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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Fox Ranching, Rail Histories Recalled

By NEIL A. MATHESON

MY THANKS go today to Eileen (Mrs. William) Oulton, proprietor of Lan-Rest Museum, Alberton for the loan of an historic picture.

It's the hollow log that was used as the first den in the fox ranch on Oulton's Island where Charles Dalton and Robert Oulton played their important and historic role in pioneering the industry that quickly ballooned into a multi-million dollar industry.

The picture is a bit dim, but you can see the old log close to the lone tree, and to the left of it.

A neighbor of Dalton where he lived in Norway, close to Tignish, explained that Dalton had failed in his effort to raise foxes in farm buildings. When he joined up with Oulton the idea was to get as close to natural conditions as they could. The idea worked, apparently, though many years later Robert Humphrey, Kensington pioneered the shed-type fox pens, and it was said to have improved the foxes' fur value, among other things.

The picture of the log may be found on page 5.

### Information On Wiggins Family?

JAMES RUSSELL WIGGINS, editor of the Washington Post, Washington DC, writes to inquire for any possible information about the Wiggins family on the Island. Family legend has it that a Jeremiah Wiggins or an Alec Wiggins left Ireland in the 1840's and went to Charlottetown to settle.

Any information provided by readers will be forwarded to Editor Wiggins.

### More Railway History

H.E. MOORE, retired railway man of this city, has brought me some further interesting material on the construction of the Prince Edward Island Railway.

One paragraph indicated that "two of the highest summits" on the line were between Royalty Junction and Summerside; one of them was 307 feet and the other 301 feet, about eight miles apart. The locations are not indicated.

A high point of 604 feet was encountered about five miles out of Souris where a gradient of about 74 feet to the mile was necessary. The highest gradient on the main line was kept at 66 feet to the mile.

It was necessary to build some 46 bridges, which ran in length from twenty to one hundred feet. There were 2,200 ties used to the mile.

I'M TAKING paragraphs at random from a lengthy news story. One interesting statement is that the original survey called for the main line to run from St. Eleanor's to Traveller's Rest with a spur about one mile in length to connect with Summerside.

Work was done on the road bed with this in mind. When the plans were changed to take the line through Summerside, the contractors were paid an additional \$40,000, the old story relates.

There's another interesting reference to the 10 locomotives. Six came from England, the rest from the United States. They were about twenty-five feet in length.

### Coal Box Was In Cab

THE ENGINES from England had no tender; the coal was carried in a coal box in one corner of the cab, and water was replenished from various brooks and streams along the right of way, where a large pipe was set and water siphoned to the boiler.

The locomotives also had a high stack, some of them being painted red.

The English engines were too light for freight work, the old story charges, or for fighting snow in winter. They were used mainly to haul the mail trains which consisted of two first-class and two combined cars, the total weight of which would be in the vicinity of 60 tons.

A recent reference to the early days of the railway in this column said that the road was closed the first winter, because of lack of equipment to keep the road open.

THIS STORY, Mr. Moore loaned to me, indicates that one engine was stuck at Mt. Stewart early in December and it was abandoned there for the winter.

Another train became stalled near Hunter River. It was brought back to Charlottetown in January and service was discontinued until the following spring.

The effort to open the road had been made late in the fall of 1874, this clipping states.

The first time table was issued in 1875 and called for three trains per week, east and west.

The branch from Emerald Junction to Cape Traverse was constructed in 1885. The portion from Carleton Junction to Cape Traverse was abandoned in 1919, when standard trains were operated to Charlottetown and Summerside from Borden.

The Murray Harbor branch was built in 1899. The branches from Harmony Junction to Elmira, Montague Junction to Montague, and Lake Verde to Vernon were built in 1908.

In 1929 a line for moving freight in carloads to stations on the Murray Harbor branch was constructed from Maple Hills to Lake Verde.

Up to December 1919 the gauge of the tracks on all tracks on the railway here were three feet, six inches. A third rail was laid from Borden to Summerside and Charlottetown, and trains of both standard and narrow gauge could be, and indeed were operated between these points.

IN 1923 the standard gauge was extended to Tignish, in 1926 to Souris and Georgetown, and to Murray Harbor in 1930 when all narrow gauge rails were removed and standard equipment used on all Island tracks.

As a veteran railway man observed to me recently - I believe it was Ab. Bagnall who is now retired in Charlottetown - for many years the connection of cars was made by "link and pin", and a number of trainmen of that period had occasion to remember this feature because they lost some fingers, and on several occasions lost the entire hand, the old story relates.

Incidentally the old story from which I am quoting was written by "J.F.L." I have been unable to find who he was. If any reader can tell me his name, I would appreciate it. This man wrote a number of stories for The Guardian in former years, I understand.