

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Thurs., April 15, 1965

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Cache Of Pirate Gold Eludes Bedeque Man

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MORE THAN 5,000 registered potato growers in this province are eligible to vote next Wednesday, April 21, and say whether they are in favor of the temporary plan that was established for potatoes by an Order-in-Council by the provincial government here on November 13. It was under this plan that the present potato marketing board was established, though the vote on Wednesday has no relation to the personnel of the present board. Indeed the board personnel is to be changed in the near future.

It is the plan under which the present board has been set up and under which it operates, and is fairly elastic. It provides, for example, for the setting up of a central marketing agency should that be considered desirable, I am told reliably. But that again has nothing to do with next week's plebiscite. It is the plan which has been established that will be at stake in this vote, and interested potato growers should register their opinion one way or the other.

IT'S A long time since there has been a potato plebiscite in this province that did not stir deep feelings and ruffle many of them. There is no controversy this time, as far as I have been able to learn.

This has been one of the better crop years for potatoes so far as price is concerned, and it's natural that most producers are not deeply concerned with the industry. But next year, or the next, or the next could be an entirely different story. With that in mind, it would be a good idea to say what you think about the marketing plan now. Nobody is suggesting how you should vote. The idea is you should vote.

Grandfathers Are Most Interesting

HARRISON MacFARLANE, Bedeque had two most interesting grandfathers, I found on a visit to the MacFarlane home at Bedeque not long before it was burned in a fire that destroyed the house and practically everything in it, including some interesting antique souvenirs.

Harrison's maternal grandfather, Alexander Anderson, was born in Elgin not far from the birthplace of Sir Ramsay MacDonald who was premier of Great Britain at one time. He's the man who surveyed the Anderson Road which links Bedeque and Charlottetown.

Mr. MacFarlane had an old Flint Lock musket, a 12-gauge affair that Mr. Anderson had used, and it still sparked fire as I lifted it to my shoulder and pulled the trigger. Anderson lived to be 106 years old, which was most unusual in those days. It's unusual at any time, but particularly in those earlier years when people living even to 90 – that's common now – was rare.

MR. ANDERSON came first to Rustico in this province but moved later to Fernwood where he died. His discharge indicated that he fought with the 84th Regiment of Foot and had been discharged in 1784.

This unusual man was 100 years of age when a friend inquired after his health. The reply was "I feel fine. Seldom do you hear a man of my age complain."

He came to Bedeque to get marshy land for his cattle.

He lived on Melrose Farm which is now owned by Wesley Campbell. Anderson moved to Fernwood in 1797 and built a log house at the East end of the Cove and acquired 600 acres of land. He was buried in Bedeque Cemetery and the old headstone says "He retained all of his mental faculties" and this despite the great age he had attained.

Bear Chased Sheep Into His House

COMING FROM Scotland he was taken prisoner at one time by the Indians, but managed to escape. The cellar of his house may still be seen at Salutation Cove, I was told.

One old story handed down says at one time bears chased some of Mr. Anderson's sheep right into his house on one occasion.

Donald MacFarlane was his other grandfather and he also had an interesting background. This man was the original MacFarlane in this province and all of the MacFarlanes here now are descendants, his greatgrandson told me.

Once when Donald MacFarlane was put in charge of a prison which held pirates, one of the pirates apparently took a liking to him and gave him a chart and maps indicating where pirate gold was buried in the West Indies. "There's more gold there", the pirate told him "than any 10 generations of people could spend."

Donald MacFarlane fitted out a brig and sailed for the West Indies at the first opportunity but the brig was wrecked in a storm off Cape Sambro, not long after he left Halifax.

Pirate Gold Dream Was Ended

WITH THE insurance money, Donald MacFarlane was able to buy another vessel but preparations for the trip were still underway for the voyage when a rope block fell from the crosstrees and killed his partner who was standing beside him.

And that ended the dream of getting the pirate gold. Mr. MacFarlane came to the conclusion that his Maker didn't want him to have any of the ill-gotten wealth. "So he abandoned the idea and the MacFarlanes have been working for their living ever since", Harrison told me.

Donald MacFarlane had come from Virginia. When the War of Independence broke out he fought on the side of the British, and his scarlet tunic was in his son's possession at the time of my visit.

Maternal Greatgrandfather Anderson had also fought for the British. His discharge paper, dated June 24. 1874, signed by Major John Adolphus Harris, commanding His Majesty's 84th Regiment of Foot, was another treasured possession that was destroyed in the fire.

AN OLD Colt revolver dates back to the days before cartridges were made. On the barrel is an etching indicating a naval engagement had been fought between Mexico and the United States. The gun came from Colorado many years ago.

With the old Colt, which had been sent home by one of Harrison's brothers to their father, was an ingenious powder measure and a bullet mould.

Other things I saw at the MacFarlane home included an Indian tomahawk that came from Miminegash where an Indian battle was fought long ago. There was also a set of deer horns – the animals were native to the Island once. And there was a moose horn that had been picked up near Muddy Creek, west of Summerside.

An old issue of the Summerside Progress, dated in the 1860's told the story of a man boasting of the fertilizer compost he had made by mixing salt, ashes and plaster, which seems like an unusual mixture according to present-day thinking.