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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Pirates Are Bested; Defensive Driving

By NEIL A. MATHESON

A TRUE "pirate story" is the way Emery MacEwen, West St. Peter's introduced an interesting story of other years which involved several Mt. Stewart men.

This affair happened about 1882 (?), Mr. MacEwen tells me.

It happened to a sailing vessel called "Victor", a wooden vessel built at Mt. Stewart, P.E.I. by the Pigott Brothers, David, Montague and Benjamin.

David was the Captain; he did the sailing which sometimes took him as far away as the West Indies. The vessel sometimes carried potatoes and lumber, but this incident, of the pirates, happened when Captain David and his brothers were on a lumber trip, that started from New York, U.S.A.

The "Victor" was loaded with lumber up some river from New York harbor. When loaded, she sailed down to New York and anchored while the Captain went ashore to get his clearance to sail.

That night, after the crew had gone to bed, they heard a noise on deck.

### Williams Was Fast, Effective

JOHN WILLIAMS, able seaman of the crew, belonged to Little River, P.E.I. When Mr. Williams heard the noise on deck, he opened the hatch to the companionway and shouted "Who is there?" At that moment a man pointed a revolver at Williams' face.

Knowing that the captain always kept a revolver under his pillow, Williams slammed the hatch shut, ran to the Captain's cabin, got the gun, and came back to the companionway.

Back on deck as Williams was passing the skylight, he saw a man on deck he took to be a pirate. He fired through the skylight and killed one man and wounded another.

There had been five pirates in the gang, but the remaining three jumped from the deck of the "Victor" into their boat which was alongside. The pirates upset their boat as they landed on it, so they swam around the bow of the "Victor" and held on to the anchor rope.

By that time all of the Victor's crew were on deck.

Mr. MacEwen relates that John Williams was an able and a determined man, powerfully built and afraid of nobody. He and his crew companions took the pirates up on deck one at a time, and tied them securely.

One of the crew then went ashore to report to the police who placed the pirates under arrest.

The next morning Captain Pigott got word at his hotel to come to court. He had no idea what was up.

Arriving at the court house, he found his crew there, also the pirates.

The pirates were sent to prison and Captain Pigott and his men sailed away.

Sometime later the "Victor" and crew sailed back to New York, and the police there told John Williams they would advise him to leave the sailing ship.

The police reasoned that the pirates would have friends and they would try to “get” him sometime.

### Fruit Farmer In California

WILLIAMS TOOK their advice and went to California where he spent the rest of his life running a fruit farm. But he came back for a visit to the Island several times before he died, Mr. MacEwen told me.

John Williams was the grandson of Mr. MacEwen’s grandmother, Emory tells me. She was Annie Williams and she was married to Edmund Coffin of Savage Harbor.

Little River, incidentally is a settlement right next to Fortune, Mr. MacEwen tells me.

The Pigott’s home was located on the St. Peter’s highway, it was the second house on the left before you turn right to enter the village of Mt. Stewart where the Mathesons have their home now, though we are spending the winter at the Dundee Motel, Charlottetown.

My brother-in-law and neighbor, Wendell Glover, tells me that Montague Pigott married his aunt, Mary Glover, which means that she would also be Mrs. Matheson’s aunt.

I am told that Captain Dave Pigott fished out of Savage Harbor after he quit the sea, his brothers farmed at Mt. Stewart.

THOSE PIGOTT brothers grew strawberries. One informant suggests they were probably the first men around Mt. Stewart who grew strawberries.

There are a great many strawberries grown in Mt. Stewart and nearby areas now.

Williams was an uncle to Mrs. Harry Burke, Fortune, Mr. MacEwen tells me, and that reminds me of a story Mr. Burke told me several years ago which touches on a colorful yarn of international fame – only thing wrong, as Mr. Burke told me, is the yarn was completely false. I’ll tell you about it in a future column, even though I wrote a column on it some years ago.

Mr. MacEwen told me, on a visit to our apartment here last Friday, that Captain David Pigott had said, after the incident of the pirates and the “Victor”, that it was a good thing he (David) “was not aboard at the time, or we all might have been killed by the pirates.”

The Captain’s reasoning was that he would not likely have acted with the speed and grim efficiency Williams had shown when he shot one of the pirates and wounded another, thus dispersing their attack.

And Williams, with Able seaman rank, would not likely have taken things into his own hands, had his captain been aboard the ship.

### Defensive Driving Training

DEFENSIVE DRIVING is “driving to prevent accidents in spite of the incorrect actions of others, and adverse conditions”.

That’s one definition of a subject that is becoming more popular, more necessary and more valuable as more and more car traffic builds up on the Island and other highways.

Nobody has the right of way on the highway, the defensive driver believes. Sure the old rule is “protect the car on your right”, but the Defensive Driver is taught “never assume the other driver is going to do what you might normally expect”.

If you insist on protecting your rights, insist on not losing your prestige, that's your problem. But Defensive Driving teaches that it's much better to ease off and let the other guy go his way, and you remain alive; indeed you and your car remain unhurt and undamaged.

These are only a few ideas passed on to almost 30 licensed drivers the last few weeks, including Mrs. Matheson and myself. The ideas are valuable; someday one of them may save the life of someone who sat in on the class sponsored by the Zonta Club of Charlottetown. The instructor was Walter LePage.

Classes are held each Monday night from seven to nine o'clock. A new group starts this evening at the Boy Scout headquarters on Upper Prince Street. It may be filled up by now, but several other courses will be available this winter.

The fee of two dollars for the course covers only the material needed for the course; the Zonta Club provides the classes as a public service.

### Many Courses Available

SIMILAR COURSES are being conducted in many parts of the province. For example, this month courses are being held in such widely spaced communities as Millview, Kinkora, Souris, Brackley School, Sherwood Fire Department, Birch Hill – this, I am told, is close to Wellington, though it's one of the few places on the Island with which I am not familiar.

Other courses are being held this month at Elmira, Georgetown, Crapaud Community School, Charlottetown Rural Community School, Athena High School and there is one booked, I am told, for the Red Cross, but that, I believe, is for Red Cross worker personnel.

Interested people should telephone 894-3648 for more specific information about this worthwhile development.

NEXT WEEK a story about a mutiny aboard ship somewhere off Brazil in the year 1902. An Island Scot, who was First Mate, was clubbed to the deck, then tossed overboard into the sea.