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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Early Railway Days Recalled

(This column was written by Neil Matheson Friday night after he completed most of his work of handling news copy for page one of The Guardian. A linotype operator had just finished putting it into type, in preparation for use in Monday's edition, when news came of Mr. Matheson's sudden death. Mr. Matheson had left for his home in Mount Stewart about 2 o'clock Saturday morning. He died about 2:20.)

By NEIL A. MATHESON

HAROLD E. MOORE, Weymouth Street, Charlottetown has a cheque for "Four Cents" which he has framed as a nostalgic reminder of his experience as a railroad man back in the early days of the P.E.I. Railway.

He never cashed the cheque which was signed by the superintendent and, so far as we could tell, it was also signed by W.M. Flynn, who was the father of the lady who is the wife of Willibald J. MacDonald, former Lieutenant Governor of this province.

Mr. Moore started as a Cleaner, (or wiper) as the position was often called back on September 5, 1907. His pay for the first year was \$1.43 for a 12-hour period, the second year it was \$1.56, the third and subsequent years the pay was \$1.92 a day. The cleaner had a night job. He went on duty at six o'clock p.m. and came off at 7:00 a.m. next day. Actually the "day" was 13 hours, with one hour off to eat.

A fireman started at \$1.76 for a 10-hour day in those times. An engineer got \$2.80 a day in the first year.

There's more, much more to tell you about what I learned from Mr. Moore, in a chat of perhaps one and one-half hours at his home last week.

Accurate Records

THIS MAN has accurate records going back into his early employment. He was an engineer in his later years with the road.

Right now I have the largest collection of really good column stories I have ever had, and that goes back to the autumn of 1959 when Across The Island started. It will take at least two months to use them all.

Mrs. Matheson and I moved back to our home in Mt. Stewart last week and our neighbor Happy MacIntyre was one of the first men I met.

He told me of a rose bush which is coming out in bloom.

"We'll have a Rose for Easter, Mrs. MacIntyre (Zelda) told me happily.

They purchased the little rose bush last summer, potted it last fall and put it in the cellar. When they took it up to the kitchen window, a few days ago the plant was in perfect condition, green as though it were summer, and the tiny bush was just starting to open. I saw it Friday afternoon, and I'm wondering just how unusual it is to have a rose peeking out this early in the spring.

In mid-March, Happy tells me, they had a beautiful black and white butterfly flying around their kitchen window, two days later there was a very cold night, and the butterfly was found next morning dead on the window sill.

I'm also wondering just how unusual this is.

Canada Geese Moving

MRS. MATHESON noted a V-shaped flock of Canada geese flying high in the sky as we were driving to Mount Stewart last week. Happy tells me that Tracadie Bay is full of them.

I have another story from the MacIntyre home, but I'm leaving it for now, in hope that I can get a picture to prove at least one part of an interesting story.

That story on Stone Houses last week brought many telephone calls. Incidentally my telephone number now is 53 Mt. Stewart.

I made one error that I should have caught, for I did my own proof reading. The Clyde River house was reported as being built in 1882. I meant 1842.

The stone for the house was hauled from the field of Gregor MacCallum, not the man whom I named.

Ruth Bagnall, the lady who is painting the old houses made of Island stone, believes the Clyde River house was built around 1820 to 1882. She told me this week Ellen Hewson was born there 108 years ago. She was a granddaughter of John Oldfield.

My friend Walter R. Shaw was one of the many men who called me concerning this interesting house. Mr. Shaw has done a great deal of research on it.

Many Changes

IT REVEALS the Clyde River house property has changed hands many times since Major Ambrose Lane owned it back in 1837.

I have no personal knowledge of this but I have been told that those Lanes were relations of Franklin K. Lane who became at one time one of the more prominent people in the United States.

Major Lane sold the property to Thomas Kickham in 1840, Mr. Shaw's research tells him; also that it was known then as "Dog River Farm", a name once applied to what we know as Clyde River.

In 1842 Mr. Kickham sold a farm in the nearby vicinity – the distance apart is vague – with the money from the sale to pay off the Clyde River Farm, as we call it now, and build a house on it, apparently the one that Mrs. Bagnall has painted among others. Mr. Kickham was of the same family as Lawrence Kickham of New Haven, Mr. Shaw says.

The Shaw research would indicate the Clyde River Stone House was built between 1842 and 1844, he tells me.

The property was sold at the Court House in 1844 when the property was purchased by Ambrose Lane and it became a hunting lodge for a time.

A big rock well back in the property – apparently it was close to a spring – was known as Lane's Rock.

After Lane died it was known for a time as Sherwood Farm. He had left it to his son, John Hamilton Lane who offered it for rent in 1855.

Changes Are Frequent

IN 1867 JOHN Hamilton Lane sold the property to William Hyde who In turn sold it to Zacharias Mayhew.

Mayhew sold it to Robert Boyle who then sold it to Edward Mayhew – an Alfred Mayhew owned it for a time, apparently in the same year, Mayhew sold it to James Beer who sold the property to Wesley Hood, who sold it to Angus MacPhee, MLA of New Haven in 1920.

In 1930 it was owned by Leonard and Arthur MacPhee, sons of Angus.

Later George MacPhee owned it, and Mr. Shaw tells me he has been unable to place this man, despite his great knowledge of that whole area.

We find that it was owned by Robert Boyle in 1941 and that he built a wooden frame house on the property.

Present Owners

MR. BOYLE lived there for a time until he sold it to its present owners, Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Atwell, or Jimmie and Dora Atwell as their friends know them.

As I explained last week, Mrs. Atwell is the former Dora MacDonald, sister of Mary of Charlottetown and Phil of Toronto.

The Atwells lived in Ottawa when I first met them – indeed I had a pleasant visit to their home in the days when I was an MP for Queens.

Mr. Shaw is responsible for all of the information I have listed here. What a tremendous amount of research this man has done. My thanks to this former P.E.I. Premier for sharing your research information with my readers.

Information on additional buildings of Island stone – I have located several – is going by mail to Mrs. Bagnall.