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George Maxwell Family Stories It should be explained at the outset that there were at least three George Maxwells: the first came to Cape Breton as a small boy, lived in Judique and Malagawatch, near Marble Mountain. His son, George, was born at Malagawatch, worked for a time dory-fishing on the Grand Banks, is probably the Black man in Rudyard Kipling's CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS, and raised up his family at Malagawatch. It is his Gaelic tales told here in English, in the second half of this article. We talked with his son, the third George Maxwell, at his home in Sydney those days. And my father was doing that kind of thing. I don't know how much money he would get. There wasn't much money in those days. But he was picking up a little to keep him alive. There were no other Black families at Malagawatch, only my grandfather's family. That would be three boys, I think, and one girl. And one of those boys was my father. My father and my uncle--they were twins. There's a story about them in Cape Breton Over (a book by Clara Dennis, 1942)--they used to go to the Grand Banks, fishing out of Gloucester, Mass., the both of them. There was a captain by the name of Macintosh from Malagawatch--he was in contact with the owners of vessels in Gloucester. Gloucester was a big shipping place at that time--all the Grand Bank boats used to lay up there, and when they were going to the Grand Banks, they'd hire on from there. And one time my father was cooking on this vessel. And I don't think he was a very good cook, anyway. One of the guys was giving him a hard time. My uncle was on another vessel. But when they were out fishing in the dories they would see one another. So my father was telling my uncle, this fellow was giving him quite a hard time, growling about the food being greasy. (Clara Dennis adds that "John was of a brave nature, while George was timid.") So my uncle said, "I'll take your dory to night and go back, and you can come on Macintosh's vessel." (Dennis: "That night the crew on George's vessel sat down to a very indifferent supper, for John was not the cook that George was. The crew began their customary bullying of the cook, aided by the added vigour of a grievance in the shape of the poor supper. The first man who advanced, received the surprise of his life. He found himself suddenly on his back nursing a sore jaw. In the space of moments, everyone in sight was lying right and left. The meek George had suddenly become crazy, or so the crew thought. At any rate for the rest of the voyage the cook was left severely alone. Next afternoon John and George, as by pre-arrangement, met on the banks, exchanged dories, and rowed back, each to his proper vessel.") George Maxwell: So I guess my uncle dressed him up. They were twins, and I guess the growler couldn't tell them apart. And he didn't bother him anymore for a while. My grandfather spoke Gaelic. I don't imagine he had very much of any language when he came to Halifax. And up there in Judique George Maxwell, Sydney: The earliest member of my family that I know of would be my grandfather. He came to Halifax on a vessel. And this O'Handley fellow was up there for a load of potatoes. And one of the boys on the vessel, a sailor or some one, said, "Do you want this little fellow?" And he said, "Yes, I'll take him," So he came on the cart with O'Handley to Judique. He was the only Black man in Judique. And



he lived there--I don't remember how long he was in Judique--till he got married. Then he left there and he came down to Malagawatch, right alongside of Marble Mountain. He lived in a log house in Malagawatch. Used to work for the farm? ers . And used to hew out the timbers for bams and houses with a big broadaxe. Used to put houses together, used to put the braces in with trunnels and drive those wooden, pins in. I often go through the country, watching houses that have fallen down--you see where all this work was done. But that's a forgotten thing now. There's a lot of art those old people had, that a lot of carpenters today, they don't know what they are. If they had the planes and stuff these old fellows had, they wouldn't know what they were. It took an awful lot of time--but time didn't mean anything in