

[Page 27 - Remembering Life on Scatari Island](#)ISSUE : [Issue 14](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1976/8/1

Remembering Life on Scatari Island Edgar Spencer: I was born 28th of October, 1893. I spent all but three years on Scatari • then I corae up here, Main-a- Dieu. Spent 20 years up here. I went to school on Scatari and when I was 16 I was made secretary of school. And the first teacher I paid was 200 dollars for the year • and she had to pay 10 dollars a month board. At the last going off I paid thera 300. And she'd teach frora 1 to 8. There were 16 or 17 farailies there all through the winter. Suramer there'd be people come there fishing. I fished all my life. Used to dry fish, you know. And when they started buying fish fresh, up here, people gradually started to sell the fish fresh over Main-a-Dieu, Glace Bay, all around. Fishing was good but you couldn't get no price for them when I was young. We'd dry our fish on flakes in my father's time • send them to Halifax and they'd get four and a half dollars a quintal. A quintal would be 112 pounds of dry fish. They'd get flour and sugar and tea back from Halifax with the boat. Ihings were pretty cheap. They had their own gardens. Raise their own potatos and turnips and cabbage. Everybody had a couple of cows, few sheep, field fenced in, raised their own hay • got along good. But after I grew up they gave up that farming. We'd dry our fish and take them to Glace Bay, Sydney • get our flour and stuff. But when they started buying fresh fish up here everybody started to move away. Better money and no work to it. If you dry thera, you had to split thera, salt thera • they'd be in salt a couple of weeks • then wash thera and then dry thera. A lot of work to it. Not very often there'd be a boat come out and take the fresh fish. Last going off there nobody'd come • they'd only buy up here. Everybody moved to Main-a-Dieu. Everybody but the lightkeeper. Our last winter there we were all alone • Tom Barnswell, Bess Trim and us. And Tim Trim. And the two light- keepers on each end. I loved Scatari, don't you know, when everyone was there. You could take the gun, go get a mess of birds any time you liked. No raounties. Go shoot deer any time at all you wanted to. I killed 22 ducks one time. They were coming down a- long the shore • there must have been a thousand. And I got ahead of them. And hid. And before they got to me • there was one young drake • another took after him and they all swung off. Put on the charge. And when they came, passing me, going down to the next point • they were just as tight as you could pack them. It was about 50 yards to the inside ones. So I give them both barrels. Lot of fuss. Walked up on the bank and counted them. 22 dead. I launched off the boat at Northwest Cove. I went down and I found 20. Ihe other 2 might have come to or drifted off. I got 20. I give everybody on the island a mess--and some left for ourselves. Scattered them around like that. Abbie Spencer: Everybody was one person on Scatari. Edgar: Just like one family down there. If we had a dozen eggs and some? body came for some • give them half of them. Everybody that had anything would share with you. I miss it. Oh, yeah. I don't raine it now. I couldn't go about it anyhow. But that was gre'at sport, shooting boy. Lots of birds then. Not now. And no fish now. There's two lights on Scatari • one on each end. Ihe East Point Light got a fog alarm and there's two families there. The West Point Light was just a light and a signal station • ships passing through they'd wave



their flags to there. And they'd wave back. And they had a hand f