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ACROSS THE ISLAND

New Evidence Found Buffalo Bill Islander

By Neil A. Matheson

RESEARCH ON stories for this column involves a great deal of work, and letters often go to distant spots, as I seek for confirmation, or otherwise, on information I have received. I travelled all the way to Rumfort, Maine in 1964, for example, hunting for evidence on the flying machine story of Patrick Peters, but Hawaii is the most far-away spot I have reached in my research efforts.

Mrs. L. John Westaway, Albion Bay, P.E.I. is one of the many people who wrote me about the story I did suggesting Buffalo Bill Cody was born in this province. She told me her nephew, Dr. Willard E. Edwards, Honolulu, Hawaii had visited Buffalo Bill's grave once on a trip to this province, and memory told her a sign near the grave said he was born at Albion, P.E.I. This prompted the letter to Hawaii.

DR. EDWARDS, the man who has designed the perpetual calendar – it's pictured elsewhere in this issue – writes in part as follows:

"In 1939, when motoring across the United States, I journeyed up to Prince Edward Island and had a pleasant visit with my aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. L. John Westaway, Albion Bay. At that time I mentioned that I had seen Buffalo Bill's grave at the top of Lookout Mountain near Denver, Colorado. While there I heard several tourists talking at the graveside monument, and one said 'Why Buffalo Bill was born in Prince Edward Island in Canada, not in the U.S.A.' My aunt told me that she had heard that also, and that there is a Cody's Lane near her home – it runs from the main road down to the bay. We then conjectured that Buffalo Bill may have come from Albion and that his parents lived there."

A column I wrote for August 4 of last year contained some fairly substantial evidence to indicate Cody had been born here. To review briefly I said I had talked to Island historian George Leard, Souris and John Cairns, Dunstaffnage.

Mr. Leard gave me the names of Hector MacKay, Desable, and Murdock MacLeod of Bonshaw both of whom said Cody was born here. MacLeod said he had talked to Cody who had told him of his P.E.I. birth. MacKay had said Cody left here as a child of 18 months with his parents.

Mr. Cairns showed me a letter from Rev. R.J. Westaway who had talked to the late James Creed, in Albion. This chat also indicated Cody had been born here.

And I recall Jim Pendergast's story of "Twitter" Johnson, a former circus employee, who said he had met Cody years ago in a circus run by Wild Bill and had been told of the Island birth.

Pal Of Former Island Man

MRS. MATHESON tells me that Wild Bill often visited her uncle, James Haywood in Montana, a man who came from Tignish in this province. Whether that has any significance, or not, concerning Cody's Island parentage, I do not know.

Many people have called and written to me about Bill Cody. Will MacLeod, 27 Palmer's Lane, City, recalls seeing him in a show in Western Canada some years ago; there were many others. He had heard Cody came from P.E.I. On the other hand there is the evidence in American publications which states he was born in that country. A book Bill Ledwell loaned me, for example, traces Wild Bill's family back several generations.

Perpetual Calendar

I LEAVE Wild Bill's story, and consider for a few paragraphs the "Perpetual Calendar" designed by Dr. Edwards.

It has had some favorable reaction. It was endorsed by the Ecumenical Council in Rome in October 1963. The vote was an overwhelming 2,057 in favor, and only four opposed. It's been endorsed by the legislature of Hawaii, in 1943, Massachusetts, in 1952, and by the government of the Philippines in 1947. The target date now for the calendar's adoption is 1973, Dr. Edwards tells me in a personal note.

The calendar has some unusual features. To begin with New Year's Day is the day before January 1. "It is a day apart", Dr. Edwards tells me in his letter and is simply referred to as NYD in the calendar.

The second day of the new year, a Monday in the Perpetual Calendar, thus becomes January 1, and will always be the first business, or working day in the year.

In Leap Years Dr. Edwards puts an extra day between June [3]1 and July 1 – it's known simply as Leap Year Day, and is designated on the calendar simply as LYD.

I said June 31, and I mean that. No longer has June 30 days, not according to the Edwards' calendar.

January and February have 30 days each, March has 31. The same rotation runs consistently through the rest of the year.

April and May have 30 days each, June has 31; July and August have 30 days each, with September boasting 31. October and November have 30 days each with December having 31.

There's No 'Unlucky' Friday 13

THERE'S NO "unlucky Friday 13th", Dr. Edwards notes, "to worry the superstitious, or to deter them from business sales and the signing of contracts".

Leap Year Day is proposed as a new international summer holiday, or "a second Sunday", thus the two "extra days" would be rest days.

"I've taken six trips around the world lecturing and writing on 'The Perpetual Calendar' in 300 cities in 90 countries." He visited The Vatican in 1952 and again in 1962 when he presented his calendar to the Ecumenical Council for their study, and later approval as it developed.

His father was Arthur Edwards, brother of his aunt, who is Mrs. L. John Westaway, their father, Arthur Watson Edwards, was the proprietor of "The Shavings Shop" in Chatham, Mass. who was the main character in the book "Shavings" by author Joseph C. Lincoln, writer of Cape Cod and Down East novels.

Dr. Edward's address, incidentally, is 3038 Oahu Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822. The latter is a zip code number, I understand, which helps considerably in the direction of mail.

Have a look at the Edwards' calendar. It's pictured on page 12.