Nan's little home by the water, and those are thoughts that I couldn't be happier with. Happy birthday to my real Nan, I hope it's full of joy.

after. Nath made sure that she always had nice clothes to wear and that her standards for personal appearance were kept up. As far as he was concerned, there was no expense too great for his beautiful wife.

33 Beth's sister Cherry and her husband Will Newhook were also good companions for "going in the country," as Beth called her outings for fish and berries.

Mahala would come, too, when she came for a summer visit, as would her eldest son Ron. Both of Mahala's sons had inherited the family fishing gene and it was always a great pleasure for Beth to hear of their exploits.

One year when Mahala was visiting, she, Cherry and Beth prepared a picnic and headed into the woods. They lit a fire, boiled the kettle for tea, and made a full lunch. Mahala was overjoyed to find that her sisters had brought along a can of clotted cream. This special Newfoundland treat, inherited from British tradition, was one of the few things she could not find at the Newfoundland store in east Toronto. And even if she had, she would not have to been able to pick fresh berries to go with the canned cream. For the

three sisters to sit on a rock in the woods and eat so heartily was a dream come true!

But the sisters knew sadness was coming. Julie had cancer. Mahala tried to visit as often as she could. Julie passed away on September 6, 1981.

It was a hard blow for the sisters.

34 By now, Beth's grandchildren were starting to grow up. Russell had brought his girlfriend, Jennifer Hunter, to Newfoundland to reconnect with his cousin Bill. The two boys had always been very close and now that girlfriends had entered the scene, they became a foursome. Bill was engaged to Lisa Simms, with plans to marry in August 1991.

Russell told Beth that he wanted to take Jennifer down to the beach behind her house. He said he wanted to show her the beach and to collect some of the smooth glass washed into the sand. Beth wasn't surprised he wanted to take his Ontario girl to the beach. All of her visitors were drawn to the cute little cove. Her daughter Judy, especially, seemed to want to spend most of her time there when she visited, just as she did as a child.

But Beth did get a surprise when Russell and

Jennifer came back from the beach. Jennifer had a piece of glass alright: A diamond engagement ring!

Beth's grandchildren were full of dreams about their future. But Beth had a surprise in store for them. They weren't the only ones with romantic tales to share.

Beth had fallen in love, too. She was engaged to be married.

35 Beth had met Lorne Walsh at their church. He was a widower whom she had known while his wife Dorothy was still alive. They were a nice couple who had moved



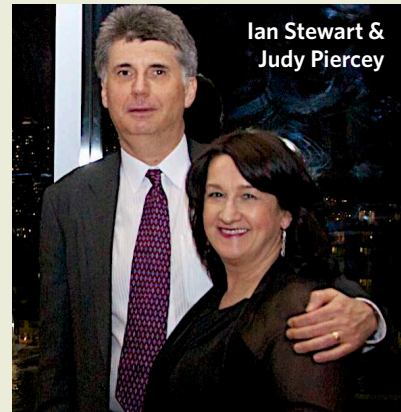
Lorne Walsh

One of my favourite memories of Nan is the first time she came to see us in Edmonton with her second husband Lorne. We took them to the Rockies, to Jasper and Banff National Parks. They were captivated by the splendour of the mountains. And it was evident they were surprised by the density of the geography. They both enjoyed themselves very much.

Another great memory is Nan's relationship with our first dog, Buster, a border collie-terrier cross who had a rough beginning -- he had several previous owners before we adopted him at nine months old. Nan and Buster seemed to be kindred spirits. When Nan came out to see us after Lorne died, she and Buster would go for long walks together. She called Buster "Bussy" and fed him bits of food from her plate and called Judy and me "a mean crowd," convinced he wasn't getting enough to eat.

Nan became convinced our house was haunted when, hearing a noise from upstairs, Buster went into the hallway, looked up and Nan said his hair was standing on end. Buster at that time was not allowed in the living room, but forgot about the rules and darted in and stood beside Nan, frozen in fear.

When we did our first big car trip to eastern North America shortly after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., Nan was especially interested in seeing Bussy and they had a happy reunion. Buster spent a lot of time in her kitchen, intoxicated with cooking aromas and waiting for fish treats.



Ian Stewart &
Judy Pierce



Buster



Nan in the Rockies

to Chapel Arm from the northern peninsula of Newfoundland. Beth had very much enjoyed the company of the Walshes and considered both Dorothy and Lorne friends.

But she had never imagined that she would have a romantic interest in any man. Bill had died just before Beth had turned 50. In the 23 years since, she had built a new life for herself. She had a comfortable and independent life, which revolved around friends, family, her church. She was free to travel and could always find someone to drive her to the country to go troutling and berry picking.

A husband was the furthest thing from her mind. And now that she had developed feelings for Lorne, Beth wasn't sure she liked it. But Lorne had feelings for her, too. The risks were great. Either one of them could have failing health. Their families might not support the idea of a marriage so late in life. There would be questions about property and inheritance. Plus, Beth had an overall feeling that it was ridiculous to even contemplate marriage at the age of 73, after 23 years of living on her own.

None of it mattered. When she and Lorne were together, they were happy. Beth waited until Bill and Lisa got their wedding out of the way so that she wouldn't take any attention away from them.

Ten days later, she and Lorne were married in a quiet, private ceremony at their church.

36 Life with Lorne was fun. They bought a camper and traveled to the northern peninsula to visit his people. Beth loved them and they became fast friends. She also loved this part of Newfoundland, which was mountainous and very different from the Avalon Peninsula.

Lorne was a great storyteller. He had fished in Labrador and hunted seals, a part of Newfoundland tradition that was now dying out. Like Bill, Lorne had worked in the woods most of his life and had many stories to tell about life in the lumber camps.

A couple of years after Lorne and Beth were married, Judy's in-laws came from British Columbia to visit. Lorne regaled Neil and Sheila Stewart with stories from his childhood and of days gone by. The Stewart's were impressed by Beth and Lorne's life stories, their resilience and their generosity. Neil and Sheila could not have received a warmer welcome. Beth and Lorne were delighted to host them. The Stewart's returned to Victoria with warm memories of Newfoundland and the people. Sheila couldn't help but remark upon what a fine-looking couple Beth and Lorne

were. Lorne, said Sheila, was a dead ringer for Cary Grant.

37 One of Beth's lifelong dreams was to see the Canadian Rockies.

On her 80th birthday, Judy and her husband Ian Stewart presented Beth with a surprise: Two airline tickets to Alberta for her and Lorne. Lorne hated to fly but Judy had talked him into going.

In the fall of 1998, Beth's dream came true. Her first glimpse of the Rockies was from the Trans Canada Highway approaching Jasper. What a sight it was!

Beth was overwhelmed by the beauty. When they arrived in Jasper, Judy and Ian had booked them in small cabins beside a pond. It was like being in Newfoundland but with a mountain view! But the best was still to come. Beth didn't quite know what to expect when Ian turned off the highway and headed for the Jasper Tramway.



Jeff's favorite memory is when Granny used to babysit him and put him on her shoulders and dance around, and say "Nan's little ding a ling".

We also cherish the memories that we have of the more recent years, when Granny has spent Christmas morning(s) with Jeff and I. The child still lives within her. She is amazing. She would be up and ready to open up the gifts, and Jeff and I were just rolling over for a second nap! God love her.

For many years, it was pointless to call our house from 5:30 - 6:00 pm in the evening. There was no way that you were going to get through by phone. Jeff and Granny would spend the whole half hour watching "The Wheel" (Wheel of Fortune) together. Seeing who could get the most right.

She is something special, and we love her dearly!

The only aerial rope-way in the Rockies, it is the longest and highest guided aerial tramway in Canada. Before Beth knew it, she and Lorne were in a cabin, being lifted up into the mountains. By the time they got to the top, they were 7,472 feet above sea level. What an experience!

Looking around, Beth could see six mountain ranges, glacial-fed lakes, the Athabasca River and the town of Jasper. Wow! She and Lorne were in awe as they walked around the paths, taking in the view. Off the beaten track, they could see hiking trails that would take them even higher. They were tempted to give it a try, even though Beth was wearing a dress and they both had on leather shoes.

They couldn't resist. And off they went, attempting to scale the high alpine of Whistler's Mountain, despite the fact that they were more than twice the age of most of the hikers. Despite their intrepid spirit, their skimpy dress shoes weren't up to the challenge. They had to turn back.

But Beth had more than achieved her dream of seeing the Rockies.

The flight to Alberta was the last Lorne would make. Shortly after they returned to Newfoundland, his health started to fail. He died on March 17, 2000.

38 With Lorne gone, Beth found the winters long and hard. Once again, she was alone in her little house. Her daughters let her know that they were concerned for her, as well.

Jennie was living in Iqaluit on Baffin Island, Joyce in Oakville, Ontario and Judy in Edmonton.

The only family Beth had left in Newfoundland were Jennie's youngest son Jeff and his wife Heather. Jeff made a point of calling his grandmother every day and the two of them would laugh and tease each other as they watched their favourite game show together on the phone.

Heather, who ran an esthetics salon from their home in addition to her full-time job, always made sure Beth had a perfect pedicure.

Eventually Beth accepted her family's suggestions that she close up her house for the winter and spend some time away. She got into a routine of spending most of the winter with Joyce in Oakville, then moving on to Edmonton for a few weeks. She found Edmonton awfully cold, so Iqaluit was out of the question.

Beth was never completely comfortable living in her daughters' homes, even though they tried to create a space for her. She wasn't convinced that

One of my favourite memories of Mrs. Walsh is of a time when it was popular to go crossborder shopping to the US. Mrs. Walsh was visiting Joyce in Oakville when the three of us decided to go shopping in Buffalo. What fun we had searching for and finding bargains. But, of course, before we could get those bargains home we had to pass through Canada Customs. Joyce and I had bought a skein of brown wool. For those of you who don't know what a skein is, it's a length of loosely coiled wool or yarn. We didn't actually want to tell the Customs Officer about our wool, so as we wondered what to do with our wool, Mrs. Walsh quietly picked it up, shaped it into a circle, and put it on her head. We crossed the border with Mrs. Walsh wearing the wool as a hat!! The three of us had a great laugh at this novel, creative, and truth be told, slightly devious approach.

Another very happy time spent with Mrs. Walsh was when my husband Tom and I visited Newfoundland and were so warmly welcomed into Mrs. Walsh's home at Chapel Arm. The welcome was wonderful and the culinary experience was an absolute delight. Jig's dinner, Fish'n Brewis, and awesome homemade fish cakes were just a few of the traditional Newfoundland dishes we enjoyed.

Mrs. Walsh, thanks for the wonderful memories and for always being a kind, generous and prayerful friend.

Happy 95th Birthday!!

Rosemary & Tom Matier



she was not a burden on them and she missed her own home and independence.

There were definite advantages, however, to city life. Beth loved to shop. And the bargains to be had, especially in January sales, were worth hunting down. Beth impressed everyone with her

stamina for shopping. For a woman in her 80s, she was in terrific shape. She loved to walk. In Edmonton, Judy and Ian's dog Buster was always ready to go for a walk to the park. In Oakville, the surroundings were beautiful and the sidewalks well maintained. One day, however, Beth tripped

over a broken sidewalk and bruised her face. Joyce was furious and complained to the city. The city, no doubt fearing a lawsuit, sent Beth a cheque. Beth was thrilled. She went shopping!

39 On one of her trips to Edmonton, Beth went shopping to Southgate Mall, which was one of her favourite spots. The mall had both a Sears and a Bay and Beth could usually find some good clothes for herself, as well as presents for people back home. She always tried to stock up between visits to the mainland of Canada so that she had a good supply for her secret sister at church, plus something for Nath on his birthday.

Judy's friend Kathy Collins, whose father came from the Burin Peninsula, had come shopping with them. Judy and Kathy had long tired of shopping so they suggested going for a coffee and asked Beth to join them as she was ready.

Beth was going through the racks, thoroughly examining the goods, when she saw a security guard approaching. He asked her a question, which Beth didn't quite catch. But it was clear that he was escorting her out. It was also clear that the store had closed. Outside the doors, Kathy was waiting, a worried look on her

face. She called Judy on her cellphone to say: "I've found her—she's at Sears."

It turns out Judy had been staking out the doors of the Bay, while security there checked on the possibility of an elderly woman wandering the store. Beth was highly amused. What an adventure. Driving home from the mall, she chuckled. "You know, I keep thinking about what a party I could have had if I'd stayed there all night," she piped up from the backseat. "Imagine, what a time I could have had, alone in a store all night long."

40 Beth was starting to find it more difficult to travel. Her health was pretty good, except for some arthritis and angina. But the flights were becoming harder and she always seemed to have trouble breathing until after the plane landed.

Even though Beth found it hard to believe that she was in her eighties, there was no denying it.

At the age of 85, Beth had lost Mahala. In 2007, just before Beth's 89th birthday, Cherry died. And then just a few months later, just before Christmas, Nath passed away. Ethel had died a couple of years before him.

Beth started to have angina attacks which

caused her to black out. Everyone around her was starting to worry about her living alone. Finally Beth had to listen to them. She agreed to accept the help of home care workers.

It wasn't ideal. But if having a worker come in for a few hours a day meant she could stay in her own little house, Beth would agree to it. After living in the house that Bill built, room by room, 50 years earlier, Beth was not about to move without a fight.

41 Beth missed travel. So, despite her fears that she would get sick on the plane, she agreed to go to Edmonton and Oakville once again. Oakville was always a pleasure because of the cross-border shopping. And Edmonton always meant another trip to the Rockies.

In both cities, Beth had grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It was wonderful to see them all. By now, Russell and Jennifer had a daughter, Lindsay. Bill and Lisa had two sons, Zachary and Joshua. And Stephen had two girls, Taya and Kira. Stephen had lost a child, Seth, who had been born with many health problems. Seth was born on February 29, 2000, just a couple of weeks before Lorne died. When Beth came

to Edmonton a couple of months later, she was able to attend Seth's baptism. She felt sorry for the baby and thought that he would not live long. But Seth lived to be four years old and brought much joy to Stephen and Brenda, as well as their little girls.

In 2009, Beth agreed to come to Edmonton for Christmas. She was 91 years old and part of her thought she was crazy to attempt such a trip. Her fears came true when she was overcome with an angina attack while Christmas shopping downtown with Judy.

An ambulance was called and Beth was taken to the Grey Nuns Hospital. The medical staff there began a thorough examination. It seemed they ordered every kind of test imaginable, after which Beth was booked in with an Internal Medicine specialist. Dr. Bob Grynoch was determined to get to the bottom of Beth's health issues. He ordered yet more tests. He told her that she must take advantage of being in Edmonton where she had access to some of the best medical testing equipment in Canada. He wanted to schedule some tests on her lungs, using a machine of which there were only six in the country.

Beth asked what would be involved in having this test done. Dr. Grynoch said it would take a day and explained the procedure. Beth thought about it for a minute. She decided against it.

I don't have lots of memories of Nan because she lived in Newfoundland and I didn't see her much. But she always sent me money for my birthday. Dad would always say she sent more money to me than to him!

One memory that I do have is of making Snowball cookies with her. We made them together a few times in Oakville and in Newfoundland when we visited her there.

HERE'S THE RECIPE:

Marshmallow Cherry Cookies *also known as Lindsay's Snowballs*

1 can thick Newfoundland cream (open two cans)
 1 package large marshmallows (about 32)
 2 cups coconut
 1 cup cherries (I put extra)

- Cut up marshmallows into small pieces (about 6 each marshmallow)
- Cut cherries into small pieces
- Mix together in order: marshmallows first, then coconut. This helps with stickiness.
- Add cream. Add cherries
- Roll into balls and then roll into coconut
- If the mixture is too dry when rolling, add a little more cream



FROM JEAN: I don't remember when I first met Aunt Lizzie. I got to know her after we got married and I went to work at Markland Cottage Hospital. When she broke her arm berry picking she told me it was because she was greedy. She had her bucket full, but came across a big bunch of berries and went down in a hole and fell and broke her wrist. "I should have left these berries alone," she says.

Aunt Lizzie has a awesome memory. I can sit and listen to her stories and know that what she is saying is true.

**Bill & Lisa Piercey**

FROM BILL: “It was the time she was looking after Steve, Jeff and myself. Of course I was a bit of a tormenting boy back in the day, so I decided to take it upon myself to bug Steve just for my personal satisfaction. I guess I drew the line and crossed it. Nan got to the point where I was driving her insane, as well. So she threw a plate at me and it “almost” made her say a bad word. By the way, the plate missed!! I must have been bad because that is pretty well unheard of with Nan.

On a better side of my stories I guess it would be all the times Nan and I would go down behind the house in Landy Cove and cut firewood. She was 65 years old and I was only 15, but she kept ahead of me all the time. Also we would walk to Landy Cove Pond every other day to go troutng. We would pack our lunch, bamboo rods and go for the day, or at least until we caught our limit. One time she caught an eel. The thing was so hard to kill, it actually stayed alive in the pot as she boiled it for the dog we had.

Thanks for the great memories Granny.

FROM LISA: I talk to people at work about Nan all the time, telling them how much I look up to her. She is so smart and so strong.

But she is also like a child with all of her dolls and stuffed animals.

I had known Nan for a long time before I saw all the dolls she has in her house. I think I had gone into one of the bedrooms to change Zach’s diaper when I saw all these stuffed toys. It looked like something you’d see in a child’s room. Not something you would see in a grandmother’s house.

She calls the dolls her babies. When she talks about them, she uses this special voice, like you would if you were talking to a baby. She loves her babies! So, every year for Christmas, we send her a “baby.”

I have so many memories of her. One of them makes me laugh every time I think about it. She came to our house with a whole BBQ chicken that she picked up at the store. She sat down and started to tear it apart. She threw all the meat to one side and took all the bones. She put the bones on her plate and just ate the little bit of the meat that was stuck to them. The breast, leg, skin, everything she left for everyone else. She wasn’t interested!

There is so much to admire about Nan. She’s awesome.



Great Nan is a person who has always lived life to the fullest, and despite her age, never turned down an opportunity. One example of this, to me, is when she came with us to the observation deck of the Empire State Building in New York a couple of years back. Some of my earliest memories include berry picking and fishing with her. Her beach and house are also host to some of my favourite memories.

Zach Piercey



At Brian & Jennifer's Wedding in New York (Left to Right):
Joyce, Russell, Lindsay, Jennifer, Lisa, Zach, Beth, Jennie, Judy, Bill

“I’m almost 92 years old,” she said. “I’d rather go Christmas shopping.”

Dr. Grynock didn’t argue. But he adjusted all of her medications. To this day, she is still following the prescriptions he recommended.

42 Beth doesn’t like going to the doctor. In her long life, she actually had experienced very few medical professionals. There was Nurse Cherry, of course, and Doctor Newhook. For most of her later life she was under the care of Dr. Guy and Dr. Squibb, a young woman from Ontario, who practices in Markland.

Markland Cottage Hospital is no more. It has been converted into a winery, making wines out of blueberries and other local fruit. There is a new health centre, named for Doctor Newhook. Beth tries to avoid the place as much as possible. The only bright spot of going there would be to see her niece-in-law, Jean Hynes, Willie’s wife or her friend from church, Goldie. Both are nurses.

But doctors are not people Beth would seek out. There are two exceptions: Her youngest grandson, Brian Matier and his wife Jennifer.

When Brian graduated from medical school in a ceremony at Rockefeller Center in New York, Beth was afraid to travel, as much as she longed to be there.

But four years later, when an invitation came to his wedding, Beth knew she didn’t want to miss it. Almost everyone in the family was planning to attend. The only uncertainty was around Steve, who lived in the High Arctic, and Jeff and his wife Heather. Jeff was in a wheelchair as a result of MS and travel didn’t seem possible.

Brian and Jennifer’s wedding was set for February 26, 2011. At the age of 93, Beth overcame her fears about travel and flew to Toronto. She spent a couple of weeks with Joyce and Ray, doing some shopping and getting ready for the trip. She had bought a gorgeous dress and matching purse.

A couple of days before the wedding, Judy and Ian flew in from Edmonton to accompany Beth on the trip to New York. They arrived in New Jersey and settled in beautiful rooms at the Hyatt Hotel, overlooking the Manhattan skyline. After a brief rest, Judy fetched a wheelchair from the hotel and the three of them headed to the ferry taxi terminal for the trip into Manhattan. They explored the Wall Street area and the site of the September 11th terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

Then they piled into a taxi to midtown, where they met friends of Ian and Judy, Ron and Charlene Lajoie. Beth thought Charlene looked a great deal like Joe and Clo's daughter, Eileen.

After dinner in a pub, they all got in line for the elevator to the top of the Empire State Building. Looking out over the lights of Manhattan, Beth thought it was the most beautiful sight she had seen in her life.

It was wonderful to have Charlene, who had lived in New York most of her life, pointing out the sights below. At the end of the night, Charlene handed Beth a teddy bear dressed in the uniform of the Empire State Building elevator attendant. It was a great addition to Beth's extensive teddy bear collection!

43 Beth managed to squeeze in some shopping in both New Jersey and New York. As always, she was impressed with the bargains in the United States. But the main reason for her visit was to see her grandson marry his beautiful fiancée, Jennifer Michalik.

Beth's eldest grandson, Russell Matier, ushered her down the aisle. His daughter,

Lindsay, was in the bridal party. The ceremony in an old Catholic church was led by a priest who welcomed people of all faiths.

It occurred to Beth that feelings about inter-faith marriages had changed a lot in her lifetime, especially given the rumours that her own father was murdered for preventing his sister from marrying a Roman Catholic.

The wedding reception was unlike any that Beth or the rest of the family had ever experienced, with dancing throughout dinner and a special performance around the wedding cake.

As Brian and Jennifer performed a dance before cutting the cake, all the guests stood and cheered them on. Beth joined in. It never entered her mind that she might be forgiven for sitting through the dance, given her age and the hour. For a woman who had always exhibited such stamina and determination, the reception was another chance to strut her stuff.

The wedding guests remarked upon Brian's grandmother's great energy, but only those meeting her for the first time were surprised.

Beth's family and friends expected nothing less of her.

44 After the trip to New York, Beth declared that she was through with travel.

She has yet to meet Brian and Jennifer's first-born, Chloe Elizabeth, who is named for her great-grandmother. Nor has she met their newborn, Mia, Beth's tenth great-grandchild. If

she is to meet them, she says the girls will have to come to her.

And if Brian makes good on his promise to visit with his family, Beth knows that they will follow in the footsteps of the others, visiting the rocky beach behind her house.



Judy Belle Pierce



To me, my mother is first and foremost a storyteller. She holds an audience spellbound.

The fact that I could write her life story is a testament to her talent as a storyteller.

In 2000, shortly after Lorne died and a couple of months after Stephen's son, Seth, was born, my mother came to visit us in Edmonton.

She stayed for quite a long time. During her visit, I painted almost every room in Ian's and my house. My mother sat beside me the whole time I was painting, telling stories as Buster and I listened intently.

I marveled at her skill. The sense of drama. The characters. The scenes. The moral lesson.

Until now, I did not fully understand that the greatest gift my mother gave me was the gift of storytelling itself.

My mother, and my father, too, instilled a high work ethic, honesty and integrity. Thanks to them, each of us has made a successful living.

As for me, storytelling has provided an excellent life. Thanks, Mom!

She still takes trips within Newfoundland, visiting places that would have been considered far away and exotic during her childhood. Last year, an overnight trip to the Tsunami Memorial on the Burin Peninsula brought back memories of the rocking chair which shook while she held baby Levi.

The summer before, she visited Levi and his wife, Irene, in Bonavista. Levi is the only cousin still alive. Nath died at the age of 83. Now that Nath is gone, Levi makes a point of calling Beth every week.

Another annual trip is to Gander to visit Judy's childhood friend, Cathy Baird. Along the way, they always stop at Gambo to visit Joey's Lookout with its spectacular view. Beth is grateful to this day for the man born there, Joey Smallwood, who brought Newfoundland into Confederation. She feels a personal gratitude to him for making her own life better.

If Newfoundland had not joined Confederation, Beth doubts her family would have fared as well as they have. It was in 1966, two years before Bill died, that Judy LaMarsh spearheaded the Canada Pension Plan. Beth recalls Judy LaMarsh pushing

through the pension plan and medicare during the short-lived minority government of Lester Pearson.

Little did Beth realize that one day she would be able to feed her own family with the Widow's Benefit from Bill's Canada Pension. Or that her youngest child would help pay for a university education with the pension plan's Orphan's Benefit. But, then, most of Beth's life would have been impossible to imagine.

One thing that has not changed is her life of "going into the country." At the age of 95, Beth still longs for a chance to pick berries or to throw out a fishing line.

Many family members will be paying her a visit this summer, marking her 95 years.

Beth will wonder aloud if there is a pond, close to the road, easy to get to with her walker, a half decent pond where she can cast her rod.

For a woman who changed her name, her religion, her country and who likes to keep them guessing as to when they should celebrate her birthday, her wish to go fishing is a certainty.

It's the one thing that won't ever change!



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For working with me in secret to pry out and confirm details of our family's history, I thank my sister Joyce Matier. Joyce also put her considerable energy into suggesting contributors and wrangling the stories about Mom, which greatly enrich this book.

For my extended family who provided stories, without ever questioning my intent, I thank all of you for your trust, as well as for your stories. I hope you like the result!

For cooking, cleaning, editing, photography, photo-editing, and providing constant encouragement and support, I thank Ian, with love and appreciation.

And finally, I need to thank my mother. The reasons are obvious!

George Newhook

b: 1708 in Eastbury Park, Tarrant Gunville, Dorset, England
married to Sarah Sansom

Charles W Newhook

b: 1752 in Tarrant Gunville, Dorset, England,
d: 1799 in Trinity, Trinity Bay, NL
married to Elizabeth

James Newhook

b: Before 1788 in Trinity, Trinity Bay, NL
married to Elizabeth Green
b: 1792 in Scilly Cove, Trinity Bay, NL

Charles Newhook

b: 1820, d: 1910 in Norman's Cove, NL
married to Mary Sooley b: 1835

William Newhook

b: 1864 in Normans Cove, NL
d: 1946 in Norman's Cove, NL
married to Elizabeth Smith
b: 1866 in Chance Cove, NL d: 1919 in Norman's Cove, NL

John Newhook

b: 1887 in Normans Cove, NL
d: in Norman's Cove, NL
married to Martha Rachel Smith
b: 1894 in Chance Cove, Trinity Bay, NL d: Abt. 1953

Sarah Elizabeth Newhook

b: 1918 in Norman's Cove, Trinity Bay, NL
married to William James Piercey
b: 1908 in Heart's Content, Trinity Bay, NL
d: 1968 in Chapel Arm, NL

Newhooks

from England
to Newfoundland

*John Newhook
& Martha Rachel Smith*

Mahala Newhook &
Maxwell Tulk

Ron Tulk
Pearl Tulk
Joseph Tulk
Russell Tulk
Allan Tulk
Wanda Tulk
Sandra Tulk

Sarah Elizabeth Newhook
& **William James** Piercey

Francis Piercey
Joyce Piercey
& **Raymond** Matier
Jennie Louise Piercey
Judy Belle Piercey
& **Ian** Mackintosh Stewart

Joseph William Newhook

Julia Newhook &
Jacob Smith

Francis Smith
Doug Smith
Joe Smith
Delphine Smith
Dot Smith
Cynthia Smith
Solomon Smith
Daisy Smith

Brian & Jennifer Matier

- Chloe Elizabeth
- Mia Grace

Russell & Jennifer Matier

- Lindsay Matier

Jeff & Heather Piercey

Stephen Piercey

- Seth
- Taya
- Kira Alexis
- Jacob

Bill & Lisa Piercey

- Joshua Piercey
- Zachary Piercey

Martha Rachel Smith *Newhook m 2nd* **John** Smith: **Cherry** Smith & **William** Newhook

Beth's Grandparents

William Newhook *m* **Elizabeth** Smith, *m 2nd Johanna* E Branton (*no children*)

John Newhook *m* **Mahala** Reid (*no children*), *m 2nd Martha* Rachel Smith

Nathaniel Newhook

Charles Newhook *m* **Thereasa** Piercey

Mary Newhook *m* **Soloman** Upshall

Phoebe Newhook *m* **William** Warren

Sarah Ann Newhook *m* **Arthur** Thorne

Nathaniel Newhook *m* **Jane** Smith

Sophia Margaret Newhook *m* **Samuel** Reid

James Newhook *m* **Gladys** Grouchy

Louise Newhook *m* **Walter** Vokey, *m 2nd John* Jackson

Aunt Phoebe & Uncle Will

Phoebe Newhook *m* **William Warren**

First Son (died young)

Clarence Warren *m* **Hazel**

Llewelyn Warren (died young)

Frank Warren (died on the SS Caribou in WWII)

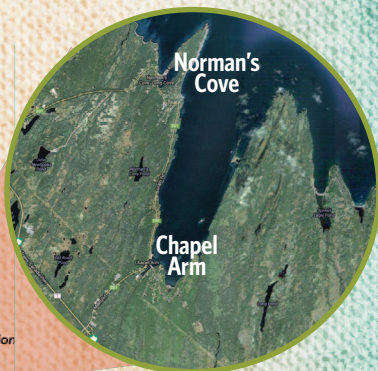
Patrick James Warren (died young)

Nath Warren *m* **Ethel**

Levi Warren *m* **Irene**



Chapel Arm by *Ed Roche*



Beth's Story

THE FIRST 95 YEARS

BY JUDY PIERCEY

GRAPHICS BY SUSAN SULLIVAN