

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Fri., June 20, 1969

ACROSS THE ISLAND

Letters Enlarge On Lane Story

By NEIL A. MATHESON

TWO UNUSUALLY interesting letters came to my desk this week; both have reference to the family of Franklin Knight Lane who was the subject of last week's column.

Rena Johnstone (Mrs. Edwin) of New Haven:

"My special interest comes from the fact that my maternal grandmother, whose maiden name was Mary Ann Maria Lane, was a first cousin of Franklin's father – Christopher Lane.

"During the years I've collected some information about these relatives. Here are a couple of items.

"Franklin's mother was Caroline Burns, daughter of the presiding minister at Pownal Church, who claimed to be a relative of the celebrated Robert Burns.

"John Lane, (Franklin's great-grandfather) his wife Joyce Lester and their children, along with a family named Fletcher, came to P.E.I. from Ireland about 1819. They chose for a home-site, the crest of a hill over-looking picturesque Pownal Bay, which they named Mt. Mellick, after their Irish home. The settlement still bears this name and the well-kept red-roofed house is still occupied by a Lane."

Mrs. Johnstone adds, "Last summer when Edwin and I were in Ireland we stayed overnight in Mountmellick (their spelling). It is a rambling small town spread out on a fertile plain and surrounded by beautiful, colorful mountains called Slieve Blooms."

No Relatives Seen

MRS. JOHNSTONE and her husband had hoped to contact relatives there, but, as Rena observed, "150 years is a very long time" and the only Lane listed in the telephone directory came from a different area. However they did enjoy a chat with the Lane family they did find there.

MARY BREHAUT, 7 Grafton Street, Charlottetown also has an interesting addition to the Lane story. She says, for example, Rev. Mr. Lane, Church of Scotland minister, had at least two sons, Frederick and Franklin (Mrs. Johnstone tells me that Christopher Lane, Franklin's father, was a dentist and that he went to California in 1871). Family records indicate that, I was told.

Continuing, Mrs. Brehaut says "Fred's daughter, Victoria, came to see me last fall, looking for information about her people. She had married a Mr. DeGrasse in California". And here is a most unusual sidelight:

King Of Siam's Inspector

DeGRASSE'S UNCLE had been a favored building inspector under the King of Siam. The King had about 40 sons and every time two of them graduated from Oxford they were given a world tour.

The last two sons were told to hunt for DeGrasse, nephew of the King's friend. The sons found DeGrasse and he accepted the King's warm invitation to visit his court.

On their way home Mrs. DeGrasse told her husband in Halifax:

"I went to Siam with you to find out about your uncle, how about you coming with me to Prince Edward Island, which is so near, to find out anything we can about my grandfather?"

Mrs. Brehaut was able to go with them to DeSable where they "found some evidence of the manse, and found one old gentleman who had reason to remember the minister", as she puts it.

My thanks to Mrs. Johnstone and to Mrs. Brehaut for their interesting letters.

Late Blooming Cactus

A CALL last week from Mrs. Edward Jay told me of a Christmas cactus blooming in June. These plants are geared to bloom at Christmas – I've had reference to several of them in the past few years – I have heard of a few that bloom at Easter but June – well that's a new one on me.

Last Sunday evening a friend and I visited the Jays at Peakes and sure enough, the plant had about 90 blooms on it.

The original cactus in the Jay home is 49 years old. "We got it as a wedding present," Mrs. Edward Jay told me, and this was backed up by her husband.

The Edward Jays live now in Charlottetown and the plant is at the home of their son Alton Jay and his wife in Peakes.

This plant is a growth from a root of the 49-year old one. Some years ago the old one was tipped over and it broke. The other part of this old cactus – the original one in the Jay family – is now in a home at York.

The grandson in the Jay home is Alvin, and this 14-year old boy was feeding his registered Newfoundland dog and her five puppies when I was there. The pups are registered and inoculated, they are bringing a good price, and half of them are sold.

Mrs. Alton Jay has a Lobster Cactus and this is a new one on me.

How does it get its name? Well, Alton pointed to a part of the plant that could be said to resemble a lobster claw – if you were thinking that way, of course.