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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Tourist Season Longer At North Shore Hotel

By NEIL A. MATHESON

CATERING TO tourists 60 to 70 years ago was different to what we know today, I learned a few days ago from Ralph Bearisto, 42 Greenfield Avenue, Charlottetown, whose father and grandfather, Benjamin and George F. Bearisto ran the North Shore Hotel at Malpeque in the earlier years of this century. Ralph ran it himself in later years, I understand, before he quit about 1948 or 1949 and moved to the City.

Commercial travelers stayed at the Hotel overnight when they came to display their wares and, hopefully, make sales to the Peter MacNutt and Son general store at Malpeque. They'd come from Kensington by horse from the Lynds or Moose livery stable.

But summer visitors, or tourists as we call them now, came in the summer and stayed for long periods of time.

June To September

JULIEN C. JANES and his wife came from Boston where he was a minister of the Unitarian Church. He'd come in June and stay until September. He'd bring his trunks, his dogs and his kennel from Boston.

Tourist entertainment then was to go to the shore, and shoot upland birds in the fields. He and others would shoot Plovers, Beetle-Heads (birds about the size of pigeons), Curlews and Golden Plovers, for example.

They would shoot in the fields in the radius of about five-miles from Bearisto's Hotel, wherever they heard there was any plover. Janes had a favorite horse, to which he became very attached.

He'd unhitch his horse, take him into the fields where the birds were – the birds wouldn't be afraid of a horse. Then the man would shoot over the horse's back, the animal wouldn't even lift his head.

The Gun Room

THE GUESTS had a room in a building outside the house – we called it the gun room, Ralph said – where they kept their guns and other gear. The guests would gather there at the end of a day and talk of their shooting success.

They'd talk of the number of feathers they collected that day, not of the number of birds they shot.

"I got three tail feathers, and a dozen wing feathers," might be a sample of this kind of talk, thought the ratio of tail and wing feathers may be a bit out.

The guests would eat the Plover, which meant they had to be plucked and cleaned before they were prepared for dinner.

Took Horse With Him

LATER, WHEN the Hotel was closed temporarily in the early days of the 1914-1918 war, Mr. Janes bought the horse, took him to Boston with him. Then he took him back to the Island each year, when he came to spend the summer. He'd take the horse by train in those days.

Mr. Janes spent the first summer at Myricks in Alberton, Mr. Bearisto said.

Travel was different those days. People would travel from Point du Chen, New Brunswick by boat to Summerside, then come by train to Kensington – the reference is to the North Shore Hotel guests.

Meet Guests At Kensington

“WE'D MEET them at Kensington where they would arrive from 10 to 11 o'clock at night. It would be well into the midnight hours when the visitors would reach Malpeque, some seven miles away. There were driving wagons for the visitors, a truck-wagon to carry their trunks and other luggage.

The charge in those earlier years was \$12 a week, and that included meals. There was no money in it, Ralph told me last week, compared to the kind of money people get now for similar catering. Offhand he could not recall immediately what he got when he ran the Hotel in later years.

There were no bathrooms in those days, there was no running water. Indeed there was no electricity at the time.

“I believe we were the first people in our area to put in a bathroom,” Ralph said and that was about 1927 or 1928.

It's so easy to forget the past, even the fairly recent past. There was no paved road to Kensington from Malpeque in 1948, there was no electricity either.

Indeed rural electrification as the Government plan was called, came to this province in the middle to later 1950s, as I recall. I recall Leo Rossiter promising to get rural electrification really going when he was campaigning for election in the 1950 campaign.

People Supported Him

PERSONALLY I HAD thoughts that Rural Electrification was pretty well underway at the time when I was a Member of Parliament, 1953-57 – I recall the line had been built through my own Rose Valley home territory about that time – but Leo insisted that he would really get Rural Electrification on the way, and most people must have believed him for he won his election and went on to become a member of the Walter Shaw Government that was formed in September, 1939.

There were 26 rooms in the North Shore Hotel.

Recalling that Frank MacNutt, former MLA, Malpeque had told me about the business Peter MacNutt built up in Malpeque, I asked Ralph about it.

The MacNutt's – Preston was running the business in the years Mr. Bearisto recalls – had a store in Malpeque, one in French River and an establishment in Kensington that was mostly a warehouse through which they shipped produce. Preston, by the way, was

the father of Erskine MacNutt, retired director of the Department of Transport office here.

They had lobster factories at Malpeque, Darnley and Seaview, also a large farm.

Three Sailing Vessels

THE MACNUTTS had three sailing vessels that hauled coal, lumber, molasses and oil, among other things, to Kier's wharf in Malpeque.

Ralph's grandfather was a Justice of the Peace and he tells me that many people were married by this man in those days. That type of marriage was fairly common in the earlier days, apparently.

A history of the Bearisto family in Ralph's possession brought out several interesting items.

One item quoted Wallace MacLeod, Ralph's cousin, as saying in part:

"I was born in Malpeque, P.E.I. My parents were en route to England to have my father's eyes tested and I arrived at Liverpool at one month of age where I remained for six months.

Vivisection On Babies?

"I WAS STOLEN on the deck for vivisection", is one startlingly interesting and revealing sentence; unfortunately Mr. MacLeod did not elaborate farther.

I know that animals are used for vivisection by medical researchers but it was the first I had ever read, or heard of babies used for this purpose.

Professor Roy Fraser, lecturer in Biology, during my student days in Pre-medical classes and Arts at Mount Allison, spoke often of vivisection but his reference was never to babies. Somehow I believe he would have mentioned it if he had known about it.

My dictionary describes vivisection thus:

"The dissection of a living animal with a view to exposing its physiological process." The word comes from Vivus, alive, and secu, cut. Another dictionary I examined described vivisection partly as inoculation.

MacLeod, who now is 90 years of age, lives in Victoria, B.C. One reference to him says he established Post Offices from Winnipeg west, much of the work done while he travelled by dog sled. Again there is no detailed description of his work.

My thanks to my friend Jim Pendergast for reminding me of the North Shore Hotel story. Jim is now in the Charlottetown Hospital. All of your friends are pulling for you Jim.

Alexander MacLeod Murdered

AWAY BACK in 1902 the Barque, Veronica was the victim of crew members who mutinied and murdered the captain and the first mate who was Alexander MacLeod of Prince Edward Island.

MacLeod was beaten with a belaying pin, or some other club and finally hauled to the edge of the deck and tossed into the sea.

The mutiny and the murder took place in the waters off the coast of Brazil.

One of the beaten-up crew members asked for a drink. "We'll give you a drink" snarled a mutineer as they tossed him into the sea.

I wonder if any reader knows the identity of Alexander MacLeod; if anybody does please drop me a line.