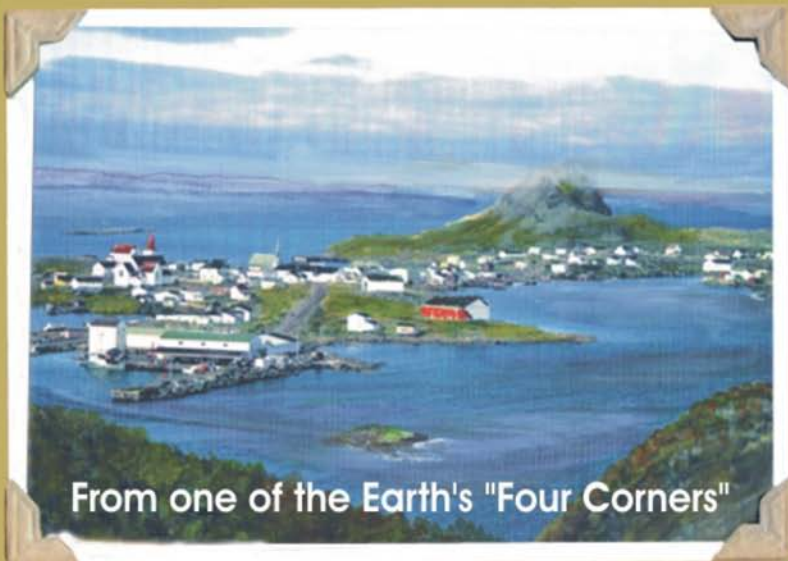


BRIMSTONE HEAD

More Short Stories



From one of the Earth's "Four Corners"

Fogo, Newfoundland

PLUS

**A Novella inspired by
a story I heard as a boy**

The Seaport Murder

By Kevin Penton

Part 1 of this book is a collection of short stories, which accompany my first book:

Brimstone Head
- A Collection of Short Stories

Part 2: Is a brief look at Fogo Island through the years.

Part 3: Contains sample stories from my first book, Brimstone Head - A Collection of Short Stories about what it was like for me growing up in Fogo in the 50's and 60's.

Part 4: of this book is my first work of fiction. It was inspired by a story I heard told at our kitchen table, illuminated by the flicker of the oil lamp and the amber glow of a well-stoked pot-bellied stove. None of the characters, names, places or events is real.

It is called: *The Seaport Murder*

Glossary: Throughout this book, you will encounter words unique to Newfoundland. If you are unfamiliar with the jargon, please refer to the Glossary section.

Contents

<i>FOR HEARTH AND HOME</i>	11
<i>WATERMAN'S BROOK TRAIL</i>	15
<i>A CHILD FROM DEEP BAY</i>	19
<i>GRAVE ROBBERS</i>	35
<i>THE "POOR" COD TRAP</i>	41
<i>MUMMERING</i>	45
<i>SUNDAY SUPPER ON NIPPARD'S ISLAND</i>	51
<i>REMEMBERING A FOGO ICON</i>	55
<i>SCOTLAND'S LOSS</i>	59
<i>THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE</i>	65
<i>SHOVELING OUT</i>	69
<i>THE GHOST ON LAYMAN'S POINT</i>	73
<i>FATHER SHOT THE WITCH</i>	77
<i>MY VIEW FROM THE EDGE</i>	81
<i>GOD IS NOT LISTENIN'</i>	87
<i>MY HOMELAND, MY PEOPLE</i>	89
<i>SAMPLES FROM BOOK 1 – A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES</i>	101
<i>LIFE ON THE HILL</i>	103
<i>A SOMBRE DAY</i>	107
<i>FLYING A KITE</i>	111
<i>BROTHERS GOT THE SHOES</i>	115
<i>ACCLAIM FOR BRIMSTONE HEAD, BOOK 1</i>	117
<i>THE SEAPORT MURDER - BACKGROUND</i>	127
<i>THE SEAPORT MURDER</i>	129
<i>GLOSSARY</i>	239

Flying a Kite

When I was a kid, we created our own fun, whether it was whittling a model boat from a log rescued from the pot-bellied stove, its main spring and key mechanism from an abandoned alarm clock and a propeller made from the lid of a spaghetti tin we found in some well-to-do

Flying a Kite

person's trash, or making a toboggan from an empty cheese container that we would plead with Garland to save for us, or flying a kite in the upper garden.

Narrow thin slats of wood stolen from a lobster pot, nails borrowed from the back of the store's loose clapboard, brown paper and parcel twine saved from shopping trips to Baker's and Garland's, bread flour happily provided by Mother from our back pantry, an Eaton or Simpson's catalogue, the loan of Father's jigging reel. These were the makings of a kite and were like Christmas to me.

After months of scrounging for enough material, my older brother and I were ready to start making the kite. This was not our first time, we usually made one every year, only for it to be torn from its riggings by an unexpected gust of wind that would come in off the harbour. I wondered as a kid if our flyaway kites ever reached the other side of the world. I was sure they did because the other side of the world to me, then, was straight out Middle Tickle to where the water ends, just beyond the icebergs.

Taking the slats we stole from a lobster pot, we formed what would resemble a cross. We fastened them together with nails, making sure to bend the nails over on the backside. After creating a slot in the outer edges of the slats, we pulled the parcel twine

Brimstone Head

taut around all four points of the cross, tying a knot to secure it. Laying out the brown paper on a flat surface, we spread on a paste made from flour and water. Then laying the kite's skeleton on the paper, we brought the paper up on all four sides following the outline of the parcel twine, and back down onto itself. Repeating the process on the opposite side with a second piece of paper to give the kite rigidity, we were now ready for the kite's tail. It was made of catalogue pages formed to resemble a double-sided fan, tied together in one-foot increments for twenty or so feet. A few final tweaks, the rigging to attach father's jiggling line, and a little drying of the paste and we were ready for flight.

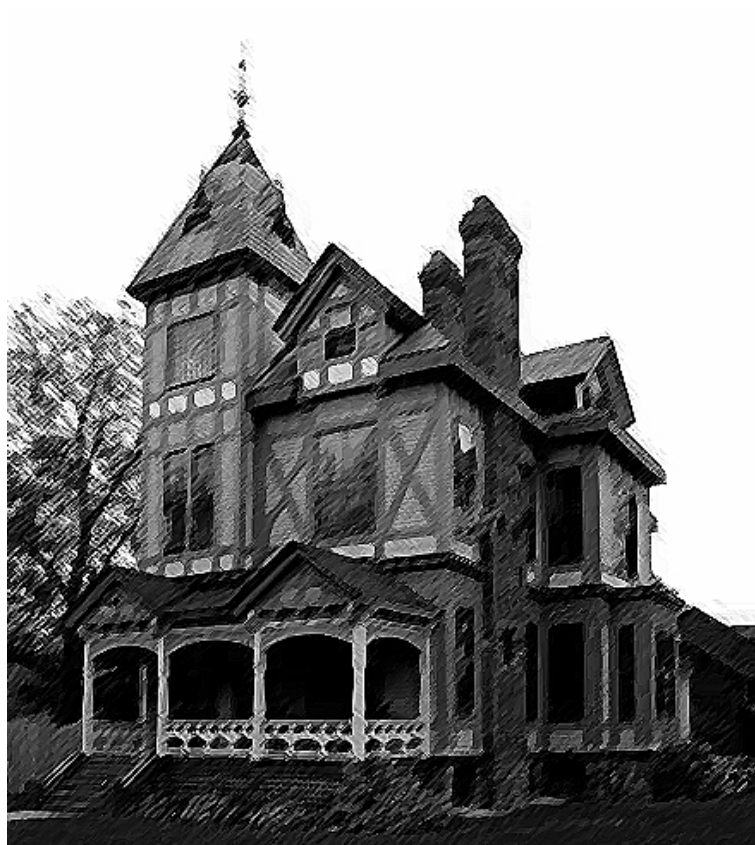
That night we were restless, worrying if there would be enough wind the next day to fly it. We had put so much effort into building her we could hardly wait. Up and out the next morning, dressed to spend hours in the cold, we dragged the kite with its long tail and Father's jiggling reel up over the hill, past Mother's clothesline full of washing. Being careful not to be tangled up, we headed to the upper garden.

I rarely got a chance to fly any of our kites; I would usually carry them to the far end of the field, while my older brother took charge of releasing the jiggling line. After a dozen attempts, she is airborne.

Flying a Kite

Carefully he manipulates the line, making this graceful bird obey his every command. My job is over. I climb the big rock that sat in the centre of the garden up to its flat surface, where I would lie back and stare at our accomplishments. I felt like Orville Wright - I wonder if my brother felt like Wilbur?

The Seaport Murder



The Seaport Murder — Background to the Novella

There were many good stories told around our kitchen, as my father and his cronies were master storytellers. There is one story in particular though, that has continued to haunt me since the first time I heard an old man recite it. The story is about a woman who was buried alive by her jealous husband because of an indiscretion. The story was told well with all the components for a good story intact, but it failed to give the woman a face. Maybe it was intentionally recited that way because of her indiscretion, "*The Harlot got what she deserved,*" so to speak. Whether the initial story was true or false, from that kernel of possibility, I have endeavored to retell the story in order to give her life and her death some meaning. Except for the part, I heard one of my father's cronies recite, the rest is purely fictional. None of the characters, names, places or events is real.

Prologue

Seaport, August 12, 1907

In the deepest, darkest hours of night, a three-year-old boy named Jeremy Hynes, sensing abandonment, cried for his mother's gentle touch and voice as he slept.

From an open window in his tiny bedroom, frayed curtains flapped like unfettered sails on a ghost

Prologue

ship, while at the entrance to the harbour, the mournful clatter of swaying bells on buoys tolled rhythmically, aiding mariners in oilskin suits through the fog-cloaked tickles.

When he woke, his room was cold and dark, except for a small band of light coming from underneath the doorway. Tears soaking his face, dressed only in a flannel nightshirt, he ran to the window. Grabbing the shutters, he forces them to.

Once again, in the warmth and security of his bed, still sobbing, he tried to return to sleep, but he could not. There was a strange silence to the house, not comforting, but rather a deafening silence. Once in awhile, over his own sobbing, the eerie stillness was interrupted by his father's angry voice, coming from somewhere outside, somewhere beyond the safety of his bedroom door. He had heard his father's angry voice many times before, but this time it was different. His first instinct was to pull the heavy quilts over his head to drown out the sound, but he had to see whom his father was yelling at and why he was so angry. He slid out of bed and ever so gingerly crossed the cold wooden floor to listen at the door. He listened for other voices, but there were none. Standing on tiptoe, he reached for the doorknob. Quietly opening the door, he walked to the stairs, where he stopped and sat on the

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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