

FSG30
23.265.2
MF289.528

Reel 119A

- 1-24. Local anecdotes told by Alvah McKinnon, Miss Margaret Patterson, and Mr. Frank Patterson about Tatamagouche and its characters.
- 24-end. Local anecdotes told by Mr. Alvah McKinnon, Tatamagouche.

These are mostly the funny sayings of people who have lived here, and appears to be the favourite type of humour.

Mr. Eph Tattrie was in Truro and they was comin' home on the train and he come around to Oxford Junction. At Oxford Junction he went up to a man with brass buttons on and he says to the man, "Us that the train for Tatamagouche?" and he says, "Yes." "By the gorry, Bennie, wasn't that a nice man?"

Told by Mr. Alvah McKinnon, Tatamagouche

I said to Eph, "Eph isn't this terrible weather. What on earth is the reason? What is the matter?"

"Well, I'll just tell ye now; I'll just tell ye what is the matter. The old man's away and the byes is attendin' to things."

Told by Miss Magrath Patterson, Tatamagouche

John Dobson was pretty slow. He watched all summer for his grain to come up and it never come up, and in the fall he found the bag of grain by the side of the field. He had never planted it.

Told by Miss Patterson

George Waugh, he was a great horseman, and he met a man on the road one day and the man had quite a poor horse and the man asked Mr. Waugh what would be good for him to fatten him.

"Ah," he says, "I think a few oats in the pit of his stomach is as good as anything you can give him."

Told by Mr. McKinnon

They were having a prayer meeting, a ? prayer meting and Mr. Waugh was there and his father-in-law, Dan Morrow and Mr. Waugh was in the chair and he asked Mr. Morrow to pray and Mr. Morrow said,

"Na, na, I'll nae pray, Georgie Waugh, but I'll keep the candle well snuffed, and I'll gie ye the true Halifax time."

Told by Miss Patterson. Nobody knows just what Mr. Morrow meant by this, but the story is often told

Father was running an election and Geordie Waugh was a Liberal but he professed great friendship with my father; my father had helped him financially. So when election time came he told father he was going to vote for him, and his father-in-law, Dan Morris

came to father and he said,
Geordie Waugh's my own son-in-law, but don't
ye believe a word he says."

Told by Miss Patterson

This man was very sick and the minister came
to see him and he talked to him and prayed with him
and then he said, "Now you are very sick and you'll
likely die; are you prepared to meet your Maker?"
"O I don't know sir, but by C'ist I'll 'isk
it."

Told by Miss Patterson

A boy went up Waugh's River to fish and he
wanted to get across the river and Waugh had a
boat and it was on the other side of the river,
so he went and he asked Danny if he could have the
lend of his boat. Danny says,

"Yes, you're perfectly welcome to it, but
they say it leaks like bugger."

Told by Mr. McKinnon

Annie Jane (name substituted for name of real
schooner). A telegram came to the pwner here in
Tatamagouche from the old captain,

"Annie Jane just arrived. She's the bye (boy) .

(Amended later by Miss Patterson's brother,
Mr. Frank Patterson who said the telegram read:

"The chief commander she's arrived;
she's the bye."

Told by Miss Margaret and Mr. Frank Patterson

Captain Elliot he went to Pictou with a load,
and while he was waiting for his load of coal to bring
back he went into an auction room, and there was a very
handsome mahogany sofa up for sale but very few bid
on it. He bid on it and it was knocked down to him.
So he got it down to his schooner and he had to put
it on the deck covered over with canvas because it
was so large, and when he got home here at Tatamagouche
and down to the wharf, a Mr. Riley who lived here
saw the sofa and he was very anxious to buy it, but
the captain said no, he wouldn't sell it. So that
night Mr. Riley, instead of the captain having to
row all the way home, to Barrachois, Mr. Riley said
he'd drive him home, and on the way home they had
great conversations about one thing and another, and
when they got near the captain's house Mr. Riley
said,

"Now captain, that sofa's entirely too big for your house. Why not sell it to me and buy a smaller sofa?"

"Well," he said, "I'll just tell ye. If Myself's house isn't big enough for Myself's sofa, Myself will build a house that's big enough for Myself's sofa."

(When he talked about himself he always spoke of Myself, and they always called him Captain Myself. My brother Frank wrote a little book on him, published privately in Truro, 1949, Truro Printing and Publishing Co.)

Told by Miss Patterson

Some of the teachers from the Agricultural College in Truro were having a meeting here in Tata-magouche and when I went up the street the next morning I met an old man and he says,

"Well, I 'spose you was at the meetin'." I said no, I couldn't go.

"Well" he said, "do ye 'spose these meetins do any good? "

"Well," I said, "I think they ought to."

"Well," he said, "I know a good story about a man, and it's a true story, in Pictou County. Some of these fellers came along like they did last night, and they were havin' meetins over therein Pictou County, tellin' the farmers how to raise grain and all the rest of it and at the end of the meetin' the speaker said,

"Now, if there's anybody has any questions to ask, we'll be very glad to answer them. And one fellah from the back of the hall stood up, a well-to-do farmer from Pictou County, and he says, "I've got a little story to tell you men." They said well, they'd be very glad to hear it. So he said,

"Well, there was a man onetime and he got his arm very badly hurt, and he went to the doctor and the doctor put chemicals on it, and it wasn't gettin' any better. So the man had to go back to the doctor, and on the way back he stopped to talk to a farmer, and the farmer says to him, 'Go home and put a good cow-dung poultice on your arm and it'll be better,' and he did. He went home and he got a good cow-dung poultice and put it on his arm and it got better. Now I just say to you farmers, go home and put a good cow-dung poultice on your land and you won't need any chemicals."

So these professors were here for dinner, so I told them the story, and they said there's a great deal of truth in it if you have plenty of it.

Told by Miss Patterson.

Cow-dung poultice was used generally here, for
bealings or any infection. The heat I suppose
weand draw out. I think it's used yet.

Told by Miss Matterson

"Well for God's sake Frankie, I mind your
grandfather. Well for God's sake, Well, all right.
He was a magistrate, and he had his hoffice over
there on the 'ill. All right. Well once there was
a lawsuit there, was a fellehⁿ Fishing andhex/Your
grandfather and old man Hervin(?) they were the
magistrates. All right. So they called the man
and the man he comes up, and Mr. Hervin says to the
man, "How many times did you see Partiquin hit
Fisher?"

"I tink once," says the man.

"Sit down," says Mr. Hervin, "there ain't
no tink in law." All right. My turn comes.

"Hpw many times did you see Patriquin hit
Fisher? " says your grandfather.

"Once," says I, and a damn good one."

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

"Gawd, do I mind your grandfather? My Gawd
I dug his grave. ~~Mim~~ All right. Me and Johnnie
Anderson that lived up on the lake road we were diggin'
your grandfather's grave. It was up there in the
graveyard. 'Tisn't a graveyard - it's just a bloody
swamp. All right. We were diggin' tump, tump, oh well
for the gawd's sakes, all at once Johnny jumped a foot
out of the grave. Gawd, we struck something, Frankie.
Do you know what it was? Oh my gawd, it was your
grandmother."

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro.

One day out in the hayfield it was awfully
hot. Eph was cursing violently, so I said to him,

"Eph, you shouldn't swear." I said, "You
know what the Bible says, what'll happen to people
who swear, "that you'll go to hell." and Eph says,

"There is no hell." Well I said, "It's in
the Bible, isn't it?"

"Well, it's just like this. People make
mistakes nowadays, don't they? Well, they could make mis-
takes them days too, couldn't they? Now it's just like
this. They got all things in the Bible shouldn't be there.
Why should we believe the b----- Bible? It was the Jews
that writ it, wasn't it? They crucified our Savo^{ir}. Why
should we believe what the b----- Jews wrote. Now

listen Frankie, there is no hell. Listen. 'Spose you got a little girl, and you tell this little girl to do some thing and she won't do it. My gawd, would you put her in a red hot stove? Now they say there's a God. All right. God madethe earth. Answer me this Frankie. Who made God? All the lawyers in New York can't answer that.

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

One day Eph was telling me about being up to see a very old lady, whom I felt must be about a hundred, and I said to him,

"Eph, that old woman alive yet?"

"Oh my gawd yes. She's never goin' to die. They'll have to take her out on the judgement day and shoot her."

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

To enjoy Eph's stories you have to get his gestures, the tone of his voice and the vigor of his expressions and his dialect. Apart from that there was unquestionably a very ready wit. He was as quick as a flash with an answer and he was quick in his motions and repartee, and he had a pleasing-toned voice. He was musical and he was naturally of a kindly disposition, very fond of both animals and children. A very hard life of it himself, but he was always cheerful and full of fun. Almost the last, when he got an old man he went to a dance and some fellow hit him and knocked him down. Eph had been a great fighter in his early days and he was very proud of the fact that he could take on pretty nearly anybody, but he was getting old and he got mad and hauled this fellow up before the magistrate for hitting him. So when they hauled the fellow up Eph had a witness there and the magistrate said to the witness,

"Did you see this man hit Mr. Tattrie?" and this fellow said, "Oh yes, I saw it and he knocked Eph right down." Eph couldn't stand it and he jumped right up and he said,

"That's a god damn lie."

Eph had a son Lite that was no good, so one day Eph came down and was greatly agitated, cursing and swearing. He had a piece of a paper in his hand. Of course he couldn't read it. It was a summons for Lite for debt and I in my innocence long

before I took law and I knew that litigation was expensive, so I said to Eph,

"Lite's very foolish not to pay that bill, because if he doesn't pay it they'll sieze his stuff and he'll have to pay the bill and he'll have to pay all the cost beside. Eph was just putting the fork down across the hay and he stopped abruptly and that ~~wok~~ eye of his dropped and he said,

"For gawd's sake Frankie, can they take feathers off of a toad?"

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

There was one day I said to Eph,

"Eph, what do you think about liquor?"

"No bloody good at all for anybody."

"Well, I said, "Eph, I'm kind of disappointed. It just happens we have some whiskey in the house to-day and I thought you might like a little drink."

"Oh well Frankie, it's like this. I 'spose a little wouldn't hurt a feller anything," so I went in and it was very strong Scotch whiskey, so I poured out a large sized drink of raw whiskey and took it out in the yard and I said,

"Eph, here is the whiskey." It was so strong Eph swallowed it and he grabbed his stomach and he said,

"My gawd Frankie, that'll burn your bloody guts out."

"Well," I said, "Eph, if it's too strong I'll take it back in the house and put some water in it."

"Oh gawd yes, that would be good Frankie." So I took it back in the house and instead of putting water in it I just filled it up with whiskey, si I said,

"Here it is Eph."

"That'll be all right now Frankie." So he just took it and he swallowed about a cup full and he just grabbed his stomach. He says,

"Frankie, you never put a bloody crumb of water in it."

(He wasn't mad. He might have been if somebody else had done it. He'd resent it. I've never seen him get mad here. If he didn't like a person he would. ~~ixnrxsrxsawxhinxgrixmaxhxr~~)

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

There was a blacksmith Eph didn't like and he was digging my father's potatoes up by the side of the road and the blacksmith came along and it was the fall of the year and he put his foot up on the fence and he said,

"Eph, you're digging those potatoes too soon."

"Well, they're Mr. Patterson's potatoes aint they?"

"Yes, they're Mr. Pattersons. The tops aren't killed by the frost yet. You're digging them too soon." He says,

"Mr. Patterson says for me to dig potatoes, and by this time he was getting mad, so the blacksmith kept at him, so Eph went right up and he had a potato fork in his hand and he went right up to the wire fence and he says,

"Mr. Urquhart, what do you know about potatoes? The only time you dug potatoes was in the horses' hooves."

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

He'd be telling a story about a dispute they had about some money and he said,

"They're all a lot of damn liars," says I, and he'd m'just go on you know. Practically everything was bloody. He'd have these expressions, you know. One time somebody was threatening to sue him or something. He lived sort of in the back woods in a way.

"Ah," he says, "they needn't think that because people live in the woods they're bloody (h)wls." (owls)

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

They were having a lawsuit and they were suing him and Eph was up and went to court and he came back and he was telling me about it and he said oh he got the best of them, he got the best of them. I said, "How's that?" and he said,

"Well I just says to them, 'Bob ^{Butler} Bucklin, you ain't got no brains, and what ye has is in the back of your 'ead!' Well I said, "Eph, you shou;dn't have said that, in court."

"Oh," he said, "that was all right, they just laughed."

Told by Miss Margaret Patterson

"All right." He'd usually start by saying all right and clearing his throat (demonstrates) "Oh gawd once there was a circus come right there by Bill Dumphry's. All right. Gawd I was there, and the servant girl from Campbell's she was there too. Well I bought her some sweeties. Well there was a fellow there, b'god he was

sassy. So he would say,

"Ceegars, ceegars. "

"Ceegars," said I, "to hell with your old ceegars." Well my gawd, he'd a whip. He just took that whip and whopped me right over the head. I just went crazy, and then he jumped in the carriage, in the wagon, and he started off. I just got down and I took a rock and I threwed a rock at him and I hit him right on his arse in the back of the leg."

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

Eph was only about 5 ft. 7, bearded, and he had a weak eye, and that eye used to fall.

"Oh gawd Frankie, I sits and wonders I look up into the sky and I sits and wonders." He had muscle and he was quick as a flash; just like that, you know. He did just general labour around. I remember one time he started to plow with a very very strong horse. He worked with the horse and got another miserable little bit of a horse to work with him. The result was that the big horse was hauling the little horse along with it. Eph was just cursing all the time, and he was saying,

"You might just as well have a bloody little rabbit. I just took the bloody little rabbit and I just hitched her up to the fence and plowed with the other horse alone. Just a bloody rabbit, Frankie. That's all he was."

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

A fellow was loading deal one time. He had really got the deal car full and when he got it full he said,

"This car has reached its captivity. We'll have to defer some to another car. " That was Sam.

Told by Mr. Frank Patterson, Truro

Years ago they used to have revival meetings around here you know, right up here in the Methodist Hall and of course the old fellers all got up and had their say about their religion and one night there was an old man got up and he was speaking about the good people try to do and he said that he'd been staying one night with a man and the man got up and said the blessing at the table, and after the blessing was said he got down on his knees and prayed a good long prayer and he got right up from praying and he looked out the window and he and he looked out in the garden and there was a great big pig and he says

to his son, "John," he says, "look at that bugger of a pig out there."

Told by Mr. Alvah McKinnon, Tatamagouche

(Compare anecdote 18, p. 125, Folklore of Lunenburg Co.)

There was a minister lived here in this town one time and he took a drive up to see one of his old friends a few miles out of town, and he drove in the yard ~~xxx~~ with his horse and wagon and the old man came out and tied the minister's horse and the minister got out to talk a few minutes and he says to the man,

"Come on now to the house and we'll have some worship." The man says,

"Oh, come to the barn and see me hox(ox) first."

Told by Mr. Alvah McKinnon, Tatamagouche

Another time they was holding a religious meeting and the deacon of the meeting he spoke about where Moses was taken out of the bulrushes, and he spoke quite a while on that and when he got through one of the old gentlemen he got up to speak and he says,,

"Dear friends," he says, "wasn't it kind of them people to take that little bye(boy) out of the elders(alder)?"

Told by Mr. Alvah McKinnon, Tatamagouche

I was working on the road one day myself and some other men and there was a man came to work and his dog followed him and he picked up a stone and he threw it at his dog to drive him home and he turned to another old gentleman who was there and he says,

"It always hurts my arm to throw a stone. Does it hurt your arm to throw a stone?" And he says,

"Look, Ams could throw stones all day!" (He always used to call himself Ams.)

Told by Mr. Alvah McKinnon, Tatamagouche

We don't tell stories these late years. All those old fellers is gone that used to tell them round the river. They're about all gone. You never hear them nowadays. Once in a while somebody will come along and start jokin' about the old people. 't used to be quite a custom to pick up old sayings. They seemed to pick up anybody that said things kinda queer.

There was a man from right here round the river. He was workin' in the woods, and one morning they had biscuits for breakfast and there was no butter. Of course them days butter wasn't very plenty in the woods and he turned to the boss and he says,

"Look, if I don't get butter on my ~~breakfast~~ biscuits for me brefus I'm goin' home."

Told by Mr. Alvah McKinnon, Tatamagouche