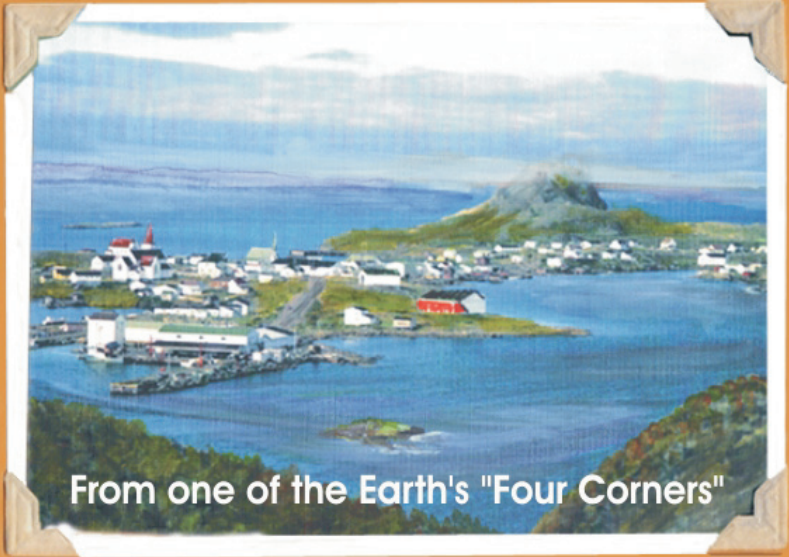


BRIMSTONE HEAD

A Collection of Short Stories



Fogo, Newfoundland

★★★About Growing up in the 50's and 60's★★★

By Kevin Penton

This book is a collection of boyhood memories of how it was growing up in an isolated Newfoundland outpost in the 1950's and 60's.

Throughout this book, you will encounter words unique to Newfoundland. To familiarize yourself with the jargon, please refer to the word definition section in the Appendix.

The following snippets are what it was really like in those earlier days.

Brother's Got the Shoes

*G*rowing up in Fogo or anywhere on the island in the fifties and sixties were tough times. If they were lucky enough to get a few stamps, the majority of people were either on, a little I.E, mother's allowance if she was extra lucky and left with a bunch of kids after her husband decided they

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would all be better off on their own and willed himself to die, or else the “Dole”.

Therefore, there was precious little cash for what we today would call the necessities of life. Most kids I knew had a pair of jeans, albeit patched to the nth degree, a kick-about shirt, jacket, sweater, and a pair of long rubber boots for mucking about in the stage and punts, just doing the things kids like to do. Moreover, put away for “good” like church on Sundays and other special times — a pair of ill-fitting pants and a shirt on a nail on the back of the bedroom door. Most of us had a pair of shoes or sneakers, maybe handed down from an older brother whose feet had grown another size but were ours now.

There was one family, however, that lived a few houses away from us and being mostly boys and our family being mostly boys, one of them was always dropping by our house for a visit. This one particular evening one of the brothers came by and it so happened that there was a time going on in one of the town halls. Father noticing that he was not dressed to attend a time, asked, “Why aren’t you dressed, aren’t you going”? He simply said without embarrassment or jealousy,

“Brother’s got the shoes!”

Gandy Day

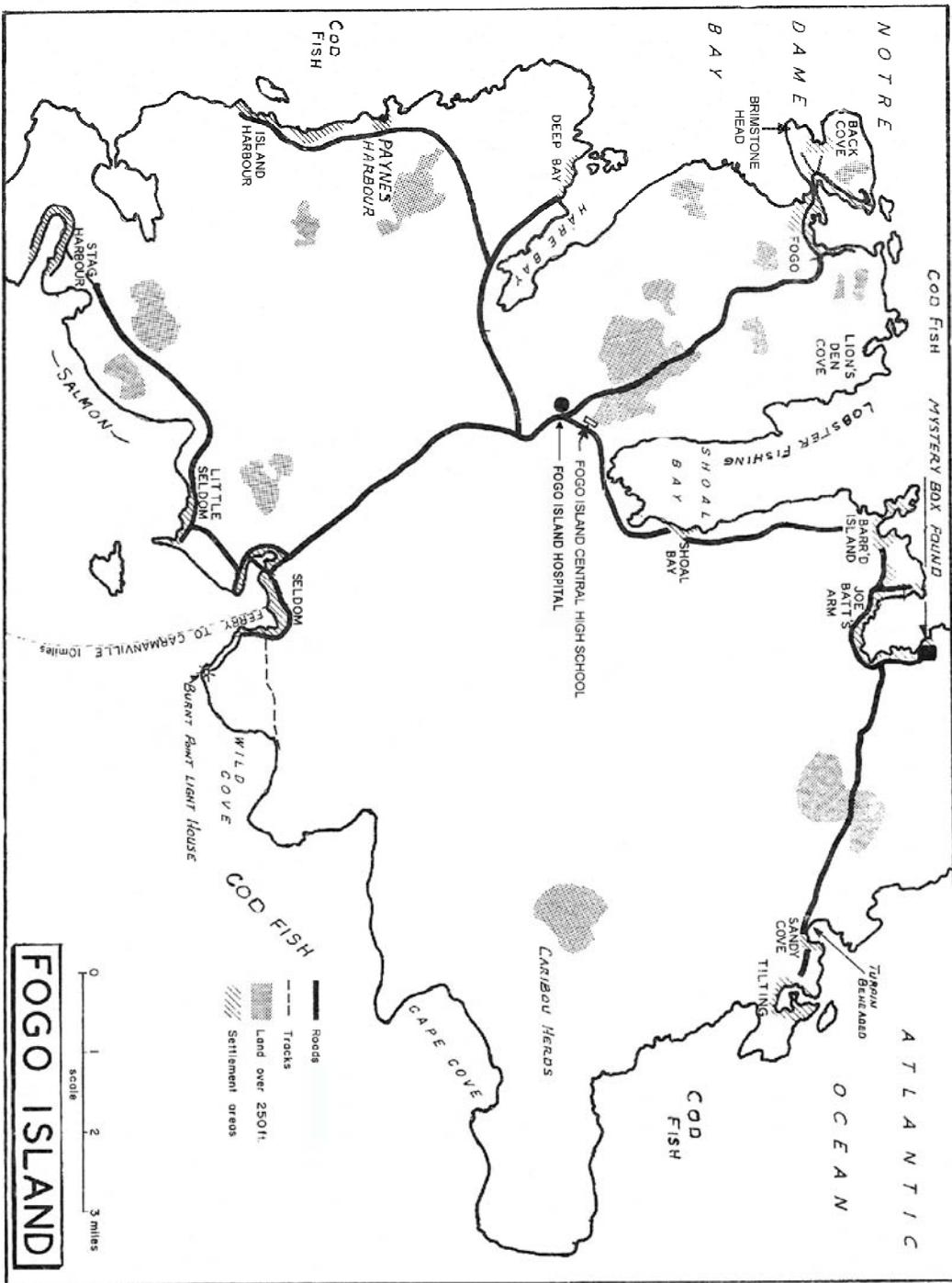
When I was young I enjoyed few things as much as the treat my mother made for us on Pancake Day. Maybe the reason they were so delicious is that we did not have them all the time. That special day celebrated all over the world as Pancake Day, should have had a more appropriate title for us Newfoundlanders. For one thing, pancakes for us have other meanings entirely. They are flat rocks or shoals over which the sea rolls in and breaks. As well, pancakes are those indentations left behind in the water, after skipping small flat stones over its surface. The delicious Pancake Day treat I grew up loving more than skipping flat stones from Leyte's Cove, we called gandies. *I think a more appropriate title for that day should be, "Gandy Day." Yeah!*

Gandy Day was one of the very few days that my parent's did not have to drag me out of bed to go to school. I would be up at dawn, eager to get the school day over, eager to get back home. It was one of those rare times as well when the entire family would be sure to be at the supper table on time. We never had

Gandy Day

gandies for breakfast; that would be a waste and besides sleeping all night, would not allow you the necessary time to anticipate that first delicious bite. On the other hand, having them for supper you would have the entire day to prepare your taste buds for that once a year special treat.

For Gandy Day, Mother would have lots of bread dough set aside and eager herself for gandies, would have the fat-back pork rendered long before us kids got home from school. By the time we tossed our book bags in the corner and washed our hands, the first batch would be waiting for us on a plate in the centre of the kitchen table. Long before she had another batch half fried, we would have bolted down that entire plateful. While one of us kids happily brought another plateful of crusty golden gandies to the supper table, Mother would smile and wipe the perspiration from her forehead while grey smoke wafted upward from the black iron frying pan, as another batch hit the sizzling fat.



FOGO ISLAND

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The youngest of six, I was born in Lion's Den, Fogo Island, Newfoundland as a Canadian Confederation baby in 1949. Lion's Den is a resettled community near the Town of Fogo. My parents were Charles Penton of Joe Batt's Arm and Hilda Mary Waterman of Deep Bay. Due to Confederation and compulsory schooling, my parents were forced to move to the Town of Fogo when I was five and there I grew up.

As most did in those days on that isolated north-eastern Newfoundland Island, I grew up without the necessities we take for granted today such as inside toilets, running water and electricity.

"Even though I have lived away from Fogo Island for more than four decades and love the place that I live, I have never forgotten my roots, my home. These are my memories"

Kevin Penton