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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Slavery Existed Here Old Records Indicate

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

SLAVERY HAS always seemed a subject that was comfortably far away, so far as this Island was concerned. But I have found that slavery did exist in Prince Edward Island at one time.

Charles R. McQuaid, QC, opened a book at the Registry Office here a few days ago and showed me a page where it is recorded that Thomas Haszard deeded a Mulatto girl, Catherine, about five years of age, to his granddaughters. The Mulatto girl was "warranted against any claim or demand" just like any other kind of merchandise might have been.

Another entry in the Registry Office book of recorded deeds indicated that a Mulatto boy, Simon, three years of age had been deeded by Thomas Haszard to "William Haszard, Lot 49, Merchant. The terminology used was "have bargained, and sold, set over and delivered to William Haszard, a certain Mulatto boy of three years of age called Simon, with all his wearing apparel".

There was the routine explanation that the Mulatto boy was 'warranted against any claim or demand".

Boy Sold For Approximately \$64

BUT THIS time there was a consideration of "20 pounds, Halifax currency". I believe that a pound, Halifax currency was worth approximately \$3.20 at that time. So the three-year-old Mulatto boy would have been sold for something like \$64.00. I'm not at all sure of that pound value, but I'm basing the Halifax pound on the P.E.I. currency.

Date of these transactions was November 1802, almost 163 years ago.

I have to thank John Martin of the National Film Board for the loan of a history of Valleyfield from which I gathered several items I'd like to pass on to you.

The present church at Valleyfield was built in 1909 by contract for \$4,875. The total amount raised for the support of the ministry for the year was seventy-two pounds, two shillings and two pence, P.E.I. currency; or about forty-six pounds, fifteen shillings Sterling. (A pound Sterling in those days was worth about \$4.85, a shilling roughly 25 cents, and a penny two cents.)

Minister's Stipend In Flour, Oatmeal

THE GREATER part of the minister's stipend was paid in kind and the first minister received in his first year 616 pounds flour, which he valued at two pence a pound; 232 pounds oatmeal, valued at penny half penny a pound; 81 pounds beef valued at one pound and three pence P.E.I. currency; tallow at nine pence, potatoes at two shillings

per bushel; oats at two shillings and six pence; pork at four pence and a half barrel of herring at eleven shillings.”

The total stipend of some \$227.00 was so small that the deacon’s court named collectors to “go out and collect forthwith,” the annual meeting report reveals.

SOME OF the preachers of those early days used physical power in the pulpit and an early chronicler refers to Rev. Alexander MacIntyre as being an unusually energetic preacher, “one who uses his hands and feet, as well as his lungs and brain. Having taken that fact into serious consideration they (the Valleyfield people) determined to build a good, strong, substantial pulpit, one that would not yield to the physical eloquence of the most zealous preacher. They also, it is said, did their best to procure a bible that for strength would correspond with the pulpit.”

He Needed Physical Endurance

THIS MAN needed physical endurance. He ministered to the church at Douse’s Road (now Valleyfield), Brown’s Creek and vicinity (Heatherdale) and also travelled to Caledonia, Murray Harbor, Wood Islands, Cardigan, Georgetown, Dundas and Grand River (now Annandale). In addition he made “frequent missionary visits to Charlottetown, Strathalbyn” which was known as the Scotch settlement (it comprised my own boyhood congregation of Hartsville, Rose Valley and Breadalbane) “Desable and other distant points.”

The man covered a large area of Kings and Queens Counties and had to do it on foot or horseback with virtually no roads but blazed trails through the forests.

The man’s tremendous efforts brought results, the old history reveals, for “when he held the first Communion after his arrival in 1847 only sixteen partook of the elements,” yet when he left five years later “the new church building holding 300 people was not too large.”

Sermons ‘Model Of Brevity’

REV. ALEXANDER Munro served the congregation for 34 years, 1850-84, and, “in his time, two sermons, one in Gaelic, the other in English, each an hour long, would be considered models of brevity.”

I find frequent references to the Strathalbyn congregation in this history which was written by a committee headed by the late Col. S. S. Weatherbie, and this is in keeping with tales I heard in my earliest days of my parents and others from Rose Valley, for example, driving with horse and wagon – I am told that some actually walked – the more than 40 miles to Valleyfield.

Clyde River Dixons’ Anniversary

FOR MANY years now Ellen who writes “Ellen’s Diary” in The Guardian, has been one of my favorite writers.

It is one thing for a writer to take an interesting old story, or an occurrence, and write about it in interesting fashion. But Ellen takes the commonplace, the sort of thing that happens around a farm home, or yard, or garden or any one of the many other facets of

farm life. To many people these things are dry and uninteresting. But Ellen tells them in her incomparable language and clothes them in the wholesome sort of interest that is always refreshingly fascinating.

How she is able to do this day after day over a period of many years, is difficult to understand. But she does.

Ellen is Mrs. George Dixon of Clyde River. She was Margaret MacQuarrie before her marriage.

I recall the years when I was editor of The Patriot that I envied The Guardian for having "Ellen's Diary". It's nice now to have her on my side, or should I say that both of us are writing for the same paper.

A few weeks ago Mrs. Matheson and I had the pleasure of spending a most pleasant half hour or so with Mr. and Mrs. Dixon. They were observing the 50th anniversary of their wedding. Not at all surprisingly an unusually large number of people came to call on these friendly and interesting people.