

## **Story #2 Elinor speaks about her childhood and family at the lighthouse**

**Story #2 in our heritage interview series. David Weale interviewed Elinor Murchison Gillis at her son Gilbert Gillis's home in Point Prim PEI on Dec 14, 2019.**

David Weale: What age were you when you started to go with your father to the lighthouse?

Elinor Murchison Gillis: That's what I wonder, I kind of figure it out to be, maybe eight. It started at eight and I stopped about twelve or thirteen. I was twelve or thirteen.

David: So where did you come in the family, in the children?

Elinor: I came fifth one.

David: You were kind of in the middle of the pack there.

Elinor: Yeah, yep.

David: Did any of the other children spend the night with him at the lighthouse?

Elinor: Not really. At the beginning when he kept it, I think, he took us, he had a doll, a wagon. What would you call em, four wheels on them.

David: A wagon, yep

Elinor: With a board or something, and the kids and his wife would go down some with him then. They quit then when the family grew.

David: When the family got bigger, he would just go by himself, but often you, did you go like almost every night with him?

Elinor: Every night.

David: Every night, ok so you are a child of the lighthouse then.

Elinor: It's very lonely, no cars much then, might be the odd one. And it's very lonely down there. Now it's not because there's a lot of activity down there.

David: I suppose it would be remote, there would be no houses around.

Elinor: Oh yeah, not a one.

David: So he was glad to have a little company then.

Elinor: Yeah, and we used to go up at night, after you'd get settled down, to the neighbours. He'd want to hear the news, it was wartime. And what's his name, Gabriel Heatter, was on and he wanted to hear that. He heard that, and the lady there Aunt Tina, would serve nice homemade cookies and a lunch and then we'd go home, back down.

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David: Back down to the lighthouse. Well, well. How would you describe your father? What kind of man was he, it's a solitary kind of life to have to live.

Elinor: Yeah, very lonely.

David: Was he a quiet man?

Elinor: Just average.

David: Just average. Did he ever tell you any stories? Did he ever talk about the war?

Elinor: No, he never did. They say they don't want to talk about it.

David: That's right.

Elinor: No, not much. He had a brother killed in the war.

David: Did he.

Elinor: Yeah, that was sad.

David: So tell me a little more about what you remember of, like you say there was a little keepers cottage there. Was it outside the lighthouse, eh?

Elinor: Yeah, towards the shore.

David: Ok, so you didn't actually stay in the lighthouse.

Elinor: No, he never did, no

David: But he would have to climb up the stairs. I don't know, how tall is that, is that eighty, one hundred feet?

Elinor: Yeah about eighty feet, wouldn't be quite that. Outside would be eighty, but inside wouldn't be quite that.

David: So he'd have to climb up there, and the lighthouse would be, the light would come from, what would it be? Kerosene?

Elinor: Yeah, I didn't mention that, but in that oil house was the supplies, the oil for carrying it up and he put it in a jug, an aluminum one like. And he'd haul that up every so often, up to the lighthouse light.

David: Were there any shipwrecks during his time?

Elinor: No, no, I don't think. There was one not too long ago, but not really a wreck, he went ashore. One fella, it was stormy and he went ashore. Way up there.

David: He just put it ashore.