

The *Miracle* of Centennial



Neil J. McKinnon

A son chronicles his mother's story about her childhood home. (Pub. 2009)

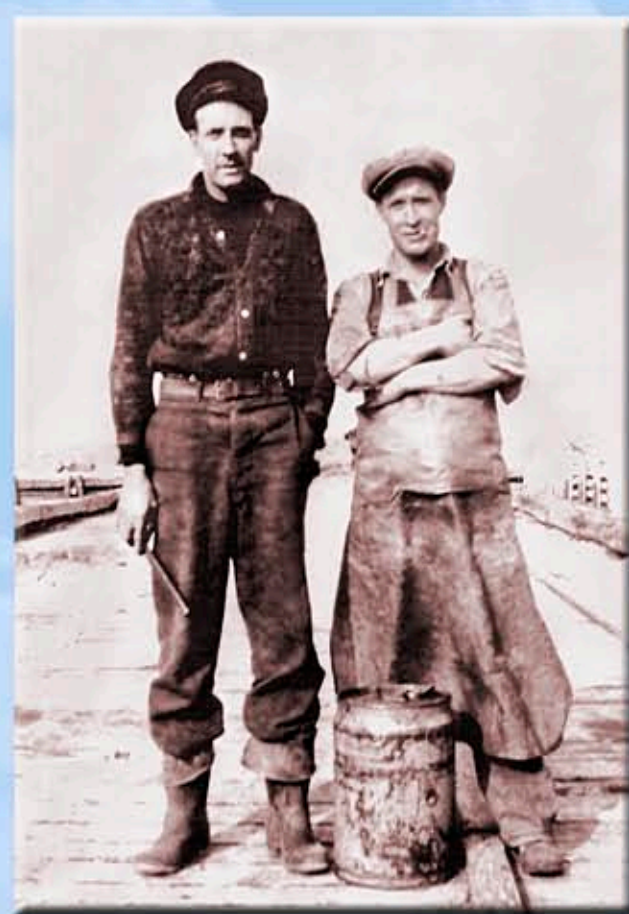
"Centennial was settled in the third range of lots, away from the coastline, and became a thriving farming community with school, stores, and post office in the late 1800s."



St. Michael's Cemetery. Earliest marked stone is dated 1815, Robert MacInnis. Photo: Blaise MacEachern

Walker's Cove

John James Chisholm and Hughie Gillis, Walkers Cove, 1935. Photo: Neil A. MacMillan



Only pier stumps remain of Walker's Cove lobster cannery, 1938. Photo: Colin Mac Eachern



Ronald J. MacDonald's truck on wharf near cannery. Photo: Ronald J. MacDonald



Plant workers in 1938 Photo: Colin Mac Eachern whose mother, Mary Ellen Mac Eachern, is seated third from the right.

Hurry On

by Euphemia MacEachern

High and dry on the Judique banks
On a cold and dreary dawn,
'Twas a lifeboat with a crew of eight
From the steamer Hurry On.

A crew of eight; no seven now
For just as they reached the shore
MacLean had closed his weary eyes
To open them never more.

Now five of them exhausted lay,
They could not raise a hand,
They did not know the little craft
Had washed up on the sand.

But two there were could make their feet,
They struggled bravely on,
And climbed a bank and saw a house
And knew the fight was won.

'Twas Douglad F. MacDonald's house
Close by the Judique shore,
And stumbling weakly up to it
They knocked upon the door.

The good folk quickly took them in
And listened to their tale,
Of the steamer Hurry On
How it foundered in the gale.

How they had managed the lifeboat then,
And faced the raging storm,
And had no time to salvage food
Or clothes to keep them warm.

How these twelve men so helpless
Upon the waves were tossed
Till breakers wild upset their craft
And four of them were lost.

They righted her and eight still lived
Tho' far from safe and sound,
For hours and hours they tossed about
And then were washed aground.

"Oh haste, make haste, and help these men
Or they will soon be dead.
The Judique men jumped to their feet
And to the shore they sped.

They brought them in and tenderly
They cared for one and all,
Tho' at the time they thought two
Had heard the final call.

But they rallied one by one
and to the Lord gave thanks,
They said, "He must have guided us
To land on Judique Banks."

For Judique hospitality
Is known throughout the land,
It's part of their religion
To help their fellowman.

And so these men from the Hurry On
Will long recall the names
Of Douglad F. MacDonald
And his brother Willie James.

Now they're in St. Mary's hospital
Reported doing fine,
If you'd care to hear their names
We have them here in rhyme.

There was Boudreau, Boyd, and Baker
And Carmichael as you know,
One was Shay and one was Evans
And one was Cocopardo.

So this concludes the story
Of the brave men who were saved,
But God have mercy on those poor souls
Who met a watery grave.

And God have pity of those at home
And help them bear their cross,
The mothers, wives, and fathers
Who are left to mourn their loss.

And O, kind people safe on land
Won't you hearken to my plea,
Say a prayer tonight and every night
For our boys who follow the sea.

On September 23rd, 1935, the coastal freighter "Hurry On" began to list 23 miles off the coast of Judique. The crew abandoned ship in a single lifeboat. The ship sank shortly afterward and the lifeboat flipped over twice during the night.

Six crew died, including the captain. The remaining six survivors made it to shore at Walker's Cove below the home of Douglad MacDonald.



Local residents who came to help: Duncan I. MacDonald, Mrs. John B. MacDonald, and Mr. & Mrs. W.J. MacDonald. Photo: Cape Breton Magazine. Photo: "Chronicle Herald" newspaper, 1945



Coastal freighter "The Hurry On" and 1930 fishing boat. Photo of Hurry On and life boat: Cape Breton magazine

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