

Page 12 - With Katie Margaret Gillis, Mabou Coal Mines

ISSUE: Issue 38

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1985/1/1

wild--jump up on your head! Oh, I tied them • I know, I know what it is. And the churning and the butter. (If a cow were going to deliver....) Well, I'd have to sit near her and explain to them if there was nobody older around, in case I'd have to go for a neighbour. Once or twice I had to go and help a cow with my small hand. When the man came up, he said, "Your hand is smaller--try and turn that calf." The man was near us was a very kind old soul, and he knew a lot about veterinary work. And when we'd see the cow having a hard time--maybe Papa was working in the woods, and it'd come all of a sudden, spring of the year. The calves were coming. And Mom was not too much for that. She nev? er was too much for that, although she was for everything • else. All kinds of excitement. Especially when Papa wasn't a real farmer. Although he was beautiful to work with the small scythe. Oh, he would be around me all the time. He never left me alone, because he was afraid that anything would happen to me on the ma? chine, cutting. And oh, I'd take a little wrench they had, and I'd turn the guards, and I'd see if they were loose, try them. And then you'd jump out and put it out of gear. I'd turn them up, and he'd call me. So Papa would be mowing--oh, he was a beautiful mower--so fast. Grandpa used to say, "I wish I had strength"--he was a strong man. (He'd be mowing with a hand scythe.) Yes. And he'd do just as much in a day as two people. He had to go in the comers (of the field). Oh, you'd be on the side like that on the machine--we had mountains down Mabou Mines--you want to see where I'd be sitting on the machine! Just slipping right off it, on the side. But Papa--he wouldn't allow me up without being in a place that I could call to him. He was very careful. (Were other girls doing this work?) No. They were talking to me the other day, they said, "My gosh, do you ever think of A Neighbourhood Store in a Beautiful Village Neil's Harbour CO-OP' it?" I said, "No, I don't. I don't think it was anything. I enjoyed it so much--I could sleep with the horses." Just loved the horses. I sawed wood with Dad, on the other end of the saw, those crosscut saws. Oh yes, I sawed, and I "tootched" it from the hills with a horse. Very bad mountains to work, too, down there. It was very hard. You have to have an easy-going horse. Of course, I was more used to horses than Pa? pa was, 'cause I lived up with Grandpa a lot, when I could sneak up with Grandpa. He was all alone, and only an old uncle there that wasn't doing much. And I knew what sheep and horses were, and I fell for the horses, and from then on, I knew more about horses than Papa. Papa was fishing all his life. (Did you ever do any fishing with your fa? ther?) No, but I used to go down with him early mornings and pick up squid. And we'd have a little fork, like, and push, and put it in the bag for him, to help him get them. No, I never went out fishing when I was with Papa. With Angus I went fishing. I went fishing in the ice down here, smelts. Every day he went out, I dressed them, when he was fishing smelts. We'd send them to New York. Sometimes, maybe if there was a good run, there'd be \$45, \$50. Smelts, going to New York, Fulton Street in New York. You were just putting them up to the train. We put ice with them. The on? ly thing is, they were awful cold on your hands. Gill nets, taking them out. Oh, they'd be so cold before you'd get them all out. We had a few

gill nets, because we had little spots where you couldn't put the trap nets. You had the little corners where the gill nets were good. We'd have big wool mitts on. Angus could work with the mitts on, but I couldn't. I had to have my hands bare. But his mother always said, "By God, that one takes more cold than any woman I ever saw!" Angus'd be freezing, thinking, "We won't stay any longer." "Oh, we'll finish this!" He'd be thinking of me, you see, that I'd be cold. I know what he was thinking of. I did it for years, if we ever were home in the winter, until we went back to Que? bec. Oh, we made so many times to Quebec. Angus would be called all of a sudden, may? be that spring, that fall, especially in the fall--he'd go the winter drilling, and VOICE OF THE PIONEER

___ Volume Two

jnHTSlfSf'CTff' More First-Person Accounts From auili>[|||i?wtw CBC's Best-Loved Radio Program ""'t'B By Bill McNeil ' || | This all-new collection of stories from Canadian pioneers of Mm'''' 'H every province and every walk of life draws on Bill McNeil's Hjj''''H interviews for his popular CBC radio program. Through the fl''''l anecdotes and memories of these pioneers run a common I''''' and to meet these people is to share their understanding of the ?? settling and the building of a new country. 'HREHIH This fascinating book is a valuable and engrossing record W w'J'HH'''I of Canada's recent past • and future. \$19.95 cloth ?? 'S'IHI'IH'H Available at bookstores across Canada MMacmillan of Canada LOCAL HiSTOR y GENEALOGIES CAE Lie BOOKS BESTSELLERS SOUVENIR ONFICTION THE BOOK SHELF SHOPPING MALL. ANTIGONISH, N.S. BZG 2E3 PH.SS3-S(64 WE ANTIGONISH ACCEPT ORDERS BY MAIL OR PHONE WE MAIL ORDERS ANYWHERE