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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Land Of Heaven Tag Is Applied

By NEIL A. MATHESON

“OH, YOU PEOPLE are from the land of heaven. How are things on Prince Edward Island?”

The greeting came from a female U.S. Customs officer as Mrs. Matheson and I waited in line at Bar Harbor, Maine, after crossing on the Bluenose ferry from Yarmouth.

In case some readers do not know, I was married July 18 to Mrs. Ella Court of Mount Stewart and we were on our honeymoon when we got the warm greeting from the American lady who assured us that she had visited our Island several times, and was looking forward to doing so again.

The Customs line had been moving slowly, several cars had been pulled out for closer examination, when the “land of heaven” greeting came. Our car moved through with a minimum of delay. We didn't have anything dutiable anyway.

We drove along the southern shore of Nova Scotia from the Bedford area and enjoyed the province's people. But we were disappointed with the lack of scenery.

Shore Scene Missing

ON THE MAP it looked as though we would be driving along the shore and would be seeing the water much of the journey. Instead we drove for the most part through woods and land that gave no glimpse of the sea.

Driving into the Bridgewater area we naturally wondered if we would see any ox teams. Many keep ox teams for pulling competitions at the various county fairs; in November the winners meet at Halifax for top competition at the Atlantic Winter Fair.

Just when we decided we were not going to see any oxen, we came around a bend in the road and there was a single ox hitched to a hay wagon. The load was fairly big and three people accompanied the animal, the white face indicated its Hereford breeding.

We spent three days in the southern part of Nova Scotia, and enjoyed the natural friendliness of the people. If my friend Ernie Himmelman of LaHave sees this, I did think about calling on you, then remembered that on our honeymoon trip I had resolved to leave anything like column visits strictly alone.

Some 12 years ago I visited Bar Harbor in the after-tourist season and was told tourism was the industry there. That was evident this time when we stopped at one of their motels and one of their best restaurants. The appointments were good, so was the service, but we got the impression that it was all strictly a business operation. The visitor was welcome for the money he would leave in the place, and for nothing else.

Strictly For Business

THERE WAS NO lack of attention, nobody was discourteous and everything was adequate. But, that warmth of welcome that we experienced in Nova Scotia, for example – visitors tell us they also get it here – was really missing.

We saw several interesting things on our visit, some of them really took our eye.

On the Bluenose, Ella noticed a girl with a shopping bag slung from her shoulder. In the bag was a French poodle who appeared satisfied and content to ride that way. The poodle kept its head, and part of its neck out of the bag just enough to watch proceedings around him. At times the husband would lift the dog to his shoulder, then return it to the shopping bag-type of transportation. I've seen lots of things carried in a shopping bag, this is the first time I saw a poodle get that treatment.

We ate dinner one day at the Indian Gardens restaurant, just outside Bridgewater. A chartered bus had appropriated the dining room as the passengers ate a leisurely meal – we ate in the adjoining restaurant.

Suddenly there was a rush of anxious women, accompanied by high-pitched screams of distress.

Their bus had moved from their parking spot, and the ladies thought they had been left alone to get back to the United States. Happily, however, somebody told them the bus driver had moved a short distance to a service station. He would be back for them.

Large Blueberries

WE BOUGHT A BOX of blueberries in Ellsworth, Maine, that made our blueberries look like pygmies by size comparison, but the big berries were flat and all but tasteless. I did not have a chance to ask where they came from, where they were grown and some other questions that appealed to me.

Charges vary widely for overnight accommodation. WE paid all the way from \$24 at Bar Harbor, to the nine dollars we paid just outside of St. John. All of the motels were comfortable and satisfactory. I wondered, though, at the great difference in costs.

In Ellsworth we saw an unusual looking cat. It had long hair, something like the Persian breed. The motel manager told us, though, that it was a "Coon cat" and it was 15 years old.

The trip turned up something most unusual for me. From the time I left Borden, until I arrived back at Tormentine again, I did not meet one person I knew, nor did I meet anyone who knew me.

Ella beat me there; she met a Customs officer at Calais whom she knew. I forgot his name but he is married to a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bagnall, Hunter River.

Tobacco Tins At Customs

THAT REMINDS ME of the 1956 visit to Bar Harbor. In the car with me were Alex Matheson – he was premier at the time -, J. Lincoln Dewar, and Dr. Frank MacKinnon. Frank had bought some five-pound tins of tobacco in the United States and we were approaching Calais and the Canadian Customs.

There I met a chap with whom I had been associated at Mount Allison University some 25 years previously. My friend took all of us on a tour of the base, then he said good-bye as we thanked him for the tour.

Frank had given me several tins of tobacco to declare, as we had neared Calais – I did not smoke. As we drove away from the Customs office, he observed that he wished he had bought several more tins in Uncle Sam's domain.

Ella and I completed our honeymoon trip without being spotted as newly-weds – with one exception. The lady at the Mariner Motel just outside Bridgewater opined that she thought we must be just that. We replied in the affirmative.

The Mariner, incidentally, is a good place to visit. It's complete with an attractive swimming pool.