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Emily Seymour, Neil's Harbour: Until the casket was made and covered and ready to put the remains in, they used to lay them out on pine boards, covered with sheets, white sheets. Then they'd put the remains in. They never used to hold wakes like, but they'd sit up all night. So many. If you had the remains in the house two nights, well you'd go and ask so many people to? night • perhaps be 3 or 4, and the next night would be 3 or 4 more. But they wouldn't be like • I mean, I have been to wakes where they'd been cooking and eat? ing • but they wouldn't do that here at Neil's Harbour. Just 3 or 4 people, sitting around in the home. Neighbours could visit, yes, yes, late as they like. Till 11 or 12 o'clock. They just come, sit and talk and reason. No singing. Nothing like that. The minister • we'd always have a minister • they'd always come in, have prayer with the family. This was the quietest place on earth one time. Here they're mostly Anglicans, Pres? byterians, and a very, very few Catholics. (Emily thought the reason things were qui? eter was that the people came from New? foundland, not the fact that they're Ang? licans.) They have a lunch, sometime. Now in the morning they'd have a cup of tea if they were hungry • nothing else. Today... there's no funeral home here, this place. They bring the remains to the home. They take it from here to Sydney sind then bring it back. They keep the bodies only three suns. They don't keep them any longer • only three suns. John Alex John X. MacDonald, Breton Cove: (When a person died, what was the first thing they'd do?) Well, first you'd stretch them out on a board. If you had a good door, you know. Put a barrel at each end and stretch them out there till the casket'd be made. The board is covered with a white sheet. And if it was a woman • I remember when my mother died here? that was in 1938 • there was no undertaker that would come here then • it was in March • the women came. There were 5 or 6 came. They looked after her, carried her out. I had to get the boards, you know. She was dead for three hours before they started getting her dressed. They put her on boards up in the living room • boards on barrels • and a sheet over her after they got her dressed. Till the casket came. I had to go for someone else to make a casket. We were making cas? kets ourselves, but we weren't going to start on our own casket. (You wouldn't make your own?) Aw, no. You'd be awful stuck be? fore you'd do it. (What was going on in the house meanwhile?) Oh, people were coming, sitting around. They wouldn't stay too long. Then after supper, after night came, they'd stay till 10 or 11 o'clock. They'd serve lunch too, you know. Then the minister would come here and he'd have a short ser? vice • 15 minutes. Read the bible. If there was a jgood singer like Malcolm Angus per? haps they'd get him to sing a hymn. Then the minister'd make a prayer and that'd be it. They'd all leave but perhaps 5 or 6 would stay. The people of the house would go to bed. But these people stayed up all night, keeping the fire on • whatever the idea, I don't know. I was asking A.W.R. MacKenzie, how come it was that tradition, in Scotland. He was born in Scotland • a grown-up man be? fore he came over. And he told me that in Scotland, if they went to bed, enemies could come in and take the remains away and that'd be the last they'd ever see of them. That's why it was done in Scotland.



The clans were so much against one another over there. So they'd be staying up all night here. They wouldn't sing. They'd read the bible and talk. And there was very little storytelling. If there was storytelling, it'd be in that crowd that was staying after midnight, staying there till morning. Perhaps if there was a good storyteller, there'd be. But if they were good Christian people you know there'd be none of these storytellings at all. They'd be talking about the bible and those things. It all depended on who stayed. Another thing, over there they weren't dressing them as they are here. Just a shroud they were putting