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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Ghostly Site Is Gone As New Road Is Built

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial-Farm Editor

I was on the way back from Borden earlier this week when I travelled across country from Crapaud to Rose Valley. I wanted to see what the highway department people are doing with the road through the old settlement where I spent my boyhood days. I experienced changes, but I saw much more than I had bargained for.

To start with, the old Rose Valley hall is gone. It stood there, not far from the church, for as long as I can remember. Murdock MacKinnon bought it, I am told. He intended to make a barn out of it. But the building collapsed when it was close to its destination – it was being hauled by a bull dozer. So the old hall has disappeared completely.

For older readers, Rose Valley natives who may be far away, Mr. MacKinnon is a son of the man we knew as “Donald Jim” MacKinnon, and a grandson of the man I knew in my youth as Murdock Harvey – his right name was Murdock MacKenzie.

Visiting with some close relatives in the Valley – I just had to talk to somebody about the changes – they told me they had heard a neighbor recall when Gaelic services were held in the hall, and the English services were in the church. “And both buildings were filled to capacity.”

That’s a far cry from today when the people who attend Rose Valley and many other rural churches, are pitifully few by comparison.

New Road Is Really Something

THE ROAD they’re building in Rose Valley is what really took my eye. The Todd hill, for example, must be 200 feet in width – if you consider the removal of snow traps, the road is even wider.

The old church yard is practically extinct. Returning visitors will blink their eyes in amazement. It’s progress, and the young people go along with it. But the older Rose Valley folk are not favorably impressed.

Remember the horse shed they built at the church in our fathers’ time? William Kennedy bought it some time ago, hauled it to Stanchel in two pieces, set them well apart from each other, built a much higher section in the middle, and he has what appears to be a large and useful barn.

Remember the ghost story I wrote several years ago about the man whose wagon was being followed by a pig? When he got out of the wagon and struck the pig, a girl’s voice from the animal asked “Why did you hit me, John?”

Ghost Story Locale Is Gone

THE SPOT was on a shaded road, just before you reach Rose Valley from Stanchel. Well the shady spot is gone. They're widening the road, and straightening it, so you'd never know it.

The new road cuts straight across the hollow of the farm we knew as Captain Buchanan's when I was a boy. It goes across the Dixon Road, well behind the house we knew as Alex Nicholson's, and later as Jimmie Nicholson's. And the road passes in front of Wesley MacNevin's house. Then it comes out on the old road almost in front of Stanchel School.

I've used the older names of the Nicholsons and Wesley MacNevin because I do not know the people who live there now. Wesley and Gracie MacNevin live in Hunter River, and Jimmie Nicholson is in the Toronto area, so far as I know.

The old Todd hill – it's about one-half mile long – creeps up toward the church. I use the word "creep" advisedly, because we did almost creep when we negotiated it by horse-drawn carriage or sleigh. Now we zip over it at 60 miles per hour, and we scarcely know there's a hill there.

Incidentally the people along that road are going to see more traffic than they ever did before, once the new road is completed. That's the best route from Charlottetown to Summerside by a long way, so far as I'm concerned. You can roll along at a fast pace with scarcely a curve on the entire road. Once you turn at Molyneaux's corner in North River, you don't hit anything like a curve until you hit Bedeque, if my memory serves me correctly.

Police Patrol Road To Ferry

AND THAT reminds me that a New Brunswick lady in one of our cottages told me this week she was fined \$10 Sunday for speeding on the road to Tormentine and the car ferry. I pass this on because it's the first time I ever heard of the police checking speed on that stretch of road. I thought the police had been told to keep away from that stretch of road. It's the only piece of road on which I travel that I consistently drive well above the speed limit. That, of course, is because one never knows whether he's going to make the next ferry or not. Next time, though, I'll be more careful, after hearing the police do actually check on speeding.

Talking of the car ferry reminds me that there were lineups of waiting cars at Borden last Sunday afternoon that stretched for two miles from the ferry, according to my information. A young lady in the restaurant, Borden Inn, told me Sunday the cars had been lined back as far as Marie's canteen. I measured the distance from the boat and made it two miles, almost exactly.

Blue Lobsters At Gaspereaux

THIS STORY comes to me from Grant Graham and Mrs. Graham, Gaspereaux through our mutual friend Wendell Mutch, a former Southport neighbor, who lives now in Charlottetown.

The Grahams showed him two lobsters that were completely blue, Wendell said. He also saw another lobster that was completely blue on one side while the other was the normal lobster color.

Wendell tells me that the Grahams told him they had rarely seen the like before and the Graham family have been buying and handling lobsters for many years.