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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Long 4,260 Mile Trip To New Project Here

By NEIL A. MATHESON

MR. AND MRS. Kenneth MacKenzie and daughter Gail are working at Iona on what for them will be a major Centennial project; hopefully for many others as well.

The MacKenzies – Kenneth was born in Cardigan – came all the 4,260 miles from Vancouver, B.C. to Iona in a two ton furniture van and a large trailer.

He went west in 1947, got into the trucking business as an employee, then as an owner and built the business effectively until he sold it almost nine years later.

The MacKenzies have a goal, they're already working on it; it is to fashion and construct a recreational camping site on the 150 acres of land he purchased from Michael MacTague, one mile from the Iona Cross roads.

There are several interesting stories about Ken MacKenzie. His first job in Vancouver was a night watchman.

The Most Peculiar Job

"IT WAS the most peculiar job I ever had", he told me, "because I don't know who hired me, I don't know who fired me, nor who paid me."

Continuing, he said, "My pay cheque was waiting for me every two weeks, as long as the job lasted. But I have yet to meet my boss.

"I went on my first shift at 12 o'clock midnight, was instructed to go to a certain spot, but had no instructions what to do."

"I was relieved in the morning at eight and told to come at four the next day.

Someone would come to relieve me at the end of the shift, and that's the way the whole job went for the six weeks I was there."

Basically the Centennial item goal is a "Recreational Camp Site". And that means recreation, and fun, for everyone, young and old.

Kiddies Bored In Few Hours

"FROM MY own experience raising a family, it's fine to go to a campsite for a holiday; unfortunately after you get there your children are bored to death after the first three hours," he observed, "because there's nothing for them to do."

And there are many elderly people who sit day in and day out in old folk's homes, with nowhere to go and nothing to do.

Ken MacKenzie wants to have a spot that will provide interesting fun and relaxation for young and old.

"My campsite will not just be a place to come and park; it will be a place for the adults to rest, but it'll also be a spot where the kiddies will have more to do than they really can have time for."

That's the goal of this Cardigan man who went west in his youth and returned when he was still young enough to plan and develop a spot like the one he talks about.

At the Iona Recreational Campsite – that’s the chosen name – there’ll be horseback riding in rings, and also on trails; there’ll be old fashioned wagon rides – he’s brought a couple of two-seater wagons with him. He’ll have jaunting sleighs and the bigger bob-sled type in winter for hayrides, and brother Mack who lives in Charlottetown, has been gathering up some stylish draft horses to handle this chore.

Sleigh Rides – Hay Rides

YOU COULD have 15 to 20 people on sleigh rides, Mack notes and “that’s a heavy load, requiring strong horses for the chore”.

Brother Mack MacKenzie of Charlottetown says he has two matched teams of draft horses, big, strong animals that will pull the heavy bob-sleigh arrangement that will be available for this type of fun and entertainment, one team are pure-bred Percherons.

“After hearing last winter that I was buying this type of horse I had phone calls from Charlottetown groups who wanted to go on this type of ride”, Mr. MacKenzie told me, as we talked about the campsite venture on our way back to Charlottetown.

One of the attractions of the campsite area is that each site has an air of exclusiveness, or privacy, because each parking area is separated from its neighbor by bushes, Kenneth explained.

Interested keenly in the development is John Malcolm MacKenzie, father of Kenneth and Mack. He was fixing a wire fence around a field where the horses were pasturing, the day I visited the Iona Recreational Campsite to be.

There’ll be a lake on the property. It’ll be 600 feet long, 300 feet wide and hopefully five to six feet deep. There’ll be paddle boats for the kiddies in summer, with a swimming pool at one end. In the winter there’ll be skating and other sports.

There’ll be such things as lawn bowling, tennis, miniature golf, and a driving range for the really avid golfer.

In winter also, there will be a large recreational building with shuffleboards and hootenanny-type programs among other things.

And all of this will be built on and into the 150 acre block of land the MacKenzies have at Iona.

An Antique Clock

HOW KENNETH MacKenzie came to choose this particular property for his dream recreational campsite operation is of unusual interest; at least I found it that way.

The MacKenzie family was on the Island for a holiday in 1970. Mrs. MacKenzie saw an advertisement in this paper of an antique clock that would be sold at Michael McTague’s sale.

She had wanted a Grandfather’s clock and hoped this might be the one, so they drove to Iona and the McTague property.

Actually I don’t know whether it was a Grandfather’s clock or not, or whether Mrs. MacKenzie ever purchased it. What perked my ears up were the words of Kenneth MacKenzie as he said:

“As soon as I turned the nose of the car into the lane I said here is the type of layout I’ve been thinking of.” Learning that the farm was for sale, he had a couple of family conferences, made an offer to the owner and so bought the place a day or so later.

‘Family Conferences’

HE SAID “family conferences” and that meant his wife and three daughters; Mrs. MacKenzie is the former Elva Luce of Brandon, Manitoba. Their daughter, Gail is with them – she is a graduate of business school. Younger daughters Brenda and Elaine will be here next month, after they have completed their high school year in Vancouver.

To House Museum Items

ALSO ON the project there’ll be space for a building to house antique material that brother Mack MacKenzie has been collecting in recent years.

The planned opening date is 1973, the 100th anniversary, or Centennial of Prince Edward Island entering Confederation.

There’s a big job ahead, but Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie have behind them a successful venture into the competitive freight and furniture-moving trucking in Vancouver. They developed that business over a period of eight and one-half years, including a really large storage warehouse, which they sold with a view to making their present goal possible.

Mr. MacKenzie gives full credit to his wife and family for their help, and understanding, during the busy, long-hour years of that trucking venture with all of its pressures and hard work. It’s not difficult to envision a successful Recreational Campsite at Iona where the MacKenzies are centering their efforts now.

The Santa Maria And Leo Frank

ELLA BARNETT, 2210 Avenue M. Galveston, Texas asks in a letter to the editor if it was true that the Spanish government sent a replica of the Santa Maria and her sister ships to the Chicago Exposition.

Mrs. Mary Brehaut, capable Island historian tells me Dr. Leo Frank bought the Santa Maria that was seized here for lack of funds when she was in Charlottetown.

Mrs. Brehaut says that Dr. Frank paid \$400 for her and sent her to the World’s Fair at Chicago. She knows this is true though she does not know the year.

C.H. (Charlie) Black, who was a merchant here in his time and later a life insurance underwriter, saw the Santa Maria when he was at the fair. Apparently Dr. Frank sold her there.

Dr. Frank was manager of the Rosebank Silver Fox Ranch on Langley Road, Southport. The ranch was cleaned out about 1942 or 1943, when the animals were no longer profitable to raise.

Dr. Frank lived in the house now owned by Warren Hood. The former rancher died several years ago in the United States. Indeed I purchased my home from Dr. Frank; I knew the man very well as he was my across-the-fence neighbor for almost 20 years.