

Mud Lake School

*presents*

## Looking Back

- Item 1: A brief history of Mud Lake  
by Sandra Dee Hope
- 2: Song. A Crowd of Jolly Trappers  
sung by students in grades 3-8
- 3: Recitation - Wallace McLean relates  
events of his life in Mud Lake  
by Joe Dalton
- 4: Skit - The Plane Crash of 1943

### CAST:

Pat Callahan	Donald Michelin
Paula Rose	Hilda Michelin
Charles Rose	Herb Michelin
Nelson Hope	Wallace McLean
Mike White	Henry Best

- 5: Recitation (poem) Uncle Dougie's Fight  
by Jennifer Best
- 6: Song: Ode to Labrador  
sung by Grades 3-8

## History of Mud Lake

Mud Lake was settled early in the 18 hundreds . When it was first developed it was known as Muddy Lake and Grand Village. The first settlers found the area excellent for a variety of purposes. The area was excellent for fishing, gardening, it had excellent timber, good anchorage and shelter. The main way of earning a living was by trapping and the settlers found the area was well located. Mud Lake was in the middle of the trapping grounds. It gave easy access to the trapping areas of the Mealy Mountains, the upper Grand River, as it was known then, and the Kinamu River.

Because of the excellent timber in the area a sawmilling operation was started in the early 1900's. The Newfoundland government issued a 50 year timber license to a Nova Scotian group, the Dickie Lumber Company. This company was quite prosperous in the early years of its operation. By 1909 they had exported over 12 million board feet. Huge ships of 2000 tons could anchor close to the mill which made easy transportation of the lumber from the mill to the ships.

With this increase in employment and more opportunity to make a stable living, the population of Mud Lake increased rapidly. Also with the increase in population there came an increase in community services. A company trading store was built. Then came a doctor and a teacher and a school and church was built. The Methodist church moved their headquarters from Lesters Point, near Rigolet to Mud Lake in 1905. The International Grenfell Association built and maintained a winter hospital at Mud Lake. From their headquarters at Mud Lake the minister and the doctor travelled around Lake Melville and the coast.

In 1915 the Dickie Lumber Company went bankrupt which caused a gradual decrease in the population and services of Mud Lake. The I.G.A. hospital moved to North West River and the community of Mud Lake went back to its original means of employment of trapping, fishing, gardening, & sewing.

In 1941 another seemingly stable form of employment came to the area. It was the development of the Goose Air Base. Many people of the area then gave up the traditional ways of making a living and worked at the Base but the day to day village life at Mud Lake remained much the same.

In recent years with the unemployment all over Canada increasing, Mud Lake has also felt the pinch. Many people who gave up their traditional ways of making a living to work at the Base now find themselves unemployed due to the Base closing. Mud Lake has seen this happen before and it has survived and due to this unique and distinctive way of life it will survive.

### Labrador Memories

Uncle Wallace McLean of Mud Lake relates events of his youth.

"Tell us about the time you went looking for a baby."

My name is Wallace McLean and I was born in Mud Lake in the year 1903 on the 10th day of October. I was asked by the teacher to come here to tell you young people about a few things that happened to me.

When I was a very young boy of 5 years old, my mother had a baby. I was right interested and wanted to know where the baby came from. My granny told me they got babies out of old rotten stumps. Well, sir, I took my little axe and went to find a rotten stump. I found a rotten stump and started to chop. The stump was so rotten that I cut right through and chopped my knee. I never found a baby but I still got the scar on me knee.

"Tell us how you and your father hunted partridges."

In them days ammunition was scare. You had to get that from the Hudson Bay Company. You'd get your powder, shot, and oakum. You was allowed 20 lbs of powder, but fer shot and oakum, that was different. Fer shot you was allowed one handful. Didn't make no difference if you had a big or small hand. Fer oakum you had to jump. You see the oakum was hangin from a beam just where a man couldn't reach, unless you jumped. Whatever you got in one jump, that was all you'd get, that and no more.

Tis now about the oakum I was going to tell ya. I remember one fall me and me father went down to Sandy Point to hunt partridges. I was about 10 or 11. When we camped fer the night me father gave me balls of oakum to chew. I had to chew them oakum balls until they was right hard. I'd chew about a dozen or so.

In the morning we went for partridges. Father would shoot them in the head with the oakum balls and stun um. I'd have to run up and twist their necks and look for the oakum balls before they burnt away. Then I'd spit on them. You'd keep doing this until there was nothing left. Then you'd use a new one.

"Tell us about the proudest time in your life."

When I was 15 or so my father told me I had to go in the bush for the winter. I was frighten to stay in the tilt alone but I did.

The first day I was in the bush I fixed the tilt so I could stay there. The next day I went and made a trap line. I used to have to go different places to check my traps. The first couple of weeks was bad for the traps but after a little while I started to catch the furs.

Then come the big day and in one of my traps I had the biggest cat I had ever seen in my life. That was the proudest time in my life.

Kids: Thank you Uncle Wallace.

## A Crowd Of Jolly Trappers

A crowd of jolly trappers, we are leaving one and all.  
The first hard work is started on the portage, Muskrat Falls.  
And getting in our canoes boys, oh, it seems so fine.  
Going up Grand River with our pole and tracking line.

Now good-bye wives and sweethearts, we are going to leave you now.  
For you we'll make a living by the sweat of our brow.  
But when we all return once more, out from our trapping line.  
Oh, we'll be glad to see you all and have a jolly good time.

Now up the river in his canoe every man is found  
Feeling very jolly for to reach his trapping ground.  
And setting out our traps, we work from early until late,  
And every man a'wishing that the fur is taking bait.

But when the hunt is over and we are homeward bound,  
Feeling very sorry for to leave our trapping ground.  
And going down the river, we are nearly blind with sweat.  
But when we see our friends at home, we'll be happy then, you bet.

Now just a word for Kenamu, Naskaupi just the same,  
Including the Goose Bay River boys, we know that they are game.  
Also the chaps that trap the bay along the water line.  
We wish you all the best of luck, long life and a happy time.

So now my song is ended, the truth to you I'll tell.  
A trapper has a lonely life and that you all know well.  
I think I'll boil the kettle, cheer the bogie with a junk.  
I rhymed this into Apple Lake stretched out upon my bunk.

Plane Crash of 1943

Scene I: (Setting: Uncle Donald Michelin's house in Mud Lake. Donald is getting his traps and gear ready for the morning. Hilda, his wife, is preparing his grub bag.)

Uncle Donald: Now Hilda, be sure you've got them biscuits in the bag. You knows how much I likes em.

Hilda: Now Donald I've done this before you know, I won't forget nothing.

Uncle Donald: I knows times when you have forgot. What about the time I was down the bay and you forgot to put in the kettle.

(In the distance a loud explosion is heard)

Hilda: (looking frightened) What was that loud noise?

Uncle Donald: I'll run out and check... (Exits) (Returns with Uncle Wallance McLean)

Uncle Wallace: That was an awful gert ball of fire in the sky. Theres something bad going on.

Uncle Donald: I wouldn't be surprised if that was one of them Yankee planes. Theres always hundreds flying over. Had to be something like that.

Hilda: What youse talkin about?

Uncle Donald: Theres nothing to be scared of. You get a cup of tea fer Wallace and myself. (Hilda gets the tea.)

Uncle Wallace: That ball of fire seems to have dropped up in the lake somewhere.

Uncle Donald: I've got to check my traps in the morning so I'll have a look then. See if theres something up there.

Curtain

Scene II (Donald returns to his house after checking his traps. He has discovered the wreck and the bodies. In his house are his wife and son, Herb)

Uncle Donald: (talking to Herb) Come here my son. Theres

been an awful thing that happened last night. I don't think I should tell your mother just yet, but you know that noise we heard last night, well twas a plane and there was a lot of men on board and theys all dead. Theres bodies and pieces of bodies all over the ice and in the woods.

Herb: Whats we going to do?

Uncle Donald: We'll just go over and get Wallace and Austin and tell them to come down to the house. Then run and get Henry, Cortland, & Ben. We're going to need a lot of help. (Herb exits)

Hilda: Whats going on? Why do you need all them men?

Uncle Donald: I don't want you to be afraid or scared, but you knows that noise we heard last night.

Hilda: What about it?

Uncle Donald: Well it was a Yankee plane and theres dead men all over the ice.

Hilda: Where to?

Uncle Donald: Up there around Otter Brook.

Hilda: Oh my God! What are we going to do!

Uncle Donald: Thats why I sent Herb to get all the men. We've got to do something with the bodies. Can't leave them up there lying on the ice.

(Enter Henry Best, Wallace McLean)

Henry: Cortland and Ben are out there waiting.

Uncle Wallace: So is Austin.

Uncle Donald: Boy! Theres some mess up there. I'd say there was about 10-15 men on board that plane.

Henry: We'll have to get some sacks or old blankets to wrap them bodies up. We can't bring them back like them is.

Uncle Wallace: The boys have got the dog teams ready to go. Where did you say they was to Donald?

Uncle Donald: Just before you get to Otter Brook. Thats where the plane is but theres bodies and pieces all over the place.

Henry: Donald, seeing uou've got the biggest shed,  
thats where we'll have to put the bodies.

Uncle Donald: O.K. I'll get somebody to straighten the  
shed out.

Uncle Wallace: I wonder if the Americans on Base knows what  
happen.

Henry: If they di you think they'd be down here by  
now.

Uncle Donald: When we gets the bodies I'll go up and see  
if they knows what happened.

(Donald, Wallace, & Henry exit)

Curtain



### Uncle Dougie's Fight

Uncle Dougie was trapping down the Bay.  
He was doing right find with furs  
He had one more trap left to check  
And he never heard the purr.

He looked down under the bank to see  
But his trap and chain were gone  
His axe and gun were left behind  
And in his eyes two lights shone.

He saw the eyes that were looking  
Up in a tree on a limb  
And in a second or two  
The great big lynx was upon him.

Now Uncle Dougie was not a big man  
And he knew it was a matter of life or death  
So he grabbed the lynx by the throat  
And he tried to cut off his breath.

They rolled and rolled on the ground  
But Dougie was winning the fight  
The lynx was a tough old customer  
Dougie hoped he'd come out alright.

His face was badly scratched and torn  
And he knew if he wanted to survive  
He'd have to make it back to Mud Lake  
In order to stay alive.

### The Ode To Labrador

Dear land of mountains, woods and snow,  
Labrador our Labrador  
Gods noble gift to us below,  
Labrador our Labrador  
Thy proud resources waiting still,  
Thy splendid task will soon fulfill,  
Obedient to the makers will,  
Labrador, our Labrador.

Thy stately forests soon shall ring,  
Labrador, our Labrador  
Responsive to the woodsmans' swing,  
Labrador, our Labrador  
Any mighty floods that long remained,  
Their raging fury unrestrained,  
Shall serve the purpose God ordained,  
Labrador, our Labrador.

We love to climb thy mountains steep  
Labrador, our Labrador  
And paddle on the waters deep,  
Labrador, our Labrador  
Our snow shoes scar the trackless plains  
We seek no cities, streets or lanes,  
We are thy sons while life remains,  
Labrador, our Labrador.