

## Page 19 - With Hilda Mleczko, Glace Bay ISSUE : <u>Issue 54</u> Published by Ronald Caplan on 1990/6/1

didn't have much time to save money. I was getting a Canadian allowance--army allowance. I was working in a factory at the same time. So I never touched the army allowance, only to cash it and put it in the bank. So that helped start our home. Now, we knew we'd have to do it ourselves--with the help of a few kind neighbours. And his brother helped him, in between shifts in the pit. This was all going on while the men were working hard in the pit--8 hours a day. Come home and have their supper. And then have a little rest. Instead of put their feet up and drink a six- pack of beer watching televi? sion- -none of that. You see this road?--you see it coming all the way up from there. Right from the cor? ner of the road here to this house, we built our own--dug for our own water line --900 feet. They were just in shifts then (in the mines). They had dayshift, nightshift, backshift. Any shift that they were on, they'd come home, have a bite to eat. A little nap in the chair, maybe a half an hour. And they'd be out in there. My Henry went to bed, more times and enough, with mud still clinging to his hair and his ears, from the ditch he was digging in, because he was too tired to wash himself properly.... When I was in England, Henry would tell me about the place where he wanted to build the house--which was here. He wanted to be next to his parents. And it was still for sale when we came here. But they upped the price, double. When they knew we were going to buy it. But would you believe, it was still only \$300 for two acres. See, no water. Well, people were coming up to us, when we started putting the stakes in to build. Oh, I loved that day. I sat in the middle of my magical stakes, and I planned where all my rooms would go.... So people would say, "Henry's a nice fellow and you're a good woman, but you're crazy building up here. It's silly. You'll never get nothing to grow. It's awful up here." My husband's had better stuff in that garden--he's coaxed it and pleaded with it--he's got a green thumb, you know. And people now--especially in the summer--they'11 come up and ask us if we'll sell our land. "Oh, it's beautiful up here. We'd love to live up here." See the difference? When I first came here, we were crazy building up here. But Henry had to move rocks and boulders and trees and shrubs--great big trees. And (as) I said, all that from when he was working in the pit. In fact, when we built our home, he just built the foundation--he dug the foundation, where the box had to go. And left in the middle all still humped up, you know. It wasn't levelled off.... We just did around like that, where the box for pouring the cement had to go. And for years afterwards, when he had the time and the energy, and he wasn't working, he'd open the cellar window and do a bit of digging, and throw the stuff out the window. Until he got the (basement) floor all flat. And then got it cemented. No, everything we did was the hard way.... There's not enough money in the world to • uVVfB Funeral Home (In Business Since 1908) Three Generations of Service J. Michael Curry - Mgr. 140 Main Street - Glace Bay Phone 849-7617 AMBULANCE SERVICE 849-2222