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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Column On Springs Reverses Seasons

By NEIL A. MATHESON

A VISIT with Byron Burns, Charlottetown jeweler brought some interesting ideas to mind and this week I'm using "Springs I Have Known" just to change the subject from a steady diet of storm stories over three weeks.

To you good people who have written, telephoned or just told me good storm stories in person, I assure you I'll come back to the storm stories soon, likely next week. I have some really good yarns for you.

"Springs I have known" is presented almost exactly as Mr. Burns wrote it. Looking over the reference to springs made me just a bit lonesome for boyhood days when the horse and driving wagon was the means of transportation on the highway.

And I recall just how much the cool, clear brooks meant to the horses. Some brooks were better than others, and the horse would hurry as he neared the spot where he could really enjoy a cool, refreshing drink.

There was something different about those far off days when the pace of life was slower, and I always remember Jessie Carver's observation that courting in even the best automobile – in the days when car windows pulled down so conveniently – had nothing on the old buggy.

But enough of such reminiscing; here's the story on the springs written by Mr. Burns. Hope it will help you forget the very cold spell.

About Springs He Has Known

I HAVE always been fascinated by a spring. I suppose it's partly because I was accustomed to going to the well or the pump for a drink of water. If you lived in a town you would just turn a tap for a drink – today it's known as a faucet.

I recall one of the first springs I drank from was up along a brook at the head of Fox River, while trout fishing with my father. Since then I have sampled water from probably 50 or more springs on this Island.

One of the early springs that I used to stop at was the one just East of Churchill on the South side of the road. It ran out of a trough, or pipe; it's probably still running but the highway is built up in that area and the hollow in the road is no more.

There's another refreshing spring at Gunn's Bridge, in the Millvale area.

Water For Locomotive

THERE MUST be numerous springs along the railway right-of-way. When the railroad first came to Prince Edward Island the builders were obliged to lay some of the track close by a spring, or brook as that was the only way to get water for the locomotive which served the purpose until the advent of the upright water tanks.

I suppose the best known spring on the Island is the one at the Devil's Punchbowl in the Granville area. That is always an interesting place to visit for a drink, providing you are a good climber.

Good springs seem to be always in out of the way places, off the main thoroughfare. Although I can recall a few that can be seen as one drives along the highway, there is one almost on the shoulder of the road in the Dundas Centre crossroad area. I think it is by the road as you drive down toward Poplar Point.

Another is seen as you drive East on the St. Peter's road, just before you come to the field where the Scotchfort Settlers' Monument stood – it has since been moved farther East on the North side of the road.

More springs visible from the road are located in the Churchill area, the Suffolk road on the right going north, and there is a pool of springs in the Watervale area.

One of the most remote in my mind is one running into the Midgell River on the East bank. As you stand on what is left of an old road bridge you can hear the spring water falling into the stream; that is how I first found it.

A spring I call at often is located 200 feet from the highway down a lane on an abandoned farm just off the pavement, north of Caledonia, in the Bellevue area.

There are still many good springs along the shores of the Island but some are all filled in and neglected and all that remains are a few old barrel hoops and staves.

The fresh water spring was very important to the farmer in the early days; it provided a cool place to store the milk and to this day you can sometimes see some of the small buildings, or shelters over the springs, the fallen remains of others.

I recall one in the Point Pleasant area and one in the Tracadie Station area, and there must be many more.

There are a few springs on the shore in back of the late Senator J.P. MacIntyre's property in the Savage Harbor area, and a similar group on the Morell River above and below Indian Bridge.

I WOULD be interested in seeing the spring the Skye pioneers used when they first landed on the Polly, a spring of such importance should be preserved. If easily accessible by road be converted into a small picnic site by the Provincial Government and also brought to the attention of the Historic Sites and Monument Board.

South of the Seal River Bridge, on the east bank of the river, there's a very fast flowing spring, right by a lone Birch tree, it seems to be running right out of the cliff.

There is another fast flowing spring at South Lake. Right close by are two old cellar depressions, no doubt this was the source of fresh water for some of the very early French settlers in this area.

When DeRoma first landed at Brudenell Point, I understand the source of water was a spring on the Brudenell River side of the point.

The French settlers at Crapaud in 1750 used the spring that is close by a cemetery in that village.

Mineral Spring In Douglas Area

ONE I would like to see sometime is the Mineral Spring that the early Bishop Bernard MacEachern used to obtain water, somewhere in the Dundas area I am told. Of course I should mention the nice spring on the nature trail at Stanhope.

One I had almost forgotten is located at Finlayson's Mill in the Point Pleasant Park area, just before you cross the dam road down on the shore, running out below a large tree. There are others in the Greek River shore; a very good one is hard alongside Cohoon's Wharf.

A spring at Clearspring, up in Lot 44, does not seem to be very active. Any stranger passing along that way would be likely to miss it as it has been neglected over the years; it is almost on the road but it is nice and clear if you follow the water about 50 feet.

If you are driving West on the Trans-Canada highway in the Churchill area, take the little used road on the right, just before you come to the entrance of the Strathgartney Park; there is a nice spring on the right, down a ways.

Spring At Hazel Grove

ONE SPRING I will always remember is the one at Hazel Grove, on the left going west. It's in a hollow, just before you come to the school.

Many years ago there was a ram at the spring to force the water up the hill to the farmhouse; there is a ram in operation now in Strathgartney Park.

There must be many springs on the Island close to the highway that could be marked with a simple 'Spring Water Ahead', placed on both sides of the road. Which reminds me of the nice one on the highway not far from Bangor, no doubt many Islanders have stopped at that well-marked spring flowing out of the granite rock; my first visit there was in a Model T Ford in 1929.

A list of springs would not be complete without mentioning the one that gave Spring Park its name; it served a useful purpose during the construction of the Charlottetown Water system, and probably before it.

Several truckmen sold water around the streets for a penny a bucket.

Mr. Burns would like to hear of "many more springs" that he has missed.