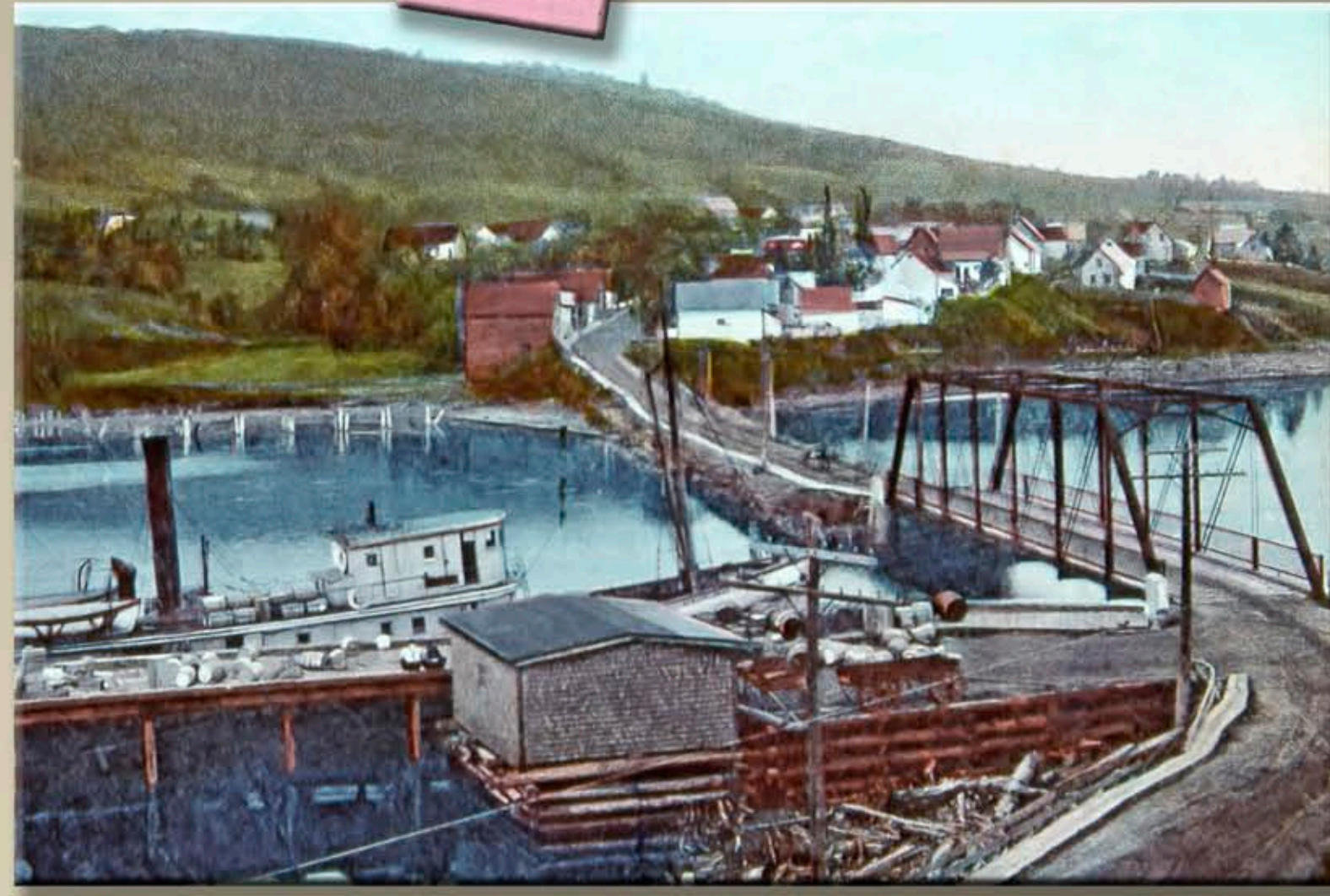


Mabou Station

Mabou village 1910-20



Winter Scene St. Mary's Church & St. Joseph's Convent

While the name Mabou may well be of Mi'kmaq origin, the meaning of the word is obscure. The name was in use as early as the 1700s. The headland which is today called Cape Mabou was known for coal deposits, prior to settlement by Europeans. The earliest European settlement of a permanent nature was made by families from the United States at the time of the American Revolutionary War. These families settled here mainly because of the bountiful fish harvest and the relatively good farm land. The English speaking settlers in the Mabou-Port Hood area in the 1780s and 1790s were joined by Irish Adventurers and British seamen.

Between 1800 and 1845, hundreds of Highland Scots first settled along the Mabou, the Southwest, the Mull and the Northeast rivers.

After 1820, later settlers had to move inland to less favorable farm lands. Some Acadian people moved into the Mabou area but most Acadians moved either north to Cheticamp or south to Arichat.



Lobster Factory, Mabou Harbour 1925-30

There were at least three different factories built to produce canned lobster and salmon in the Mabou area. Malcolm MacFarlane owned the 1879 factory when lobster sold for 4 cents a pound. Foster Rood was in charge from 1912 to 1927, Herbert Hopkins until 1948 and Finley S. Beaton packed canned salmon for about ten years during the summer months.



"The Little School," 1930s



St. Joseph's Convent School



Students from St. Joseph's Convent School 1930s



Mabou-Hillsborough United Church



Present day Mabou Catholic Church, built in 1897 and St. Joseph's Convent, built in 1886.

The last wave of immigrants arrived in the early 1950s. Between 20 and 30 Dutch families moved here and took up farms which had previously been deserted, mostly by 4th and 5th generation descendants of the original Scots, many of whom had out-migrated to places like the "Boston States", Toronto, and other parts of the USA and Canada. Today, large, successful, dairy farms are being operated by 2nd and 3rd generation Dutch families.



The lobster and salmon cannery is on the right in this 1930s photo of Mabou Harbour. The lighthouse was refurbished in 2008 and is now functional as a lighthouse and a museum.

Many of the earliest settlers appreciated the value of education, and as a result, a number of teachers were brought to the area from Ireland and Scotland. As early as the 1820s, schools were to be found in Mabou, some of which were sponsored by influential merchants. By the 1830s, despite the hardships of pioneer life, considerable improvements in curriculum, teacher qualifications and in school construction were evident. From accounts of early families in Mabou Pioneers 1 & 2, it is evident that an unusually large number of professional people such as doctors, lawyers, clergy and teachers all received their earliest education in the small one room schools in Mabou and later moved to various parts of Canada and the States to practice in their chosen fields. Larger teaching establishments gradually took over, such as St. Joseph's Convent in the 1880s, Mabou Consolidated School from 1964-2000 and last but not least, Dalbrae Academy from 2000 to the present time.

From its inception to the present day, Mabou has been much more of an agricultural and lumbering center than a fishing centre although people have engaged in fishing as a part-time occupation up to the present time.



Barry/Beaton Wedding, Early 1900s



Mabou Coal Mines



Hay making at Sight Point at Alex Dan (Iagan Measag's), 1940s



J.E. Doyle Home and Early Post Office, circa 1950s



Joseph Hunt's Store, main street Mabou, burnt in 1929.



Shipping Pier & Trestle N.E. Mabou 1905-06

Gypsum mining began at Mabou Harbour around 1890 and continued sporadically for almost forty years. The gypsum mining industry employed between forty to fifty men and in 1929, 10,000 tons of gypsum were shipped to Montreal. See display of Gypsum Industry at An Drochaid Museum in Mabou Village.

A spur line was built from Glendyer to Mabou Coal Mines with a trestle across the N.E. Mabou River in the early 1900s. When the first train attempted to cross this trestle, the pilings began to sink, thus putting an end to any further crossings and causing considerable disruption to the coal mining and gypsum industries.

The Mabou community is justifiably proud of the large number of fine musicians who have their origins here. Not only have these fiddlers, pipers, and singers preserved ancient tunes and ancient Gaelic songs, but they have composed new ones and have indeed developed a highly stylized form of playing dance tunes both here in Mabou and in places in North America where Cape Bretoners have settled. Although the "kitchen party" is almost a thing of the past, the singing, fiddle playing and stepdancing is still being passed on in the traditional way. The strong Gaelic tradition in Mabou had, and still does have, a profound effect on music and song.



Mabou Coal Mines company houses, 1905-1910



Hauling Pulp with Alexander John Finlay MacDonald, Mabou Harbour



Mabou Station



Visitors at MacFarlane Farm, Mull River, 1920



Mary Dunn Doyle



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Text: Mabou River Trails Committee
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