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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Cartier Cairn Gone, Who Authorized It?

By NEIL A. MATHESON

ISLAND HISTORIAN T. Edgar MacNutt has raised the question of what has happened to the Jacques Cartier cairn, and the plaques, one in French the other in English, that were unveiled here with impressive ceremony, and many important people in attendance more than 32 years ago.

Hon. Pierre Etienne Flandin, France's minister of public works led a delegation of 600 people that came here from that European country on the liner Champlain. Some of the top men of Canada's government were here – a Patriot headline of the time said important people from four countries were here for the event.

The cairn and tablets were unveiled on August 24, 1934. I remember that date very well for I was married next day to Margaret Miller, the wonderful girl who is still my sweetheart.

(To the hundreds who ask for her every time they meet me, Mrs. Matheson is making definite, though slow progress toward what we hope will be a really good recovery.) The story of our wedding was published in the Patriot on August 25 of that year, the same day as were the stories of the Cartier cairn unveiling and there were no papers left when we got back from our honeymoon. Of course I told them that the reason the papers sold so well was the story of our wedding. I recall, though, that a friend, Marion MacMillan, was able to steal a couple of copies for me from a half-dozen the paper normally kept for filing, and for future emergencies.

### 600 Aboard French Liner

MAJOR MACNUTT tells me the Liner Champlain anchored outside Fitzroy Rock with 600 passengers from France, including about one hundred official representatives of the French government. These people were transferred to the Cartier and some to the car ferry Prince Edward Island and taken to the railway wharf and an elaborate official welcome. The Champlain could not dock here owing to its size apparently.

A military guard of honor was present and the visiting dignitaries were escorted through the flag-bedecked streets by a troop of cavalry, to the cairn in Queen Square.

Lieutenant-Governor George DeBlois welcomed the visitors – he later unveiled the cairn. D.C. Harvey, provincial archivist for Nova Scotia – he was a native of Cape Traverse – was the capable chairman. Dr. W. J. P. MacMillan was premier at the time and he spoke on behalf of the province.

One of the most interested participants was Mr. Justice A. E. Arsenault, a former premier of the province, who is still living here in Charlottetown.

### Celebration Was "Grand Affair"

IT WAS A grand affair and the afternoon's proceedings wound up with a garden party at Government House. Meanwhile the distinguished French visitors had been met and

greeted in fitting style in the Confederation Chamber and still later visited the Experimental Farm.

In attendance at the official ceremony had been units of the Militia, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, school children and an immense number of other citizens.

John LeBlanc of The Canadian Press wrote in part at the time:

“The old grey walls of the Provincial Building never witnessed a scene of greater historic importance than that which was enacted yesterday in the unveiling of the Cartier Memorial Cairn. Present for the occasion, the fourth century of the Cartier landfall in this province, were distinguished representatives of the French nation, leaders high in the political life of Canada and thousands of spectators from all over the Island.”

### Why Was Cairn Destroyed?

THE QUESTION today, Major MacNutt states with justifiable emphasis is “why was the Cairn destroyed and by whose authority?” That’s a good question. It’s being asked by many others besides Mr. MacNutt. It’s deserving of an answer.

Mr. MacNutt has heard two stories concerning the two plaques which adorned the monument. One suggests they have been saved and have been sent to Saint John where they will be stored in a government building. The other suggests they will be stored here.

I join with this student of Island history in expressing the hope that some official information will be available, “regarding the plaques and the early restoration of the cairn”.

He suggests the new site be in front of the Provincial Administrative building on Rochford Street.

“Let us not forget our past,” he observes, “but rather remember the words of Joseph Howe ‘A wise nation preserves its records, gathers up its monuments, decorates the tombs of its illustrious dead, repairs its great structures and fosters national pride and love of country, by perpetual references to the sacrifices and glories of the past.’”

CAPT. PERCY WHITE, Murray Harbor recalls that he was one of the 21 men that went aboard the CGS Stanley to free her from the ice jam in which she was caught and he did not see a horse aboard. I don’t know, Mr. White, could that have been on a different occasion to the one about which George Keilly was talking about, as I noted in last week’s column?

As to your query as to whether the date was 1902, rather than 1905, I just don’t know. Mr. Keilly died since I wrote the column and I have no means of enquiring further about the matter. I do recall that he thought it was in 1905 but he was not sure of it, so your date could be right. Capt. White tells me that the men who freed the icebreaker at the time were from Murray Harbor, Beach Point, Guernsey Cove and Cape Bear. “I think it took us most of a week to get her into Pictou,” he explains. And that interests me sir. I’d like to talk to you about that experience when I am able to travel your way.

### Will Bill Cody Letters Persist

I CONTINUE to get calls and letters about the Wild Bill Cody columns. Mrs. J. E. Fleming, Charlottetown – she was formerly of Stanley Bridge – and Heath Macquarrie,

MP are two of the most recent. Mrs. Fleming visited the site of Cody's grave some years ago.

Mrs. Matheson told me that "Wild Bill was a hunting companion of her uncle James Haywood who came from Tignish. I'm wondering if any of the Haywood family in the Tignish area ever heard from James Haywood – he lived in Montana – concerning the colorful scout.

As I've said in previous columns I've quoted former Islanders who said Wild Bill had been born here. On the other hand there are supposedly well documented books that trace his family history back through American parentage. I leave it at that, I can do no more.

A letter this week from Rev. John E. Cash, Grand River contains a clipping from the Denver Register which says that Father Christopher Walsh became famous because he baptized Cody into the Roman Catholic faith. Cody, a Mason, had made the request, The Register said.

From that day on Father Walsh was known as "the man who baptized Buffalo Bill" and "was interviewed countless times and received mail from all over the world from the curious who sought further information regarding the baptism".

Buffalo Bill was known all over the world, apparently. The story Father Cash has passed along to me is one more among countless yarns about this colorful frontiersman.