

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Thurs., June 6, 1968

ACROSS THE ISLAND

West Pt. Ferry Is Old Proposal

By NEIL A. MATHESON

M.A.MCGINNIS was editor and publisher of "The Maple Leaf" which published bi-monthly in Oakland, California, prior to Mr. McGinnis's death early in 1947.

A copy of the final edition – it was loaned to me by Gerald Handrahan, Tignish – indicates that the West Point Ferry project was being pushed more than 30 years ago. The reference is as follows:

"More recently there has been considerable discussion (this was written in April 1947) concerning a steamer route between Richibucto, N.B. and West Cape, P.E.I., which would be of great benefit to the people of Prince County on the Island side of the Strait. This discussion has been underway for many years, without definite action being taken by the Dominion Government."

That was the comment from Mr. McInnis, a few days before he died, more than 20 years ago. But here is a newspaper comment of approximately 80 years ago:

"The idea of keeping up winter communications between West Cape, P.E.I. and Richibucto, N.B. is at last, being discussed and considered. It is now more favorably received than when it was broached at first."

Here's an even more interesting flashback in the last issue of the Maple Leaf, and this is also some 80 years ago.

"Wilmot Brown, C.E. completed the survey of the St. Louis railway on Saturday. The line is seven miles long."

This item was published in the St. John News, but it was from its Richibucto correspondent and the reference, apparently is to the West Prince area.

"At a meeting held Saturday" – there is no indication as to the month of the year, or even the exact year, except that it was probably in the early 1880's – "George V. Mclerney, William Wheton, MP; Rev. M.F. Richard and J.C. Brown were appointed delegates to go to Ottawa and negotiate with the Government for rails to be used in its construction."

THE STORY said:

West Point Ferry Efforts

"A delegation leaves today for Ottawa in the interests of the winter communication between West Point and Richibucto. Up to this date there is not a speck of ice to be seen between Richibucto breakwater and West Point, P.E.I."

The Maple Leaf neglected to tell us at what time of year this "ice-free condition" existed, but it is apparent that back in those days the effort was to have winter communications maintained between the two ports. More recently the effort has been for an automobile-carrying ferry. Of course there would be no worry about automobiles back in the 1880's.

The West Point-Buctouche ferry proposal was actively promoted again just a few years ago. My friends Peter MacCaull and Cyril Leard, Alberton were two of those who pushed the idea strongly.

Mr. McInnis was born in Seven Mile Bay November 23, 1863, moved to Egmont Bay in 1865 where his father Ambrose McInnis bought "a small farm with a log house of two rooms, a barn and a few farming implements."

The family moved to Summerside in 1870 when Ambrose's health was failing, and they lived "in one of Thomas Brehaut's houses on Granville Street", M. A. McInnis reported in the last issue of his magazine. From there they moved to Miscouche where his father, Ambrose, died in 1872. There followed three years on "Uncle Mike Harrington's farm in DeSable". He went to Oakland, California in 1889 when he was 26. That would make him 83 when he died early in 1947.

M. A. McInnis's mother was Mary Harrington of DeSable and Margaret Harrington married John Handrahan who lived in Lot 1.

The Maple Leaf was published "in the interests of the sons and daughters of the Maritime Provinces residing on the Pacific Coast. Its first issue was published in February 1907".

Accident Perils Discussed

SEVERAL YEARS ago I carried a reprint in this column from an international magazine, on the perils of careless driving on the highways. The story was terrible but the results of accidents are even more terrible.

Ralph Cameron, a long-time friend and colleague brought this short and pithy paragraph to my attention this week.

"It's good wisdom to allow prudence to keep us alive, and, anyhow, the fault of over-caution is preferable to the mistake of being killed." It's from the Royal Bank of Canada monthly letter.

Ralph also brought me this one – The Highway Safety News reports that a Northern Irishman has invented a device which may be a potent factor in reducing accidents involving children who play around parked vehicles.

It's an "underfloor safety vision screen" and can be fitted to nearly every make of commercial vehicle. It enables drivers, before moving off, to see that there are no children playing in, around or under their vehicles.

The mirror screen measures only 18 inches by four and the act of the driver taking his seat lowers it to give him a clear and unobstructed view of the underside of the vehicle and the four wheels.

Depression of a foot lever returns the mirror to the protective shell in which it is normally concealed to keep it free of dust and grime. The vision is so good that in one case a driver was reported to have identified a small coin behind the rear offside wheel.