

Labrador to Cow Head
NEWFOUNDLAND
CANADA



DAY Nineteen LABRADOR- DAY OFF L'Anse au Clair

Friday August 7/09

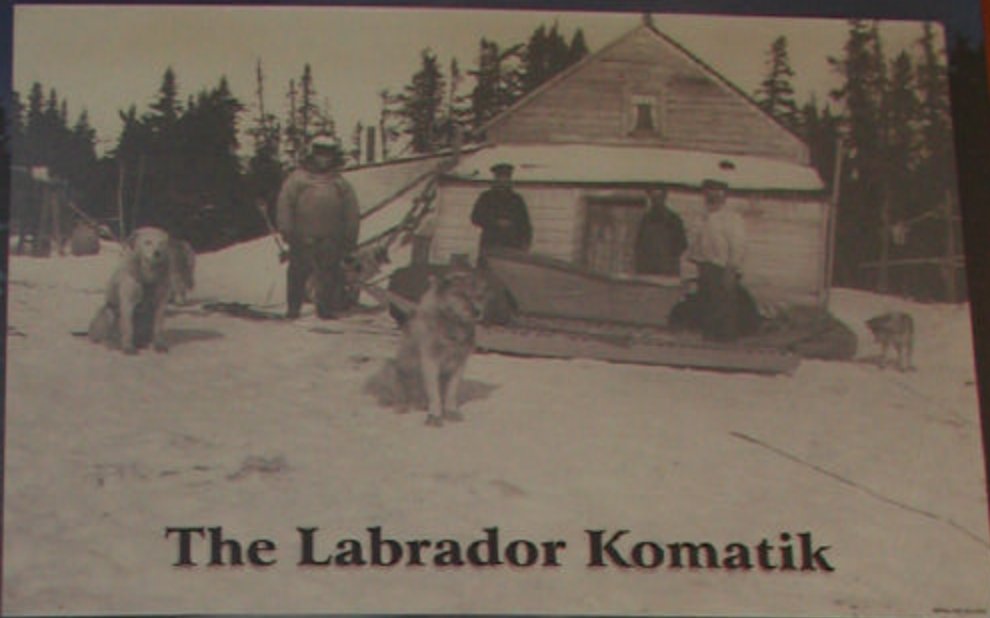
Walked only

All day just spent at the beach, walking about town and just generally resting up with bikes locked all day! Have to head up that 7% grade in the morning for the ferry at 1030.

Happy birthday #4 to Quinn our grandson....love you!



These towns had no road access until about 30 years ago so they had trails that they walked from one small settlement to another. Now these trails are used for ski doo or ATV trails, not suitable for bikes. We see virtually no one on bikes, the occasional child under 12. We also have noticed they eat a lot of meat, be it fish or beef, and very few veggies.... Potatoes seem to be always fries. Have not seen a veggie meal since St John's. Will make us any sandwich we ask for. Very obliging. Have lettuce and tomatoes, no cucumbers, might have mushrooms or peppers, no avocados. They really need some diet education. The women are a lot of them grossly overweight, even the young girls. The men seem to be slim with or without a gut. They mostly look pretty weathered.



The Labrador Komatik



The Labrador Komatik has evolved since George Cartwright's day, and across Labrador you will see many different styles adapted to meet the needs of today, but they are all based on the original Inuit design.

*Captain George Cartwright's Labrador Journal,
Wednesday December 19, 1770.*

"As the construction of an Esquimaux sled (komatik) differs so widely, and is, I think, so much superior to all others which have yet to come to my knowledge.... It is made of two spruce planks, each twenty-one feet long, fourteen inches broad, and two inches thick, which are hewn out of separate trees.... The fore ends are sloped off from the bottom upwards, that they may rise over any inequalities upon the road. Boards of eighteen inches long are set across the upper edges of the sled, three inches asunder, to place the goods upon; and to accommodate the driver and others with a seat. The under edges are shod, with the jaw bone of a whale, cut into lengths of two or three feet, half an inch thick; and are fastened on with pegs of the same. This shoeing is durable, and makes them slide very glibly.... The motion of the sled is very easy, and half a dozen people may travel forty miles a day, without difficulty, if they have fourteen or fifteen dogs yoked."



L'Anse au Claire by the shore



ICE COLD.....burr.....



Neat church changed into an info center filled with interesting stuff especially that it said they tried to sell Labrador prior joining Canada in 1949, several times with no luck!

Now it has all the resources.

Not many seen at the churches on Sundays.



shore at L'anse au Claire

DAY Twenty LABRADOR- St Barb- St Margaret's Bay

Saturday August 8/09

D46.22km A 14.8 M 35.7 PT 3 AT all day with ferry 1403.1kOD



Yardley's aftershave apparently keeps the flies off.

Ken in the store trying out a "stupid stick" I thought it was a funny walking stick, but it is a musical instrument...5 pop/beer lids attached loosely on 4 sides of a stick with a tin can on the top...you hit it with the stick and it makes not a bad sound!



Ferry ride was smooth smooth. Saw humpback whales off to the sides. Neat to see the "steam" or their blow whole first then the rising up of the whale.... Tried for photos but too quick. Really enjoyed the ride this time!



Up early to the worst black flies ever... cycled to the ferry. The hill out of town is 7% for 1.5km and then the 2 hills we came on from the ferry are 9%... no wonder I struggled up those ones after 100km. It was only 12C so the 7% wasn't too bad. No wind and the sky is blue blue.

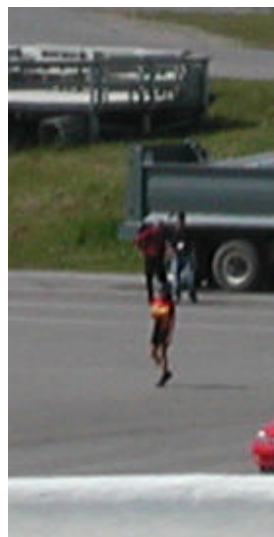
The Apollo



Goodbye to Quebec and Labrador



Don Forbes and his cycle buddy Bernard, met us at the ferry and we went to the hotel in St Barb's for lunch. Don treated, Ken says "seeings as he is the only one with an job!" Was really a treat. Thanks Don. Was great to spend a couple of hours with them. Too bad we are headed south and they north. Had Bakeapple berry pie... different crust.. good, but I still think I would go with raison.



spied Don from the ferry, the only guy in spandex on the dock!

How neat is that to be met by friends in such an out of the way place.





We left them going north to Green Island Cove and we headed south into a slight wind. Not to worry the sun is shining and we are only going a short ways to St Margaret's Bay walking trail head.



Ken went over to the restaurant and was told we could go right down to the ocean to the old town site. We were expecting houses, etc, but there is a board walk all the way to the town site with picnic tables and outhouses every so often where we could have set up camp, but we kept on to the site where they have miniatures of the houses that were here. We chose to set up on the shore. There are wild strawberries and bunch berries for a snack. Evidence of a moose I think having been around the area. The sea is dead still tonight with a few clouds forming so we might get a rain as predicted. It was 4 km on the board walk to the shore. Not really meant for cycling on but no one else here. There are skidoo crossings and ATV trail crossings in several places. Will have to look for more information about why this is

here. The woman Ken spoke to said her father was born here. Will ask here more tomorrow at coffee. Ken went for a walk on the beach and found more board walk of older variety going to the south.



No information as to how long the trail is or anything.

Snowmobiles are definitely a mode of transportation in NL

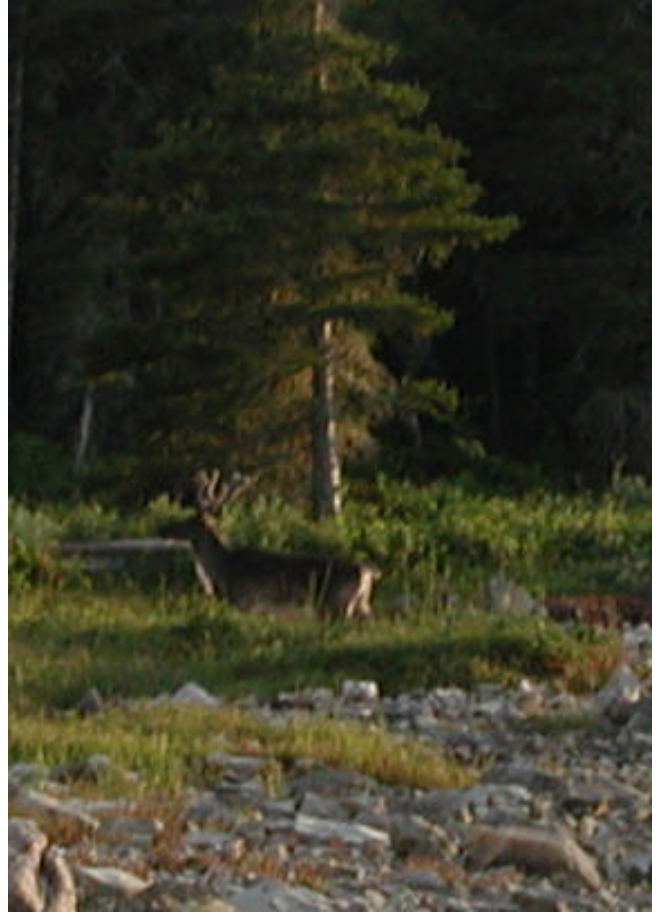


board walk all the way



Miniatures of the houses





Oh my goodness I am sitting here in the dusk and a Reindeer or Caribou just came running down the shore at us.... It is 8pm.... I hope the photos turn out ok. Exciting!





Gees.... he just dove into the water and is swimming way out to get past us! Probably 100 yd out and went clear across the bay...[300yards] Can he ever swim well.... This is so worth not getting a shower! He just shook off like a dog and romped off into the woods. Thankyou to the woman at the Tuckers cabins who said we could camp here.



DAY Twenty-one St Margaret's Bay to Rivers of Ponds

Sunday August 9/09

D76.11 km A14.5 M 53.8 PT AT OD 1479.21



Up after a little rain overnight. Clear blue skies and almost a full moon. The trail is 3.2km of raised boardwalk. I didn't like to ride spots with the handrails going up hill! You had to stay way over towards the edge and it often dropped off at least 1 ft. to the muskeg! Stopped for Ken's coffee at the restaurant beside the cabins. They told us the houses have been gone from St Margaret's Bay for about 30 years. The people just moved out gradually until know one was left. We cycled into a mild wind for 32km to Eddies Cove which has no services, but we went down to the wharf and had pb and jam sands while a boat came in with a load of fish. Watched as they unloaded and weighted the fish and everyone [and their dogs], from town came down to watch via ATV or car or walking.



Left there and continued to Torrent River/ Hawkes Bay at 54km. We stopped for salads [really missing the fresh veggies] and set off again into the wind for another 20km to River of Ponds which has a campsite with all the amenities. We stayed here last week. Nice showers, site on the pond, It wasn't too difficult a day, but the wind never quite all day. We hope to go to Cow Head tomorrow if the wind settles down. Really nice that the gravel patches were paved since we headed up north. Made dinner of KD on the Kelly kettle [dry wood a real advantage] and now off to bed after a beer.



There are lobster traps piled everywhere in the bush, along the roadsides, on the wharfs... don't know if it is to come or is over the lobster fishing for this year will have to ask someone.

DAY Twenty-two Rivers of Ponds to Mountain Waters Resort ,Portland Cr

Monday August 10 /09

**D 44.95 km hard into the wind! A 10.6 M 31.2
PT 4h14 AT 7h OD1524.16**



Up into the wind once more. Belburn is about 25km with no services. On to Daniels Harbor @ 35km. There is a home here that was a nursing post: Nurse Bennett house. Well worth the \$5 admission price with a guided tour by 2 girls who grew up here and are off at university. The town is having some troubles with a land slide into the ocean... lots a couple of homes and a large area of what was the main drag along the ocean with a whale watching platform is now fenced off. The government made a new road for them, but I think it has affected the ambiance of the town.

Often the patients were brought to her home as it was more convenient for her as she might have multiple patients. There was a Dr Grenfell up at the north of the peninsula, but he did not come here often. Now that she is gone there is a clinic where a Dr comes in 2 times per week, but still not much in the line of medical care. She married and had 3 children , two girls who both became nurses and one son who married a nurse. One of here daughters lives in Kelowna, BC. Small world. She got many awards one being The order of Canada, an Honorary Doctorate in Science from Memorial University, and honorary membership to the ARNN [RN of Nfld] She died in 1990 at 100yrs old . Very interesting woman who came to Canada because she read about a woman who was in labor and died when her husband went to get the Doctor. Other interesting things were: she still had the trunk she brought her china over in 100yrs ago, the coat she wore on the boat, The piano she brought with her! And was still using a ringer washer [the first one in this area as her husband ran a hardware store] in 1985. She sounds like she was quite a gal... would loved to have met her. The first babe she delivered lives across the street at 88 years old and the last babe was her grandson. A lot of her payments were received in kind.... Pull teeth and they would make here a table, or deliver wood for the stoves, etc.

Nothing special about her home. Started out as a one story and then when she needed more room for family and clinic they put on another floor. Most of the homes here are not very elegant, but are "homey" ... although the woman lived here until she was 95 [1985] it did need some upgrading and the addition of a lot of the artifacts in cases. She came from England in 1921 as a midwife, but was expected to birth, pull teeth, set limbs , do minor surgery and suture wounds, as there was no road until ~1975 so there was just boat access and she road a horse or ski doo to her patients.



Myra Grimsley Bennett
(1890-1990)

A LIFE OF SERVICE

Up and down the coast she was known simply as "Nurse". Yet what began as title designating professional status and personal expectations in the relationship between nurse and patient, became a term of endearment and enduring respect for a woman devoted to the care of others. Nurse Myra Grimsley arrived in Daniel's Harbour from England in May 1921 and for the better part of her life attended to the healthcare of Newfoundlanders on the Great Northern Peninsula primarily from Sally's Cove to Port aux Choix, but often beyond. Long after the placement of nurses in neighboring communities and the opening of cottage hospitals in Norris's Point and Port Saunders in the late 1930s, Nurse Bennett was still regularly called upon to birth babies, heal the sick, tend the injured, and extract troublesome teeth. For her, nursing was not simply a vocation (in fact, she often was not compensated for her services), but a calling which she answered with unswerving dedication.

Few have better captured her dedication to service than Nicky Keough of neighbouring Parson's Pond who observed,

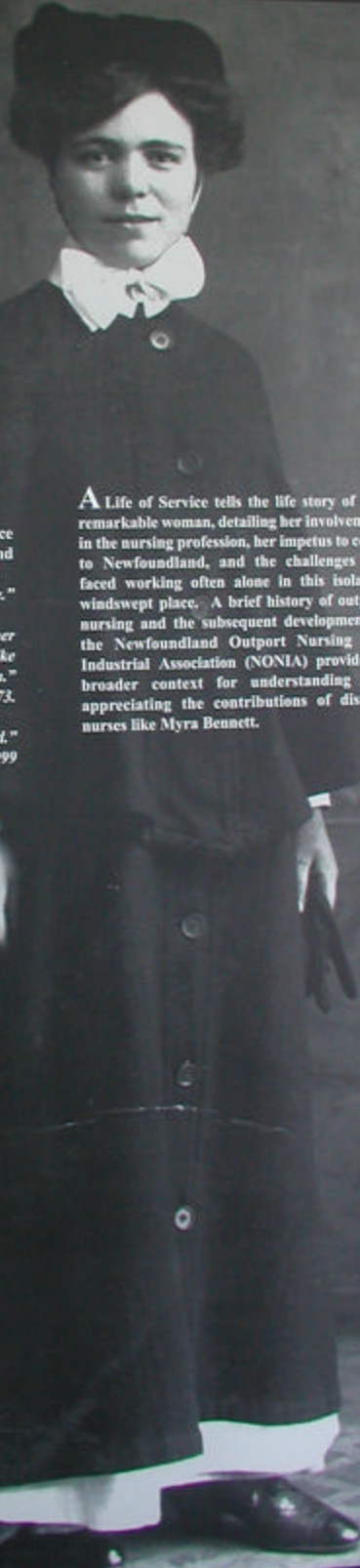
"She didn't mind dying herself, so they'll live."

"I don't suppose there's ever been anybody like her and I don't suppose there'll be anybody quite like her again."

Dr. Noel Murphy, Corner Brook, 1973.

*"What made her different was she was so good."
Myrtle House, Daniel's Harbour, 1999*

A Life of Service tells the life story of this remarkable woman, detailing her involvement in the nursing profession, her impetus to come to Newfoundland, and the challenges she faced working often alone in this isolated, windswept place. A brief history of outport nursing and the subsequent development of the Newfoundland Outport Nursing and Industrial Association (NONIA) provides a broader context for understanding and appreciating the contributions of district nurses like Myra Bennett.





“Hard Work and Starvation”: *Becoming a Nurse in England*



Myra Grimsley (seated) has “starvation” across her eyes, reminiscent of the maternity nurse at the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies Training School, 1915.

Myra Grimsley's dream was to become a nurse. Born in London, England on 1 April 1890, Myra was raised in a house where acts of charity and kindness were commonplace. A bright student, she finished school at age 13, but stayed until the compulsory 14 when she left to take up the trade of tailoring. The position was demanding: long hours, painstaking work, and little pay—good preparation for a nursing career. Tailoring provided not only a useful skill, but also the means to pursue her dream.



In 1912 Myra completed her general nurses training in Manchester and proceeded to take a three month midwifery course in London where she was employed as a district nurse in some of the city's poorest neighbourhoods. From there she went to Woking and was engaged in district nursing when World War I broke out. She describes nursing during these years as “a case of hard work and starvation,” but they were also ones during which she gained much practical knowledge and experience. In 1915, Myra completed a maternity course at the British Hospital for Mothers and Babies National Training School for District Midwives where she earned her cherished acorn pin. More district nursing in London followed and after the war's end, she was in charge of a small maternity home. During this time, she recalled, “an article in a nursing paper turned my thoughts to service overseas” and so she applied to the Imperial Overseas Nursing Association to work abroad. She was quickly accepted. In preparation for her anticipated posting in Canada, she took extra courses in operative midwifery and anesthesia at the famous Clapham School of Midwifery.

To my mind the most important persons among humans was a good midwife and of course there are hundreds of women who are so placed that a good midwife is not procurable. Therefore to find such a place and to become such a midwife were two objectives. Finally to be able to reach that place, and work, represented my idea of complete attainment.

Although the war was over, finding passage to Canada proved difficult and when an opening in Newfoundland with the fledgling Outport Nursing Scheme presented itself, Myra jumped at the chance. “If the need is there, let's go!” was her response. Her posting would be in the remote coastal settlement of Daniel's Harbour on the island's Great Northern Peninsula.

With a small medical bag filled with a modicum of instruments, medicines, and reference texts, Myra Grimsley set sail from London on Friday, 13 April 1921 with the attitude that “nothing could happen to me, to spoil the huge adventure upon which I was embarking.” She would later write:



“My old training school, 1912.” The Hospital Parliament, Manchester, England.



Myra Grimsley with her parents and two of her three brothers, London, England, 1911.



Myra Grimsley in White when she worked as a district nurse, 1911.

Outport Nursing in Newfoundland:

The Outport Nursing Scheme

“When visiting the Outport of St. Lawrence with the Governor two years ago I came upon a middle-aged man attending to his flakes . . . with some difficulty and weakness. . . . ‘You look ill, hardly fit for the work you are doing,’ I said; he replied, ‘I’ve been ill all winter, but am getting a bit better now, but my wife, she’s ill and can’t get better.’ . . . I asked why she did not consult a doctor, and his reply was, ‘There’s no doctor to consult and I can’t get her to the hospital!’ This made me think.” (Lady Constance Harris, “Outport Nursing,” *Newfoundland Quarterly*, 1921)

Witnessing personally the human costs of this inadequate healthcare, Lady Constance Harris, wife of Newfoundland’s Governor, resolved to redress the problem. In 1920 she conceived the Outport Nursing Scheme and organized the Outport Nursing Committee (ONC) with the objective of placing qualified nurse/midwives in remote outport settlements. The costs of the Scheme were underwritten by the government and supplemented by fees collected from patients.

Skilled medical care was essentially unavailable through the first part of the 20th C. in the physically isolated outport settlements lining Newfoundland’s coastline. As one observer reflected, for many of these scattered fishing villages, “amongst their most formidable disadvantages must be reckoned a lack of facilities for caring the sick and suffering.”



Myra Grimsley (far right) with other ONS nurses at Cabot Tower, St. John’s, April, 1921.



Nurse Grimsley (left), Nurse Harvey, and another woman on their voyage from England to Newfoundland, 1921.

While there was no lack of communities in need, the same could not be said of qualified nurses. As a result, Lady Harris turned to the London branch of the Overseas Nursing Association for assistance. She secured the services of four English nurse/midwives, including Myra Grimsley, and by the spring of 1921 all were working in outport Newfoundland. The ONC ultimately placed nurses in six settlements, but a range of problems, not the least of which was funding, threatened the viability of the Scheme and by the end of 1922 it was foundering.



Nurse Harvey, one of the four British nurses contracted by the Outport Nursing Committee, in Joe Butt’s Arms, Fogo Island, Notre Dame Bay, c. 1921.



Outport Nursing in Newfoundland: *The Development of NONIA*

Lady Elsie Allardyce, Lady Harris's successor in Newfoundland, recognized the need and value of the Outport Nursing Scheme and was determined to find a means to salvage it. Her most important contribution was the adoption of a system, based on the Scottish model, whereby outport women would produce handicrafts for sale, the proceeds of which helped pay for the nurse/midwives servicing their communities as well as supplementing household incomes. By December 1923, six industrial centres were organized and in January 1924 a decision was taken to reorganize the ONS. This initiative resulted in the creation of the Newfoundland Outport Nursing and Industrial Association, or NONIA as it became known, in April 1924.

In 1925 alone, NONIA supported the work of nine nurse/midwives and continued to expand each year, successfully meeting its objective of "helping outports to support a fully trained and certified nurse." As well, the high standards set for the knitting, weaving, and hooked

mats produced by local women brought praise at home and overseas, creating broad demand for NONIA goods.

Although the nursing component of NONIA was assumed by the newly formed Department of Public Health and Welfare in 1934, the industrial division of NONIA has remained active and today it continues to produce high quality craft goods recognized internationally.

NONIA, and its precursor, the ONS, made a tremendous impact on the health and lives of thousands of outport Newfoundlanders, and much of the credit goes to the nurses. Like Sir Wilfred Grenfell, Lady Harris stressed that nurses have "a missionary spirit," but ultimately success relied on their possessing other important qualities such as independence, adaptability, resourcefulness, fortitude, and endurance in the face of frequent adversity. Few were more aptly suited nurse/midwives than Myra Grimsley Bennett who possessed all these qualities and more.



Daniel's Harbour, 1911.

Myra Grimsley arrived in the capital city of St. John's on 23 April and finally in Daniel's Harbour on 27 May 1921. Daniel's Harbour was a far cry from the hustle and bustle she was accustomed to in London and its surrounding cities, but it was its very isolation which compelled the ONS to place her there. Recalling the posting, Myra writes: Daniel's Harbour "was the most remote of all the districts, from any kind of medical aid. . . I had a wider and more diversified experience and training, and it was considered that I would be in a better position to deal with emergencies." Time and again this decision would be put to the test and the Nurse invariably rallied to the cause, drawing on both her experience and knowledge to address a variety of medical situations.



School teacher George Moss with Daniel's Harbour students, c. 1915.

Daniel's Harbour

"Nurse Grimsley goes to a sterner district . . . whence come very sad accounts of the state of the people in those districts."

Lady Constance Harris, "Outport Nursing,"
Newfoundland Quarterly, 1921)



"The mailboat landing with mail and passengers. Our only means of communication" made the isolated Daniel's Harbour maintain new links to shore with mail and goods from the east. On shore is Maggie Thordahl (left), Edna Pearce, and Barbara Bennett (in boat).

Geographically isolated and far from doctors situated in Curling, 240 kilometers to the south or the Grenfell mission 320 kilometers to the north in St. Anthony, Daniel's Harbour truly was one of the "sterner districts" needing the services of a nurse. The settlement is named for Daniel Regan, a fish transporter who sought shelter from a storm here 1825, although one can only imagine how much respite these open waters offered him. What they did provide, however, was good fishing and by the early 1830s English fish merchant James Biggin and his wife, Keturah Payne from nearby Cow Head, made Daniel's Harbour their home. Others soon followed and by the turn of the century over two dozen families occupied the community.



Angus Bennett, c. 1914.

Residents of Daniel's Harbour traditionally made their living in the fishery, first selling salt fish to merchants in Bonne Bay and later fresh fish to a wider market. Lobster canneries were prevalent earlier this century and live lobsters continue to be harvested today. Other resource based industries, lumbering and mining, have also provided work for local residents. Until 1957, when a road connecting Daniel's Harbour to neighbouring settlements was completed, travel was primarily by sea. A coastal boat functioned as the community's main link to other places.

Myra Grimsley herself arrived on the coastal boat, the S. S. Home. Abner Pearce, a child at the time, remembered there was a "fine crowd around when she landed." Her contract with the Outport Nursing Scheme stipulated a two year commitment for which she earned \$75/month. Myra did not know then that she would spend the rest of her life in Daniel's Harbour. But then she also would not have known of the declaration allegedly made by young Angus Bennett, a descendant of the original settlers, when he heard the news of the nurse's arrival. Working in the woods at the time, Angus resolved, "I'm going home and I'm going to marry her." And he did so on 26 January 1922.



Angus Bennett (right), Emmanuel Stone (center), unknown, Daniel's Harbour, 1913.



Angus Bennett working in the woods, 1914.



“Pulling Teeth and Borning Babies”: Nurse Bennett’s Work in Newfoundland



The nurse was often called upon to officiate at formal occasions such as the wedding at St. John's in 1921.

To the people who had never had the ministrations of a trained nurse, it seemed a marvelous thing to have one dwell among them. The news was soon spread, and the calls for attention came thick and fast: after getting unpacked and straightened away and a room arranged as a consulting room cum dispensary cum dental parlour, etc. the patients began to arrive, first of all for curiosity, then for advice and treatment.

(Myra Bennett's description of her first days in Daniel's Harbour)

Nurse Bennett set up practice at the Moss family home, where she was lodged. Her duties also took her to the homes of patients scattered throughout her widespread district where she functioned not only as nurse, but also as cook, housekeeper, and general caretaker, often for several days running. While out on call in these various settlements, she would set up an informal clinic and see as many patients as possible. She attended her first delivery in July in Port Saunders and birthed her first baby in Daniel's Harbour in August, the last child of Mrs. J.W. Bennett, her future mother-in-law. In all, Nurse Bennett attended to the births of about 700 babies during her years in service in Newfoundland, including that of her grandson Noel.



The wedding of Charles Moss and Margaret Bennett, who was the first baby delivered to Daniel's Harbour by Nurse Bennett.



The Nurse with other local women preparing for the Bishop's visit to Daniel's Harbour, c. 1922.

While midwifery was her passion, it was only a small part of her actual duties. Treating general ills and injuries, whatever their nature or gravity, formed the bulk of her practice. Much time was also devoted to health education as a way of preventing the spread of rampant diseases such as tuberculosis and whooping cough. Nurse Bennett's patients were not limited to people either as she was sometimes called on to treat ailing livestock. But whatever the problem, whether it was pulling teeth (and she recorded over 5000 extractions) or working to save a foot severed in a logging camp accident, she rose to the occasion. Her skills and knowledge as a nurse were matched by her resourcefulness and ability to improvise solutions. “Some of the things that I had to do that I wouldn't have dreamed of doing if there had been a doctor around, I just had to do,” she noted. “What's got to be done, you do. That's all about it!” And she answered each call, never refusing her services or making excuses for weather, family, or her own health.

Although Myra's contract with the Outport Nursing Scheme expired in April 1923, she continued in her capacity as district nurse, mostly without monetary compensation, buying whatever medicines or supplies were needed from her own pocket. She could not have done so without the support of her husband Angus, who throughout her career was her true helpmate: assisting with procedures, taking her on calls, underwriting the purchase of supplies, and tending their own household while she was away. “Angus was always at her side, always in the background, always ready to help.” (Dr. Noel Murphy, 1973).



Dog team transportation. “Working to give a man, I was behind the wheel as it were, instead of the reins.”

“Pulling teeth and borning babies—that was what she was known for.”

*Emmanuel Pearce,
Daniel's Harbour, 1999.*

“He went to the house and called the nurse and said, ‘Julie needs you.’ And she said, ‘Alright, I'll be right there.’ And I turned around and she was on the sleigh.”

*Asaph Wentzell,
Portland Creek.*



Angus, Myra and Chris Bennett, 1923.

“There’s No Such Thing as a Part-time Nurse”

Although more nurses had been placed in her district by the early 1930s, Nurse Bennett remained actively engaged in her profession, but without the benefits of official



Nurse Bennett travelled her district of working on a bicycle, 1916.

institutional support. However, a 1933 pneumonia epidemic in her district tapped even Nurse Bennett’s resources and she contacted the newly formed Department of Public Health demanding change. They responded by offering her a part-time appointment. It paid \$250/year, but more importantly it gave her official status with all of its privileges. She readily accepted, but consistently maintained “there’s no such thing as a part-time nurse. Somebody’s sick, you take care of them.” In addition to her duties as a public health nurse, she assumed the added responsibility of training several local women seeking midwifery certificates. Eventually, she was appointed full time and worked



Nurse Bennett with Pin Fields demonstrating a tooth extraction in the kitchen of her home, mid 1930s.

until her “retirement” in 1953. But Nurse Bennett never completely retired and was frequently called upon for advice, to give injections or change dressings, to assist with difficult births, and to pull teeth: she performed her last recorded extraction at the age of 92.

Myra Bennett’s life of service to her community included much more than just ministering to their health and welfare. A woman of great faith, she became actively involved in the church, playing the organ, organizing and singing in the choir, sewing surplices, teaching Sunday school, and contributing to the church guild.



Nurse Bennett with members of the local church choir which she organized. She also sewed their surplices. Woman’s Harbor, 1936.

She also taught music at home, did sewing for people, wrote letters for those who could not and in support of those needing references. She took in foster children, gave



Nurse Bennett opened her home to many including this woman and her son pictured here with the Bennett children.

food and shelter to anyone in need, and was a tireless advocate for improvements in her district, never backing down from a cause. All the while, she cared for her own family of three and kept the books for her husband’s business.



Richard Calves, Fairland Creek, worked the mail route from Purser’s Pond to Bullhouse to the 1930s and 1940s. He often stayed at the Bennett’s in Dan’s Bay/Lease and the smell of his dog Hercules drying behind the kitchen stove still lingers in the memories of all the Bennett children.



Grace, Angie, Barbara, Myra and Trevor Bennett at Barbara’s confirmation, c. 1941.



“Hard Work, A Sense of Humour”



Myra Bennett in her garden with Edward Mary South, 1976.

Nurse Bennett was a woman of her convictions, who was invariably described by friends and family alike as “firm, but fair.” Her no nonsense approach to both her life and her profession, however, did not belie her depth of feeling for or commitment to her adopted home and its people.

“I cannot express how kind I found everybody. I was taken into their homes and treated as well as my own mother could have treated me. I’ve had people get on their knees and pull my wet, soaking boots off and put their warm stockings on my feet. I’ve had men take me along the coast sitting on a cold sleigh take off their warm mitts and put on my cold hands. . . . That’s what I call Christian treatment. . . Newfoundland to me is really the best place in the world. I have never met such kindness.”

She returned this kindness by providing skilled nursing care, by doing charitable works, by devoting her life to the service of others. And she did so for more than sixty years. Myra Bennett was her in nineties when she left Daniel’s Harbour to live with her daughter in Ontario where she died at the age of 100 on 26 April 1990. Her secret for a long life:

“Hard work, a sense of humour particularly, more or less contented mind, ordinary, plain food, no booze, no cigarettes. That’s all.”



Myra Bennett celebrating her 100th birthday, Wren, Ontario, 1990 with her daughter-in-law Wilma Bennett (left) and daughter Barbara Long (right).



Myra Bennett sitting outdoors, 1966.



Myra and Angus Bennett, River of Ponds Park, 1946.

*“The Nurse” lived just one hundred years,
And now she is laid to rest,
With the people she set out to serve,
Where she said, “I would do my best.”*

(Verse 339, “Nurse and Angus” by Trevor Bennett, 1997)

A Life of Service recognizes and honours the achievements of Myra Grimsley Bennett who left an indelible mark not only on Daniel’s Harbour, but on all of Newfoundland. It is a fitting tribute to a woman who became a legend in her own time.

Myra Grimsley Bennett’s Lifetime Awards and Achievements:

- 1935: King George V Jubilee Award
- 1936: Member of the British Empire
- 1937: King George VI Coronation Medal
- 1953: Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal
- 1967: Honourary Member, Association of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland
- 1974: Order of Canada
- 1974: Doctor of Science, Honoris Causa, Memorial University of Newfoundland



Myra Bennett receiving the Order of Canada from Governor General Jules Lévesque, 1974. Photo by John Evans, Ottawa.

This was a very tiring day. If I didn't have Ken to shield the wind I would have set up the tent in the ditch miles back. We had plans to go to Cow Head theater tonight but never made it.

The road segments that were gravel when we came up were all paved so that was nice.

There were mega wild flowers: daisies, fire weed, pussy toes, butter cups, and more.

More traffic Sunday and today for whatever reason... ?closer to Deer Lake? Met a couple trying to hitch hike... young boy from England and girl from Ottawa... they had been walking for 2 days..... glad we didn't decide to do that for the return trip. Saw a couple loaded headed north with the wind! Envious!

Stopped at Daniels Harbour ... Bennett Lodge for sandwiches. It is a million \$ property, but just a mess with garbage... old this and that everywhere... it is spitting distance from the deck to the ocean with a whale watching deck along the back, but the rooms smell like mold and the windows facing the view are 2 ft by 2 ft... what a shame. The view from the dining room is great! And the food is okay... came out to our first FLAT! Ken picked up a bit of steel belted radial wire... oh well 1500km with one flat is doing fairly well. He changed it and as he has a sore left calf muscle we decide to limp on another few km to the CG as the sun was shining.

Arrived at Mountain Waters Resort Pk.... Set up, had supper [no fires so she lent us a kettle] , showers and down came the rain! She said they had not had rain for weeks! We are still one day ahead of our schedule so not to worry.

DAY Twenty-three Mountain Waters Resort ,Portland Cr to

Cow Head [Sea Breeze RV]

Tuesday August 11 /09

D47k A 14.6 M35.5 PT 3h10 AT4 h OD1571.16

Rained from 1730 last night until 0530 this morning.... At least the wind stopped! Forgot to mention yesterday the CG is 1/1/2 km off the highway on a gravel road , well packed.... At dusk and a cow moose was just standing on the edge of the road... too fast for a photo, but neat to see. Also today we saw a male moose far away with a full rack, running full tilt. Seeing our share of wild life.

Up at 0530 as Ken was to bed when the rain started! He has a sore left calf so hoped for no wind today and we were granted same. Set off to Parson's Pond – Payne's Bakery and café.... 23.12km 1hr 25 by 0830 That's more like it 16.3/ 28.6 We stopped here hoping for toutans.... Bread dough fried or just grilled lightly to cook with maple syrup or molasses. The bread was not risen yet! Too early! Lazy baker! Only things to have were toast with eggs and meats so ken held the meat and I just had toast. Interestingly they make their bread in a 3 loaf... the picture will show. No





Continued on to Cow Head... cloudy with fog at times. I really wanted to go to a theater production here so we decided to rest Ken's leg and go to 2 items tonight. One is music and skits to do with NFLD called Neddy Norris Night and the other is a play called LEAVING HOME about a NFLD family that goes off island and how difficult a move it is for them.... This small town seems to have found a way to make a living other than the fishing industry. Many B&B's, one large hotel and a campsite too far for us to get back to at 11pm tonight so the RV park let us set up in a site for \$20... he quit taking tents as they make too much noise for his B&B customers

I went to a botanical garden by the Anglican church. Interesting to see some of the wild flowers cultivated. They have virtually no flower beds or trees by their homes.



Sea Rye Weed in the ditches everywhere



Ken by the light house...tiny one



Pioneer grave yard all white stones.

We went out to the old light house site where the light house structure is still there, but the home of the light keeper is gone. It is a longish walk {2km} up and out to the sea....

I went into the Dr Payne museum. He was a teacher with an honorary DR for service in his community. The guide was local and very knowledgeable. There are a lot of Paynes in this area with the original settlers coming from England. As did this man. Interesting how they have put together the house with items from town families noted.

Not very comfy looking “skin boots”



This place is called Cow Head after a rock out below the light house that sailors thought looked like a cows head! Some think it is because of a piece of land where the light house and docks are on but not so she says. These people too had summer houses out on the peninsula and came inland to below the hills for winter. We noticed they don't face their “frontroom” windows at the view of the sea, but at the major street... funny. The wind off the ocean continues to be really COLD yet it is 26C where I am sitting now.