

*Gloria Harrison, Malaga Island descendant
interviewed by Rob Rosenthal January 24, 2007*

*Transcript of clip for Maine State Museum exhibition,
“Malaga Island: Fragmented Lives”*

Gloria - My name is Gloria Harrison. I live in Bloomfield, Connecticut. I graduated from Belgrade High School in Maine, in Belgrade, Maine.

My dad was Herald Albert Tripp. He married my mother who was Laura Foy. That was her maiden name, Foy. Laura Rosetta Foy. No, Laura Etta Foy her name was, yeah.

Rob – So you grew up with Herald as your dad.

Gloria – Right.

Rob- And, in what ways did he talk about Malaga Island?

Gloria – He didn’t, he never said Malaga. But he did talk about his mother dying. She was in a boat. And, they had gone to the mainland, I guess, to get a doctor. And when the doctor got back, by the time he got back, she was dead. So, yeah.

He had a lot of bad memories about it. And he had a terrible temper. He was very abusive, my dad was. *Very* abusive. And would go on drinking sprees and just break up all the furniture in the house because of his anger at things that had happened, and. At any other time, he wouldn’t become violent. But when he was drinking he would go to the farm next to us and get in fights over there and end up in jail for 6 to 8 months, ya know. Very violent.

I think he had a lot of anger towards white people. And, what they had done to him, I have no idea, how abusive he might have been treated comin’ up as a child.

Rob - Can we talk about the night your grandmother died. What do you know about that?

Gloria – I remember him talking about the fact that the kids were around her, I guess, trying to help her and they didn’t know what was wrong because they were children, they were babies, very young. And he said they was all hanging on to her and but she was in a boat. I have no idea whether it was a canoe, whether it was I have no idea. He did say they were holding on to her and somebody had gone to get the doctor and by the time the doctor got back she had passed and they had to pull the kids off of her because she had passed.

Rob – What do you think was the impact of this event at Malaga on your family?

Gloria – Oh it was devastating I believe. My dad was, like I said, he was very abusive and just was not able to cope and deal and didn't really take care of us. We was on welfare for, for as long as I can remember. He didn't like to work. If he did work, he'd work for a short time. Long enough to get him something to drink and then, ya know.

Rob – So, this poor community was evicted. Your family then leaves and they have to live on a boat.

Gloria – Right.

Rob – Do you know why?

Gloria – I guess because they basically couldn't find any other place to go. They kind of drifted I think from island to island, from what I understand. And really wasn't allowed, I don't believe, on the mainland. With nothing more than what they had, I'm sure they didn't want them there, ya know. I'm sure that was their feeling at the time.

Rob – And do you know why that is?

Gloria – Well, it could be because of color, race, you know. I'm sure. I'm sure.

Rob – When you think of this story, if you were to try and sum it up in one word.

Gloria – Sad? A little unbelievable, maybe? But very sad I think.

Rob – Why unbelievable?

Gloria – Because you wouldn't think things like that happen. That people can treat other people like that and do those things to them.