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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Green Gables Story Brought Only \$500

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I WAS searching in the Archives this week for something entirely different when I came upon a reference to Lucy Maud Montgomery that I couldn't pass up. A visit to Jim Campbell's home at Park Corner gave me further incentive to do this column on the lady whose initial book, now being presented here as a stage play, is drawing full houses at Confederation Center.

An old Guardian story I found in my research said that the first Anne book, Anne of Green Gables, grew out of a request from a Sunday School magazine for a serial, and it was based on a note she had scribbled in a corner of her note book. "Elderly couple apply to an orphan asylum for a boy and get a girl instead."

The proposed serial grew to a book, the old story said, and from that came a whole series of Anne books. "Out of Anne's house of dreams comes the happy ending to the romance between Anne and Gilbert Blythe which began when she cracked a slate over his head in the country school, and continued through their careers at college. Gilbert becomes a doctor of a sea coast community and is involved in many community happenings."

Silver Bush Novels Written

JIM CAMPBELL is the present owner of the "Uncle John Campbell" home to which Lucy Maud referred in her books, several of her Silver Bush books were written there. And the famous writer was married in the front room of the Campbell home and the organ on which Jim's mother played the wedding march is still in the corner of the room where it was on that day when she married Rev. Ewan MacDonald.

The Lake of Shining Waters – the real one – is visible through a window of the Campbell house, and the "Silver Bush" which inspired the books of that name, is visible through another window.

I checked with Jim on the old Guardian story about the Sunday School serial, and he tells me that is correct. She started Green Gables in 1903 and completed it in 1904 but it was turned down by five publishers before it was finally published by the L. C. Page Company in Boston. If Lucy Maud had not had some extra determination in her, enough to send the manuscript to yet another publisher, the world would never have had the beautiful story which is being told in its stage play adaptation to sell-out audiences here on the stage of the Confederation Theatre.

\$500 For Anne Of Green Gables

SHE RECEIVED \$500 for the book and sold it outright, Jim Campbell tells me. Incidentally the "Uncle John Campbell" to whom Lucy Maud referred was Jim's

grandfather. If that seems like small money now, and it does, it wasn't so small then, though it was small for a book that was to become a world favorite. But the writer had hoped to get \$35 for it, or possibly \$40 at the outside, Mr. Campbell told me.

Lucy Maud's grandson, David Cameron MacDonald, visited this province recently. He stopped in to see Jim and Ruth Campbell at Park Corner just over a week ago. He's a school teacher as his famous grandmother was at one time.

Fox Prices Are Recalled

AN OLD fox story I came across last week indicates that 10 fox pelts had sold for an average of \$925 each, 20 pelts sold at an average of \$760 apiece, 300 pelts brought an average of \$280 each and 500 pelts brought an average of \$250 each.

To make those prices even more impressive the old story of June 1917 said that the pelts had been sold "largely as a result of a weeding out process, and were not by any means representative of the high quality skins which Prince Edward Island ranches were capable of producing.

"The weeding out had cleared the province of a large proportion of undesirable animals. Next year's returns are expected to show a decided improvement in quality and no doubt in price", the fox observer of 1917 suggested.

IT WAS exactly 75 years ago this month that a Charlottetown woman was hailed before a magistrate and charged with being "a common scold". She lived on Prince Street and her neighbours testified against her. They gave evidence of her "vituperative oratory" the news story of 1890 said. She was termed "a common brawler and a sower of discord".

The usual punishment was to be sent to the ducking stool, and that was probably similar to what John Mullally, MP and Walter Dingwell, MLA underwent voluntarily recently at an outing in Kings County. But the magistrate of 1890 evaded his responsibility for sentencing the woman when he sent her case to a higher court.

Nearly Every Ch'town Automobile

NEARLY EVERY automobile in Charlottetown was used, The Guardian said, to transport guests to the big dance at the opening of Beech Grove Inn which was opened as a high class summer or tourist hotel on July 14, 1921. Dixon's orchestra was hired for the dance and approximately 800 guests were present at what observers of that day called "the magnificent summer hotel," that was opened by R. H. Sterns.

That was about the time the tourist industry was just getting underway here and J. A. Webster, then president of the automobile association, told Rotarians here of the plan to mark Island roads. The Rotary Club offered to donate 500 signs with room for road markings, and advertising space.

The automobile association looked after the first bit of road marking, though the department of public works loaned an "auto truck" as it was called then, to carry paint and equipment.

The roads were marked by white, yellow and red bands painted on telephone poles on either side of intersecting roads.

White bands marked the road from Souris to Tignish. The marking from Charlottetown to Murray Harbor was yellow and it was red from Charlottetown to Montague, to Borden and Summerside.

Signs were posted at Borden to give the key to the color bands, so visitors would know the correct sign to follow for a certain destination. And that was back in 1921.

First Wide Gauge Train To City

IT WAS on Sunday, Sept. 14, 1919 that the first wide or standard gauge train arrived in Charlottetown. Harry Ferguson was the conductor and Cyrus Partridge the engineer. Superintendent was T. B. Grady and J. J. Bethune was trackmaster.

The Guardian on Monday, September 15 expressed that the new service which was soon to be inaugurated – this was only a trial trip – would mark an era of prosperity and advancement for the province “which has long been patiently awaited.”

The engine – it was number 4506 – had crossed the Northumberland Strait on the carferry Prince Edward Island on Friday, and had laid up at Borden until Sunday to make the trip. Reason for the delay is not explained.