

[Page 5 - The Plaster Quarry at St. Ann's](#)ISSUE : [Issue 15](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1976/12/1

my horse home to the barn. I used to jump on the horses back when I was through at 6 o'clock and give him a root with the heels in the ribs and he'd take off home to the barn. They told me not to run him to the barn • I could walk him • but I didn't like that. So I went to the Big Quarry. Pick and shovel and go with the trolley. The trolley was a four-wheeled little wagon--steel wheels on rails • the rubbish would be all in it. It would go too fast if you wouldn't check her. Yqu got a piece of rope oh it. There was a brake on it. Let the brake go and it'd go like a son of a gun. There was a little decline, you know. (Did you ride it?) Oh, no. follow it. holding it by the tail. Holding it by a .rope. It would dump in some automatic way. It was feeding Norman Morrison's train. He had three or four boxes where we were dumping those trol? leys. And he was going somewhere with that • out to another dump. I lived in a little shack on the dump- on the upper street. It was made of wood. There were 4 of us in it. Danny Morrison of North River. My brother, John. And Murdoch MacMillan from Big Baddeck. No foundation. Only a little stove in it for heat. Two bunks. No beds. No Little better than bare boards. Two men above and two below. Just spent time enough to sleep there. 10 to 5. Wfe were boarding at Mrs. Andrew Sutherland's. (And the MacDonalds had a boarding house?) Indeed they did. And Malcolm MacAskill. And Angus Alex MacLeod. And Angus Morri? son kept boarders • that's the only house that's standing there today. (Did you like the work?) Well, yes. It was the only thing around here • I didn't mind it. Good place to work. Good place in the evening; there were so many people around. There were Frenchmen there from Inverness. There was everything there. There was a great big store down there run by MacKay and MacAskill. Food, clothing, everything. Play checkers, mostly the game. If you found a girl you'd go out with them. Lots of them around there. And you wouldn't feel the day long, working among people. We were all in the open field, working in the quarry. You know, it wasn't like be? ing in a berth of your own. It was a very nice place to work. Start at 7. Wake up 6. 10 hours. 10 cents an hour. Dollar a day. 6 days a week. It was pleasant enough when you didn't know any different. That's about all I can say. You're breaking rock. You couldn't get anybody to do it today. Malcolm Dean; a view inside the forge. Blacksmith Jimmy Allan MacDonald; Malcolm A, MacLeod of Tarbert. Malcolm MacLeod, Tarbot: There used to be two or four to a shanty • it just all de? pends. Too many wasn't very good in a shanty. No foundation. Just built on the ground. Just a cheap thing, 2 x 4s and rough boards and tarpaper on top. It was nice and warm, (v lhat about the founda? tions?) Aw, yes, that was buildings be? longed to the officials, you know. There was some people that moved in with fami? lies there. The children used to go out to Goose Cove School, They lived up on what they called The Dump, And they had a great big barn • 14 horses, (Blacksmiths?) You bet your life they had a blacksmith shoing horses, fixing up carts. There was Murdoch MacDonald from Tarbot here • that was in my time. And he was a good black? smith too. And he had different people going in for helping him. And you know that lake you were talking about • well they filled that. They filled that taking grounds and spawls and anything that wasn't



worthwhile • the hard stuff they called the bull • dumping it in the lake. She was filled right up. And after a while the bottom went out of her • I don't know but that it's what they call plas? ter holes • and she is just the same today as when they started, J.P,Matheson was on the Little Quarry and this Angus Morrison was'on the Big Quarry • and they worked toward each Cape Breton's Magazine/5