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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Interest Is Strong In N.Z. Emigrants

By NEIL A. MATHESON

INTEREST IN the early sailings of Prince Edward Island people to New Zealand continues.

Sister Francis Loyola, CSM has kindly mailed me two letters she has received from people seeking knowledge of their ancestors here.

John C. Vowles says in part:

"I have just read your letter to the New Zealand Women's Weekly. "My mother's father came from Prince Edward Island . . . as my mother was born in Scotland in 1874 it seems likely that my grand-father was on that ship. His name was Ellworth. I am almost sure that he actually came from Charlottetown.

(It should be noted here that there are many methods of spelling the name to which he refers. We have Ellsworth and Aylward, for example, and there are many others.)

Vowles did his air training for the Royal New Zealand Air Force in Canada and actually spent two months at the Navigation School we had in Charlottetown – they were July and August 1942.

But it was not until he reached England that he received a letter from his father telling him that his grandfather had been born in this province, and probably in Charlottetown.

If there are any Ellworths – remember what I said about the various spellings – Vowles would love to hear from them.

His address is J.C. Vowles, No. 2 R.D. Ngatea, Hauraki Plains, New Zealand.

Great-Grandfather Born Here

MRS. MARY A. FIDDES writes that her great grandfather, John Robert Williams, was born in Prince Edward about 1853 or 1854. His father, a ship's chandler, was Thomas Charles Williams.

"Tradition has it that Thomas and John helped to build a ship that brought the first sewing machine to New Zealand", Mrs. Fiddes writes.

This lady has "tried in vain to trace" her Island ancestors. She would appreciate any letters that would bring her some information. Her address is 7 Woodall Place, Glenfield, Auckland, New Zealand.

Sister Loyola has been writing for some 10 years to a lady living in Timaru, New Zealand who was very fond of Anne of Green Gables and wanted to know more about our Island.

"I made a tea-wagon mat from a pattern in the magazine and sent a picture of it when I finished crocheting it." The picture with the Sister's name and address were published in the magazine and that led to the letters from New Zealand.

In my files last week I found a letter from Rena Wood Johnstone, New Haven – she is now on a world tour with her husband, Edwin – which refers to her great-grandfather Alexander Boswall, M.D. "who was one of the first resident doctors on this Island."

Dr. Boswall went as medical officer on one of the voyages taking emigrants to New Zealand.

Voyage Difficulties Described

“AMONG THE very old family papers I have a photostatic copy of the letter he wrote to his wife and family on P.E.I. while en route to New Zealand. It was written in Simon Town, Cape of Good Hope on March 8, 1859 and begins:

“My ever dear wife and children, I suppose you have given up all hope of ever hearing from me again. I am happy to inform you that we have at last arrived in Simon’s Bay 22 miles from Cape Town, on the 28th of February after a long, long passage, and we are only half way to New Zealand.

“After leaving the Gut of Canso we sailed a long way to the Eastward in an endeavour to meet with the North East Trade Winds, but we were disappointed; we met only with the South East Trade Winds which drove us on the Brazilian coast of South America and were obliged to put into Pernambuco for want of water.”

Mrs. Johnstone told me the letter goes on to tell of some of the privations experienced . . . “I assure you I have been, with the rest, nearly starved . . . only salt pork and beef . . . no potatoes. The preserved meat was putrid and was obliged to be thrown overboard.”

Dr. Boswall was born in 1802, near Gibraltar on board a British ship called the “Cacafago”, Mrs. Johnstone stated.

Another “Victory Chimes”

MY RECENT reference to the ship “Victory Chimes” was not the ship that was built at Cardigan and was owned jointly by John A. Macdonald (he was later Senator), George A. Thompson, Montague and Charles Lyons, Charlottetown.

The Victory Chimes to which I was referring was built in Bethel, Delaware in 1900. She was owned in Baltimore, Maryland until 1954 when she was purchased by her present owner, Captain Frederick B. Guild.

This information has come to me through the kindness of Mrs. Howard Vickerson, Montague who was John A. Macdonald’s accountant during his shipbuilding years.

Mrs. Vickerson believes that Kimball Coffin, Mt. Stewart was in charge of building the Victory Chimes. “All others including the ill-fated Barbara Macdonald, were designed and built by my father, Duncan S. McLaren of Cardigan,” Mrs. Vickerson tells me.

Incidentally Captain Guild remembers the Victory Chimes that was built here. He recalls seeing her in Penobscot Bay occasionally where she brought pulpwood “from away down East”.