

Historic Buildings of Port de Grave

THE FISHERMEN'S MUSEUM

PORTER HOUSE

HIBB'S HOLE SCHOOL

An Interview with Mona Petten by Stephanie Dawe of Ascension Collegiate.

Mrs. Petten accompanied Stephanie on a tour of the Fishermen's Museum, Porter House, and the Hibbs Hole School, which were all developed in the 1970s by artist George Noseworthy.



On December 4th, 2009, I interviewed **Mrs. Mona Petten**. From being a resident of Port de Grave and also, in having worked in the historical buildings there, she shared with me the history of the 3 buildings: The Fishermen's Museum, The Hibb's Hole School & The Porter House. These historic buildings are located just along side of Mrs. Petten's house, so we also got the chance to go inside to fully see and feel the history.

The Fishermen's Museum



The Fishermen's Museum was founded by George Noseworthy, an artist from New York who moved to Port de Grave. He collected items from members of the community and arranged them in the old school. Soon, it was necessary for a larger building so the Fishermen's Museum was built, and opened in May, 1970. It now contains many artifacts showing the aspects of Newfoundland fishing and lifestyle.




George Noseworthy (1929- 1985)



**Fishermen's Museum
Opened in May 1970**

Collection of hats from former Port de Grave
skippers and painting of George Noseworthy.





Mrs. Petten was a member of the Fishermen's Museum for quite some years, working there and sharing the history with tourists.

“When I worked at the museum, there would be bus tours on a daily basis during the summers. There would be mostly older crowds, but some scattered young ones. Today the museum seems to be slowing down. Not nearly as many people go there today.”

Hibb's Hole School



The Hibb's Hole School - Typical one-room school house for Grades 1-8. According to Mrs. Petten it was built sometime around 1910. It was closed in 1966. After that, St. Luke's in Ship Cove was built and the children went there.



The school now looks as it did when it was open. It contains many photographs, including class pictures from this school along with those of St. Luke's and the Pentecostal school, and old photos of local community members.



Leather “School Strap”

One of the most eye catching articles in the school is the leather strap hung on the wall next to the chalkboard. “I can't recall ever getting the strap, but I can surely remember those who did. Whether it was for not washing your hands before you arrived at school or for horsing around during class, it didn't matter, you'd get it right across the palm of your hands or across your knuckles.”

After it's closing, the school was used to hold events such as small dinner theaters and church suppers. It was also used a scene for the short film *Turning the Page* that was presented in the "The Nickel Independent Film Festival & Video Festival" "I'm surprised that you weren't part of that video. A lot of the young crowd from down around here were asked to sit in the desks and be students"



Small kitchen that was built inside the school after it's closing.

The Porter House



The **Porter House** was first built and owned by John Charles Porter of Port de Grave and his wife Ida (Newel) Porter who was originally from Cupids. The house was built in 1904, which makes it today, 105 years old. Although the house was restored and made part of the Fishermen's Museum in 1978 it still maintains a rich history and depicts the lifestyle of the time.

The walls are covered in floral print wallpaper, the house is supported by only a stone foundation, and the only source of heat was the wood burning stove in the kitchen and two small stoves in two of the bedrooms. "When I was younger, we lived similar. Many nights, we heated up a large beach rock on the stove and put it in the bottom of our beds."

Stove in Bedroom



Heated Beach Rock in Bottom of Bed





Baby Carriage

A baby carriage that Mrs. Petten told me belonged to my great-grandmother. I then asked my grandmother about it, and she remembered it down to the last detail. It was the carriage that was used to carry her, along with her brothers and sisters. It had been donated by a family member to be put on display in the house.

We also came across an old spinning wheel in the house that Mrs. Petten told me, was used to turn sheep's wool into cotton. "And do you know something? Your great-grandmother Greta is the only lady around here now who still knows how to use it. She used to do demonstrations of it for the Harbour Days Celebration when it was still on the go, and up to the Klondike Days."

Spinning Wheel



One of the four bedrooms in the upstairs of the house, contained many paintings. Mrs. Petten explained that after the house was vacated, George Noseworthy (founder of the museum) used the house as an art studio to teach local children how to paint.

George Noseworthy's Art Studio



“These here, [pointing to paintings signed with “Gary”], were done by **Gary Kennedy** when he went to school down here. He's a popular Newfoundland artist now and these are from when he was young.”

This shows the importance of the history of the house as Gary Kennedy is now a well known Newfoundland artist, and his career started right there.



Painting by Gary Kennedy as a child found in the Porter House.



The Fishermen of Hibb's Cove, 2003

I would like to thank Mrs. Petten for her time and the information that she shared with me. It was nice to be able to learn about some of history from my hometown and even some things about my own family. I would also like to thank Mr. Herman Porter for allowing me & Mrs. Petten to go inside the 3 buildings and take photos of the artifacts.