

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Thurs. August 24, 1967

ACROSS THE ISLAND

1st Roller-Bearing Block Built Here

THE WORLD'S first Roller-bearing block was built right here in Charlottetown, Joe Curran, 12 Lewis Street told me recently. Mr. Curran has the original block in his home, it was developed and built by Watson Duchemin away back in 1827.

Mr. Duchemin – he was the great grandfather of Lillian DuChemin, Charlottetown – not only conceived the idea of the roller bearings but he built the block right here in his machine shop. And the workmanship on it is really good, even when judged by today's standard of excellence in fine workmanship, with the latest in mechanical devices.

The Duchemin block – it's a two-pulley block like you use in a block and tackle arrangement – was patented in Paris. Just why he sent to Paris for the patent is not known. He sold a half-interest in the invention in 1853 to a man in Boston. The price was \$850. And Mr. Curran has the agreement of sale.

Family Name Was Julien

THE DUCHEMINS were originally called Julien, they were Huguenots. When they were fleeing from France they came to a cross roads and then changed their name to "Du Chemin" which means "of the road", hence the name Duchemin.

The newly named Duchemins crossed the Channel Islands and reached this Island by way of Newfoundland, Mr. Curran told me.

Watson Duchemin would be the grandfather of Alfred and Ernest Duchemin who ran a lumber mill in the city some years ago. I remember that it was still in operation when I used to haul shavings for poultry litter in the middle 1940's. I believe it was on the site now occupied by Associated Shippers.

Watson Duchemin was a skilled and talented workman. He built three pipe organs. One of them was installed in the Anglican Church at St. Eleanors about 1855. So far as Mr. Curran can estimate, the organ was there for perhaps 60 years or more.

Mr. Curran has that organ in his barn now, though it is dismantled at the present time. He bought it at a sale. He put one bid on it and it was his, nobody else was interested.

Museum Need Is Emphasized

THE BLOCK doesn't belong to Mr. Curran, it was given to him by the late Ernest Duchemin for safekeeping. Joe would like to see a museum provided here to contain valuable items of historic interest, like ones he has – he has many of them – and others in the province.

I don't know the date but the first Indian encampment in this general area was on the shore below Lou Henry's farm on the Keppoch Road, Southport, Mr. Curran tells me.

There was a spring there where the Indians got their water. Due to the erosion of the land along the shore, the spring is now out in the sand on the beach. But at low tide you can still see the water oozing out of the old spring, Mr. Curran observed.

It was from there that the Indians were moved to Rocky Point. I was told the idea at first had been put to the Indians in the area that is now known as Victoria Park, but the authorities changed their minds and took them across the river, he added.

IF THIS old story is true it must have been many years ago that the transfer took place. I talked this week with Martin Mitchell at Rocky Point. He told me his grandfather Chief Jim Louis Mitchell died in 1902 at the age of 96, and he had been born on the Rocky Point Reservation and that takes the reservation back close to 1800. It may even be older than that.

New Houses At Lennox Island

IT'S STILL classed as a reservation but there are no Indians there. Most moved to Lennox Island in 1947 when the government built new houses, and a new school there, Mr. Mitchell told me

I attended the official opening of the new school, and the Indian Agent's office, in September 3, 1947. I was writing the story for the Patriot and Calvin Lewis was writing for the Guardian.

After the ceremonial part of the day, most of the visitors including Calvin and I, went down to the school basement where large boxes of sandwiches and other eats were stacked.

I guess we had a few ourselves first, but I remember that Calvin and I were stealing sandwiches from the ample boxes and passing them out through the basement windows to the dozens of Indian youngsters who were squatted low on the ground. We were making sure those youngsters were going to have a special feed, even though they were being ignored by most of the people who came from the mainland to put on the official opening ceremonies.

I VISITED Lennox Island a few days ago but didn't think to look for some of the people who might have been on the receiving end of our sandwich stealing that day.

I talked briefly with Chief James Sark who is 28, and was wondering afterwards if he might have been one of the youngsters, but I didn't think of it until I was on the little ferry crossing back to Port Hill.

Mr. Mitchell Is Independent

MR. MITCHELL, incidentally, doesn't believe in keeping Indians on reservations where the government contributes to their livelihood. He left the reservation a long time ago, he told me, and he has never had any trouble earning a living. He worked as a carpenter for many years. Right now he's in charge of the Micmac Village at Rocky Point, a commercial venture

Mr. Curran had many other stories for me. One or two of them are particularly interesting. I'll tell you about them in a future column.

'Recipe For Perfect Love'

IT'S CUSTOMARY, I believe, to send recipes to a young bride and our Betty Carol – she's being married tomorrow - received a number of them. But one was just a bit different.

It's called "A Recipe for a Happy Marriage" and here it is:

"One million pounds of thoughtfulness,
One million pounds of kindness,
One million pounds of tenderness,
One million pounds of forgiving,
One million pounds of trust!
One million pounds of pleasant memories.
Sprinkle generously with kisses, about a billion pounds;
The finished product is Perfect Love."

I was home when the two friends, man and wife, came in with their gift – this recipe was inside of it. I told the lady she was boasting, but I do know her marriage, hers and her husband's, is an unusually happy one.

Sorry, I couldn't persuade her to let me use her name.