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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Canoe Cove Scholar Had Unusual Career

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Provincial - Farm Editor

I LEARNED a few days ago about a man who must rank with the best this province has ever produced in so far as his academic career was concerned. His life history was also outstanding.

I'm thinking of Donald A. MacRae, a Canoe Cove boy who won a scholarship to Dalhousie University without attending high school, and went all the way through his undergraduate and post-graduate work, apparently, on scholarships he won at Dalhousie, Cornell and other universities. He was the son of Finlay and Anne MacRae.

Donald MacRae was a youngster working in Prowse Brothers store here back in the early 1890's when he decided to do some serious studying. Though he had never gone to Prince of Wales College - I don't know how far he had progressed in his home school - he learned the work up to and including Grade 12, or what is known as Grade 12 now, that's second year PWC for example; then wrote to the president of Dalhousie University and sought permission to write for a scholarship.

THE FIRST reaction was the request could not be granted. The scholarships were for graduates of high schools. Prince of Wales College was the only avenue to scholarship eligibility in Prince Edward Island.

But the president later talked with young MacRae and was so deeply impressed, that he tested the young man's knowledge with a special examination. Then he said "I'm going to let you write for a scholarship, even though it costs me my job".

Donald MacRae won the scholarship and kept on winning them, apparently until he graduated from Dalhousie with honors in classics and the University medal in 1898. He won a \$1,000 annual scholarship to Cornell where he studied and also taught classics for several years and also earned his doctor's degree. He later taught at Princeton.

He entered Osgoode Law School in 1909 after he had decided to become a lawyer, but he was not to practice law for long. A vacation trip to the Maritimes ended with Dr. MacRae agreeing to become dean of Dalhousie Law School. After 10 years at Dalhousie, he became dean at Osgoode Hall where he served for more than 20 years.

National Leader In Legal Education

WHEN DR. MACRAE died, October 1955, he was called "the outstanding leader in legal education in Canada" by Sidney Smith, Toronto University president, who later became secretary of state for external affairs in the Diefenbaker government. "Dr. MacRae was responsible in large measure for the curriculum of our Canadian law schools", Mr. Smith added.

And there was good reason for the statement. Dr. MacRae was chairman of the committee on legal education for the Canadian Bar Association from 1920-31.

He was district governor of Rotary when he organized the Charlottetown club here in September 1917, along with C. J. Burchell. He also drafted the international object of Rotary and had the satisfaction of seeing it accepted unanimously at the international Rotary convention in Edinburgh in 1921.

IN HIS mature years he had the honor of being a Queen's Counsel, and held the degree of Bachelor of Arts, Doctor of Laws, Masters of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy. He received many tributes from across the country, but we expect that the Canoe Cove boy who never forgot his humble beginnings - he kept his mother's spinning wheel in the parlor of his Toronto home - would have liked best this simple tribute: "He stripped the subject of law of much of its dullness".

I want to thank several people for help on this story. It was Rod MacNevin, St. Avard's who tipped me off first, after reading my story on Norman MacDonald. Allison MacLeod, who "sold cars to Dr. MacRae about the 20's", and Premier Walter Shaw, who knows his family, were also helpful. And it was his niece Annie MacRae, Canoe Cove who found and showed me the scrap book that contained a great deal of the essential information.

Incidentally I want to credit Malcolm MacKenzie, Canoe Cove who is in his 90's for the information on MacRae's home study efforts and his successful effort to write for a Dalhousie scholarship. I did not see Mr. MacKenzie as there was nobody home when I called at the house where I was told he is staying. But I used the information Mr. MacKenzie provided in an old clipping I found which, I presume, was written at the time of Dr. MacRae's death.

### Parlors Were Kept Tightly Closed

THAT REFERENCE to Dr. MacRae's parlor reminds me that parlors were kept tightly closed through most of the year in my area when I was a boy. It was a rare occasion that saw the beautiful old room opened up. Blinds were raised for they were also kept closed to prevent the sun fading the furniture, or the beautiful paper on the walls.

On a Sacrament Sunday or when the minister or some other unusual visitors came during the Sacrament week, the room would be opened up, and on a few other rare occasions. A youngster would step softly when he went into the forbidden room, lest his seniors hear him and administer swift and adequate punishment.

You will pardon one personal reference, I hope. It's still the custom in many localities to take an important visitor into the parlor, and I recall that happened many times when I was visiting people as a political candidate, and later as a member. The people were invariably kind and I appreciated their hospitality so freely given, though I never could think of myself as being any more important just because I happened to be running in an election.

BUT THE one experience I remember above all others was the welcome my colleague, Cecil Miller and I received when we called at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roddie MacPherson, who was chairman at the time of the Caledonia poll. We were

welcomed warmly into the kitchen, and we spent the night working around the kitchen table on the voter's list which was being examined carefully.

When the time came, Mrs. MacPherson prepared and served a tasty lunch and that was one evening I shall never forget, because it was "down to earth". Nobody fussed over us; but they simply accepted us as welcome visitors and left it at that.