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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Ship's Clock Strikes As Captain Drowned

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Provincial - Farm Editor

THIS COLUMN on May 15 told a story passed on by Wallace Smith, Pownal of a Mick Long, who sailed as mate aboard a brigantine loaded with oats at Charlottetown in 1878 and the vessel was lost at sea, and never heard from again. The story said farther that Mr. Long's sister and brother-in-law with whom he had been living in Pownal, distinctly heard his step in the yard a week or so later, then heard him knock on the back door. The pair scrambled quickly out of bed but found nobody at the door when they opened it, nor in the yard when they searched a minute later. They felt he had returned to bid a last farewell.

Charles S. MacDonald, Murray Harbor (formerly of Wood Islands) told me an interesting addition to that story when I called on him last week.

"I STOWED oats on that ship as a boy of 12 and got a man's wages, which was 30 cents a day." To those who are interested in comparison with today, Mr. MacDonald suggests that the money of that day might be worth five times as much as today's dollar. So he got about \$4.00 for his day's work, in terms of today's currency.

The vessel was the Brigantine Vigilant. Mr. MacDonald knew the captain, Malcolm MacLean whose home was in Surrey, which is now Ocean View. And he had an interesting story about Mr. MacLean.

"My half-brother, Donald Nicholson, married Miss Annie MacLean who was the captain's sister", Mr. MacDonald told me. So my friend had personal knowledge of the family.

Annie told Mr. MacDonald that they had in their house at Surrey an old ship's clock that had not been working for many years. But the old clock struck one night and everyone in the house heard it clearly. The belief was that the clock had struck at the time Captain MacLean and his ship were disappearing under the waves. Mr. MacDonald believes that Capt. MacLean had given the old clock to his sister, though he is not sure.

7,000,000 Bushels Of Oats Shipped

REFERRING TO oats for a moment, the Examiner-Argus Weekly reported that Bishop McIntyre of Charlottetown said in October 1886 that this province exported annually 7,000,000 bushels of oats to France and Great Britain. This compared, the Bishop stated, with some 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 bushels of potatoes that were shipped at the same time to the United States. Bishop McIntyre added that several thousand sheep and 2,000 to 3,000 horses were shipped out annually.

Those were the days when the land was being ruined by growing and shipping oats, later generations of farmers charged.

Dungeon Room At Ravenwood

I UNDERSTAND the old "Ravenwood" house on the Experimental Farm - it was used for years as a residence for the farm superintendent - is being used at times this year as a temporary residence for VIPs who visit the province in this Centennial year. And that reminds me of an interesting story about the white house.

Ravenwood was built sometime between 1820 and 1828 and was acquired by the Experimental Farm in 1909.

The old story reveals that "The Commons", north of Euston Street, were set aside to provide for future Charlottetown expansion and divided into pasture lots. On one of the lots Ravenwood was built. It had been granted to Attorney General William Johnstone in February 1820 when Charlottetown reportedly had some 2,000 people. (I am quoting from a document that is on the wall at Birch Court).

The main house, the document says, is 36 feet by 45 feet, is two storey and of Colonial design. There were seven fireplaces. Originally all of the cooking was done in the basement.

AND HERE'S the interesting part : the basement contained a "dungeon room" where unruly servants were confined for punishment.

Bricks used in the house were made from clay dug on the property, and one of the clay pits is now used for the Farm's lily pond that attracts so many visitors annually.

The floor joists and rafters in the old building were hand hewn.

When this province entered Confederation the Hon. J. C. Pope, the man who is often credited with playing a leading role in having P.E.I. affiliated with Canada, was living in Ravenwood. He had a hop garden, a cricket field and also owned a brewery, the available information indicates.

The property was sold in 1909 for \$5,700 to Hon. Francis Haszard, commissioner of agriculture, and the house and 29 acres of land leased to the Dominion Government for the establishment of the Experimental Farm.

Biscuits Baked As Prayer Offered

THE TALK got around to long prayers of the past when Mrs. Matheson and I called on Mrs. Sam Martin at Middleton a few days ago. She's a sister of the late Sir Andrew MacPhail, and I hoped she could recall for me some of the many interesting events of the past that Sir Andrew described in "The Master's Wife".

Mrs. Martin remembered that once during "the long Sacrament" - services began Thursday forenoon and carried over until Monday at noon - a man from the "48" district whom I'll describe only as Sandy, was always "given the book" as the language of the day interpreted giving The Bible for family worship.

People came in great numbers from many miles away, and they stayed for the Thursday -Monday period with people in the community where the services were being held.

Sandy always prayed at great length. "He could "go on" for an hour on his knees, after the Bible reading was over," she recalled.

She recalled several unusual incidents. I'll tell you about two of them.

YOU CAN understand that baking enough bread, and other eatables, would be a most necessary task for the lady of the house who had to feed so many visitors, in addition to her own family.

Mrs. Martin's mother once got up off her knees, slipped out to the kitchen, prepared a batch of biscuits, put them in the oven and baked them, and was back on her knees in plenty of time to catch the final exhortations of Sandy to his Maker.

Another time Mrs. Martin, then a little girl, was a tiny tot with a terrible toothache. Everyone in the house knew of the calamity, and everyone sympathized. Sandy remembered "the lass with the sore tooth" in his prayers for everyone in the family, and he enquired when he arose if indeed her toothache was any better.

The young Miss MacPhail, as she was then, had to admit that the tooth was better. But she thought to herself that perhaps the improvement was due more to the fact her mother got up during the long prayer and slipped into the kitchen for the Carbolic Acid - an old toothache remedy - than it was to the well meaning prayer of the veteran Presbyterian elder from "48".

"But", observed Mrs. Martin, with a mischievous twinkle in her eye, "my mother always had taught me that 'faith without works is dead'".

A LETTER from L. E. D. Stevens, Montreal to whom I referred last week as the owner of the first plane to fly into Prince Edward Island - it was in 1919 - assures me that he was at the controls of the plane. I had quoted an old Stamps magazine which suggested a Charlottetown boy did the flying.