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How I Got My Nickname A True Story by Gladys Mary Ross, Sydney Mines Apart from being a curious per? son, especially about nature and life in general, I never gave up on something that both? ered me. So that beautiful spring morning while looking out the front door across the pond, I spied an unfamiliar ob? ject shining in the sun. It was the period in our history when space travel and moon walks were a household subject. I said to myself "May be...," and as my husband was asleep, decided to investigate. Our home was built about seven? ty feet from a steep hill at the back and it was the only way to get to the pasture. I climbed the hill dressed in what my husband called my "pit clothes," everything two sizes too big. I called them "just out-moded" and he would tell me ways dress for the occasion." I clothes from the 'Forties! "You al- still have I crawled under barbed wire and walked down a cow path. Ducking between the little hills, I could see the spot where the ob? ject lay on the side of the hill that faced my front door. I stood and stared down at a gorgeous blue rock. It was as big as a twelve-pack, rounded on each side with cra? ters all over it, just like a moonstone. Excited, I tried to lift it but it was im? possible, yet I was determined to take it home. I started to roll it over the hilly field, up and down most of the time, on my knees. I got it under the barbed wire and finally it lay next to my veranda. I walked in the front door and by this time my husband was puttering around the kitchen, probably watching my antics from the window. Nothing was said for a moment or two. He sure could make you squirm. By this time, I was feeling ridiculous in my get-up. Then he said with a smile, "What have you been up to now? I see you're all dressed up for a special occasion." I blurted out, "I found the most beautiful stone in the field, it wasn't there yesterday." Calm as a cow chewing its cud, he never seemed to hear me. I was getting exasperat? ed. It seemed like a scene from an "I Love Lucy" show. He was enjoying my discomfort. Lighting a cigarette, he took a few puffs and finally sauntered out to the end of the veranda. He looked down at that blue sapphire stone and said, "You just snitched the cow's salt lick." "I never heard of such a thing!" I almost screamed. "Do you mean to tell me that beautiful stone belongs to the cows?" "Well," he said, "if you don't believe me, take a lick." He turned to go back inside. "Aren't you going to help me take it back?" I asked. "What?" he said, "and be charged as an accessory?" Well, at that moment I wished I had evolved as a snail and let the beautiful sea soothe my injured pride! But the worst was yet to come. It meant going back uphill with the stone. After much puffing and grunting, I returned it with envy and regret. My husband didn't waste time, telling my family and friends about the moonstone that fell out of the sky. I took the kid? ding for a long time with a grain of salt. But my husband never did let me forget it. He nicknamed me "Sapphire." Born in England, Gladys Ross came to Cape Breton in 1924 when she was 14. She raised a family of 12 children on Pond Road, Sydney Mines. In 1973, after her husband retired from the railroad, they moved to Margaree, his childhood home. While she had visited Margaree through the years, that's when her country experience rea/Zy



began. Front Cover Photograph: William Roach, woodcarver, Petit Etang. See story beginning on page 69.