

# Joyce Starratt, 90, resides in birth house



Joyce Starratt has been writing the Bass River Notes for The Shoreline Journal since the paper was first published. She recently celebrated her 90th Birthday. Her canine friend Mimi joined her in the photo. (Harrington Photo)

By Linda Harrington

Joyce Starratt was born on October 30th, 1920 in the very house she still resides, on Edgewood Drive in Bass River. Her parents were James and Jenny (MacLaughlin) Starratt and she shared her childhood fun with three sisters Evelyn (McLellan), Clara (Galway) and Barbara (MacDonald-Hood).

Five generations of Starratts have lived on the original lands granted to her great-grandfather when he came over from Ireland in 1760. Joyce says her great-grandfather married Elizabeth Fulton and she brought with her a dowry of 4 chairs, a table and 2 line back heifers. "The cattle had distinct markings that carried on for over 200 years," she says.

Joyce has lived her whole life in Bass River, except for teaching a few years in Halifax and Truro. She worked on the switchboard, at the telephone office in Bass River, for nine years and then at the Dominion Store for 22 years.

There have been plenty of changes over the last 90 years. She remembers how the roads weren't ploughed in winter, and then even after the pavement went through only the main road was ploughed. "I went to school up in Little Bass until Grade 3 and we used to walk 1½ to 2

miles each way. When we went to the Bass River School (which is now the Elementary School), we took a path through the woods and came out behind the school," recalls Joyce. "We had to break trail, with snow up to our knees. In those days, there were no buses, snowsuits or ski pants. We would wear shoes, with rubbers and long woollen socks."

Joyce has fond memories growing up with her three sisters. "We didn't have much to play with so we would make our own fun. We were outdoors all the time, playing in the brook, helping make hay, coasting and playing dress up. We used our imaginations."

She remembers making harness out of old straps with her sister Clara and hooking up drags to calves, which they then used to haul moss. "We made our own cubby houses by filling in the trees with moss," she says.

In the Starratt home everything took place around the kitchen table including school lessons and playing games like snakes and ladders or cards. "We didn't play in the dining room or bedrooms and the parlour was only used on special occasions, like a Sunday night sing song," says Joyce. "We had a lot of music in the family, my mother's family were singers, and I

can't remember a time when we didn't sing."

There was no radio in the house until an uncle came home to visit her Grandfather in the late 30's. "He suggested Grandpa might like to hear the news. There were different news programs on throughout the day- like the stove news and the tea news. Everyone had to be quiet when these were on, so Grandpa could hear his news."

Joyce enjoyed long hikes with her grandfather back into the logging camp where her father was working. "We would know we were going when he arrived home with a big bag of store bought cookies," she laughs.

Fun times were had at their neighbours Henry and Joe Fulton's, where they enjoyed listening to the gramophone. Joyce can still name some of the records and she especially enjoyed the times when Henry played his violin.

Joyce remembers going to silent movies at the Hall (what is now the Community Centre) on Saturday afternoons when she was about 6 or 7. Later the "talkies" were shown at the Odd Fellows Hall on Tuesday nights and as a teenager she would walk there and back.

"We only used our car when we had to," she says. "I always walked to work at the telephone office and the Dominion Store and didn't even get my license until I was 40 or 50. I had no desire to learn to drive a car, I could drive the horses," she laughs. "My father finally made me get my license. He said if I was going to live out here I would have to be able to drive my mother and me to choir practice."

Joyce still has her license and will often drive as far as Masstown but no longer into Truro. She enjoys the independence of being able to take short drives to the post office, doctor appointments and the store.

She keeps busy by making quilt tops, all sewn by hand and still does some gardening. She regularly attends choir practice at Riverside United Church and has been the oldest participant in the local Umbrella Walk for the past few years.

Joyce has been a Bass River correspondent for the Shoreline Journal since the early beginning. Ken Kennedy, who started the original West Colchester Free Press (name changed to Shoreline Journal in 1997),

says it just seems Joyce has always been there. "It seems she took up the challenge when we made a request for correspondents from the Bass River area and she has been a faithful contributor ever since."

"In her first column, Nov issue 1997," says Ken, "she told us that Noel Tomm, Stoney Plains, Alberta, visited his grandmother Marjorie Thompson for a week in October. She also told us Tommy and Joyce Grue took a trip to Galveston, Texas, to visit their daughter Margaret, who was nursing in Galveston. Elsewhere, Joyce reported Arthur, Hazel and Evan travelled to Ontario to visit family in Cornwall and Ottawa."

The column continued with updates on the travels of Bass River residents and local news. "They must have been quite a few travelers that year as Helen Creelman went to visit family in Quebec; Doreen Pettigrew "enjoyed a cruise to the Caribbean." Even Joyce, herself, got away with her niece Margaret to the Metro Centre in Halifax on Nov 9 to watch the Skate Canada finals. (I believe Joyce was quite the skater in her day.) By the way, Canada got gold in the Dance and Men's Division. All this important information courtesy Miss Joyce Starratt, Ace Reporter, The Shoreline Journal," recalls Ken.

Ken notes this type of reporting received much ridicule from the larger papers back in the early years, "They couldn't understand why I would publish such "fluff!" The community notes continue to be a popular feature after all these years.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Joyce on her 90th Birthday.

## Historical Sites

The Shoreline Journal, in collaboration with the Colchester Historical Society Archives, have inaugurated an on-going feature utilizing a combination of the new "E.F. Church Maps" to pinpoint the Circa 1875 location of a Colchester site of historical importance, and connect it to an archival photograph of that site, in that frame.



Map # 317 shows the Cobequid Mountains and the Gundalow Plains just north of Five Islands, where the Barytes Mine of "Bayne & Soley" was located. The white crystalline sulphate, used primarily at that time in the manufacture of paints, was put in 100 pound bags and hauled by wagon to the Five Island wharf, and shipped to Boston. An Excellent wagon road was built to the mine, with five strong bridges over the various waterways. The photo, one of a series in the Archives, was produced by Halifax Photographer Frank Adams, and shows a group of sightseers

Visiting the mine site on a summer's day. The two men standing in the lower mine open, and the man standing on the log crib to the left of the stairs are wearing carbide gas lights on their caps. Most of the people in the photo have been identified and their names are available at the Archives.

Be sure to see next month's "Historic Sites" feature in the Shoreline Journal, and if you have a suggestion for future "sites", submit it to the editor or the Archives, at 895-9530.

## For all your painting projects . . .

Two great brands of paint, one great downtown store!



Downtown Truro's Paint & Wallpaper Centre

895-4678

897 Prince Street, Truro

## Offices of Scott Armstrong, MP

### Truro Office:

28 Esplande  
Truro, Nova Scotia  
B2N 2K3

Tel: (902) 893-2455  
Fax: (902) 893-1959

Toll-Free: 1-888-752-0552

### Amherst Office:

16 Church Street  
Amherst, Nova Scotia  
B4H 3A6

Tel: (902) 667-8679  
Fax: (902) 667-0742

Support Our Farmers - Buy Local

[www.scottarmstrongmp.ca](http://www.scottarmstrongmp.ca)

As a lifelong resident of West Colchester and having just joined the sales team at Prudential Woods Realty, I am excited to assist residents of the shore with their Real Estate needs.

Whether interested in selling or interested in the Market Value of your property, please call for a FREE Home Market Evaluation Certificate.

Should you be interested in purchasing, please allow me to help in finding the right property at the right price.

## Tom Taggart

Office: 902-893-1990  
Cell: 902-899-7768  
Home: 902-647-2025



**Prudential**  
Woods Realty Ltd.

107 Willow St., Truro  
[www.pruwoodsrealty.ns.ca](http://www.pruwoodsrealty.ns.ca)

An independently owned and operated broker of The Prudential Real Estate Affiliates, Inc., a Prudential company, owner of the trademarks. Used under license.