

[Page 10 - Johnny Allan MacDonald of Enon](#)ISSUE : [Issue 48](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1988/6/1

barn." That would be about 150 feet long. Okay. They'd haul the stuff in, you know, with a team of horses. It was all cedar that was going in the barn. Nice wood, too. And the other fellow, it was props, you know, up and down, you know--that's the way the cookhouse was built, and the sleeping house. Got along good. Got along okay. (Where did you go from there?) Came home. (Cape Breton.) I had a letter from my mother to come home. And, I came. I had (an offer for) a better job than that in the States, and they wanted me to come home. (What did they want you to come home for?) Oh, just to fix things up, and pay a lot of bills too. Fix things up. So I'm still here. (Once you came home, you stayed.) Yes. Somebody had to look after the old folks. (Were you married yet?) Not at that time. (And did you go very far looking for a wife?) No, indeed. I didn't believe in going to any distance! (Where did you find your wife?) Oh, about 3 miles from here. (Another descendant of the Big Carpenter?) Yes. That's right. (Did you have children here?) One boy. I had one boy, and the Depression came. (You had one boy, and what came?) Depression! (Johnny Allan MacDonald.) (Did you have any schooling at all?) No. Oh, I went, well, a couple of months. And then there was something to be done, and I'd have to stay home and look after the stock, or water the cattle. There were so many of them--Lord, we always had between 15 and 20 head of cows, and 50 sheep, 4 horses. And you know, it was quite a job for a young kid like me, you know, to clean the stables at that time. I'd only go to school when they thought that they didn't need me around. That's all. So I never got any schooling. I have made it myself. (Did some of your brothers and sisters go to school, though?) Oh yes, they had a lot of schooling. (More than you'd had.) Ach, yes, 10 times more than I had. I never had very much. (So you were the only one of your brothers and sisters that didn't get a chance to go to school that much.) Yes, I was. (Were you the baby?) Well, my youngest sister, she died when she was 12. (So you were the youngest son.) Yeah. (And it was just understood that you would stay home?) Oh well, yes. I think they figured that I'd always die right here. And I guess I will, too! I went to the States and I went to school. (How old were you then?) Oh, I was grown up. I was going to go out to British Columbia, to the woods. And I thought I'd go and visit my sisters--there were 4 of them in the States. And one of them told me to stay--not to go to B. C. at all--stay with her. "Stay, board with me." And I went to night school. I was doing carpenter work. And only that I had to come home, you know, I would have been one of the richest guys that ever left Loch Lomond. If I had a chance--when I got word--I had a chance of working for a woman--she was a millionaire, and her husband was a millionaire. And they were married. And this man where I was working, he'd come every day, you know. I didn't know why he was coming. I was working alone on the second storey: putting down floors, and partitions, and hanging doors. You know, the contractor I worked for, he wanted to keep so many men, you know, for the spring when things would be brightening up. So, there must have been 3 or 4 or more working downstairs. And indeed, they weren't doing much. They were working in the hall. I couldn't see--when I'd come down,



see, from up where I was working--I couldn't see anything that they did do. Only they were just hammering and making a little noise; that's about all. But this man, he'd come every day, and, "Do you smoke, John?" "No, I never smoke on the job. I never do. But I smoke when I go home. I have a smoke then. 'Cause, we only worked 8 hours. And surely to goodness, I was used to work 16 hours, and sometimes more than that. And I don't mind working 8 hours." Well, when I was leaving, going to another job, the contractor told me, "I figured on keeping you. Keeping you to help on Dover Street, on both sides of the street. I own all the houses. And I own this building here." I didn't know he owned it. God, it was a big building. "And I own another big building over on Columbia Street. And I was going to have you to look after all those buildings for me. There's always a window-pane broke, or something wrong with a door, something wrong with the latches, hinges. And outside, too. Anything that's to be done, that you'd look after it. And you'll get the same going wages the carpenters are getting, a year." You know, the carpenters, shortly after that, the wages went--the sky's the limit. And I would have been well-to-do. ARM OF GOLD campground and Trailer Park 736-6516 35 Acres on the Bras d'Or Lakes \* Hook-Ups and Tent Sites GROCERIES \* ICE \* LAUNDROMAT \* CANTEEN 2 Miles from the Newfoundland Ferry Host: John Brennick On Route 105 at Little Bras d'Or, Cape Breton 736-6671