

[Page 13 - Isabel Bartlett Remembers George](#)ISSUE : [Issue 43](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1986/8/1

for something we did," he'd say. Then he'd tell me the story about the wife saying, "Let's kill the rooster and have people in for our anniversary." "Why take it out on the poor rooster?" (But his heart was tender.) Oh, I know. He couldn't say no to anyone except me. And really, I nagged at him too much the last few years. Not the last year. I gave up. But I wish I had nagged more the last year. Then again, he did what he wanted, right to the very end. (You're not suggesting that you think you could have saved him.) No. But I do think that he might have lived longer if he had taken a little bit better care of himself, you know, after he found out. He told me, in the hospital, he had the pain all summer, that pain in his chest. And he never stopped. He never went as much as he did last summer. 'Cause he always used to come home at noon, he had his big meal at noon, and a little supper. And then we had a great big feed about mid? night, all his life. But he'd sleep all af? ternoon, from 1 o'clock or so to half past 5 or so, and then he went back to work. But this last summer, it just seemed that he couldn't lie down. He had to get going. He'd go back to see if everything was all right--oh, he'd better check something. And it's so funny. So many strange things happened this summer, it almost seemed as if he knew. They made him a life member of the Yacht Club this summer. And then the Lions Club made him a life member. He said, "My God, they must know something. I guess this is my last year." Little things like that. And 2 or 3 weeks before he died, I had come from a funeral that Rev. Ian MacLeod had conducted for someone that I thought it must have been hard for him to speak for, because the deceased had never gone to church, and he was rather a reprobate. I said to George, "It was a lovely ser? vice." And afterwards, several times, he said to Louise and Karen, "Well, if any? thing happens to me, I want Ian MacLeod." And Ian's Presbyterian, and I'm United Church, you know. But of course, he knew Ian, they both sang in the choir, and they were good friends, like that. Up in the hospital--it's nothing bad about it, really--but a minister heard George was in. And he had a special nurse on, and she said, "Do you want me to send for the minister, George? We're supposed to ask anyone that's had a heart attack." George said, "Hell, no--he's nothing but a Tory!" Didn't have the word out of his mouth when the minister popped in! I was scared he'd heard?? And then after the minister went, George said to the nurse, "You know, I don't need anything like that. If I have to go, I'm ready to go." George said there was one time when somebody asked him, "Have you made your peace with God?" "We never fought," he said. Was it Paine, first said that? George said that to some? body. Everything about us was odd, you know. We knew that. I knew that Rev. Ian knew George wasn't a religious person, in one way. But in another way, I don't know, whether you'd say. He was a very good per? son. (Would you say George was not a relig? ious person?) I guess he was, his own re? ligion. He had, like that poem the minis? ter quoted, that was one George thought a lot of, "'That man has no religion,' you often say of Jack, But I have seen him share his bread when times were hard and slack." And things like that. This is it, I couldn't remember all of it--I just told what I could remember of it, (It sounds like a Cape Breton poem,) It is. It



comes to my mind, it was in The Steelworker. "And I've seen him cross the street with children not his own.., with men like you'd disown. And I've seen him keep his head when most men went war-mad. And when the savage was let loose, it simply made him sad.,," And it ends up, "That man with no religion, it really seems to me, resembles more than you and I the Man from Galilee." Something like that. There's lit? tle bits of it I could remember, I know it was in the old Steelworker, and George cut? ting it out, And he was referring to his own father. He said, "Those people saying my father was burning in Hell." And he said that poem spoke about his father. His father died when he was only 40-something. Everybody thought George was so terrible tight, and terrible money-mad. He was ter- Jacques-Cartier Motel Mr. Gervase Chan, P. O. Box 555, Sydney, N. S. Motel: (902)539-4375 Residence: (902)562-2985 SYDNEY- GLACE BAY HIGHWAY FRANCAIS 2 Kilometres de l'Aeroporto English , And he had a special nurse onT and L • ,,,,,, bYUNtY - ULAOt BAY nil-nWAY ' I FRANCAIS 2 Kilometres de l'Aeroporto B , .. • . • . hut "the tape • ? t_.ri auQhter from Cape o VJ V/?-" ' • A new cassette from UCCB Press"' , Not the movie but "the"P"" J,,, ..d rf;'R;f • ';d Follies gang ' In retail stores throughout Cape Breton %#