

The Guardian, Charlottetown, Mon., May 3, 1971

## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Hunting Tragedy Story Recalled

By NEIL A. MATHESON

"Tragedy to Goose Hunters" is the name Morley M. Bell gives to this rather unusual tale he is good enough to share with "Across the Island" readers.

The Summerside Queens Counsel tells the story like this:

The late George W. Sharpe of East Bideford, P.E.I. besides operating a large farm (subsequently owned by his son the late Shelton Sharpe) was also Federal Fishery Inspector for West Prince.

During the spring seasons when the ice was safe enough to travel and when openings began to appear, many hunters including the late George W. Sharpe, used to build blinds, mostly from ice cakes near such openings and shoot wild geese and Brant, as they flew into these openings to feed.

On April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1878, Mr. Sharpe received a letter from farther West asking him to go West on official business. While having supper a neighbor, Andrew Blacquiere who lived over a mile away, on his way home, looked down towards Nigger Point, a short distance from where Mr. Sharpe and his friends had been doing their shooting that spring.

### Winding White Sheet Swinging

HE SAW what appeared to him as a long winding white sheet suspended in the air, and slowly swinging in the light breeze. In those days where people lived close to nature, it was not uncommon for them to see signs which warned of danger and very often such portents turned out to be real ones.

Mr. Blacquiere immediately turned and cut across the snow-covered fields, in some places up to his thighs, and proceeded towards his friend's house to give him warning, as he had heard that Mr. Sharpe had intended to go shooting the following day.

### Man Arrives Almost Exhausted

HE ARRIVED at Mr. Sharpe's almost exhausted from wading over a mile through deep snow! He told Mr. Sharpe what he had seen and asked Mr. Sharpe not to go hunting the following day. Mr. Sharpe told him that he had to go West and was not, therefore, going goose hunting the next day. Mr. Blacquiere thus assured, made his way back home in the darkness. Mr. Sharpe went west that evening by train.

The following morning two hunters from Summerside, Alex Rayner and a Mr. MacKay, arrived from Summerside and after putting their horse in Mr. Sharpe's stable started across the ice towards the shooting rig.

AT THAT time of year the ice was safe in certain places which would be known to Mr. Sharpe and others in that area, but in other places, such as over channels, it was quite thin, which would not be known to strangers.

THE MEN never returned. Mr. Sharpe returned home the next day and a search was made, but no trace of the men could be found, so it was naturally concluded that they had wandered into thin ice and were lost.

Died On April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1878

IN THE SPRING when the ice was gone in the Bay, the remains of Alex Rayner were found, but no trace was ever found of MacKay. Among other names on the high I.O.O.F. monument in the People's Cemetery, Summerside, is this simple inscription "Alex Rayner died April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1878" The portent in this case turned out to be true.

Nigger Point at the end of Hog Island got its name as follows: Many years ago, a Mr. Hardy had a negro employee, or possibly a run-away slave and he took him down the sand hills which connect with Hog Island to cut hay on the sand hills. It was a very cold day in the fall and the negro was ill-clad and most likely, just as poorly fed. He hesitated to go to work, so his boss attempted to persuade him with a club.

THE NEGRO put up some defense and he was clubbed to death. Nothing further was done about it as the "boss" stated that the Negro attacked him. The Point was afterwards known as "Nigger Point".

The above information was given to me by Mrs. George Harris, a daughter of the late George W. Sharpe, and a sister of the late Shelton Sharpe. She states that the above information was well known by the older residents of East Bideford.

#### Captain Kidd's Treasure

MUCH HAS been written about the notorious Captain Kidd and many is the tale that has been told of great treasures buried by this pirate of old, in caves and inlets along the coast.

"Agricola" – his right name was Richard Hurst and he lived in the Brackley area – wrote many an interesting column for this paper in days that are gone. Looking through some of his material a few nights ago, I found a reference to Kidd.

Talking of the many stories of buried treasure, buried by Kidd as the stories had it, Agricola told of some of the portents that caused people to set out on treasure hunts.

If a man dreamed once of Kidd treasure, it was more than interesting. If he dreamed twice about the same place, the treasure was there for sure.

#### Diggers Had To Be Silent

SOMEHOW the legend developed that a man, or men, had to find the spot and dig in complete silence.

The late Keith Matheson, O'Leary, told me once of a spot not too far from the Cape Wolfe and West Cape areas, where a group of men were digging one night, they had actually uncovered an iron chest, and were carrying it to a place where they could examine it when one man grunted "My God, it's heavy", and with that a tempest and storm came up and the treasure had disappeared by the time quiet and calm had been restored.

One of the more oft quoted stories of pirate gold was to the effect that the pirate captain buried his treasure, then killed a member of his crew and placed his body atop the treasure. Thus the treasure would be "watched and guarded".

There are dozens of tales, but nobody really knows whether there ever was any treasure buried. Be that as it may, the stories told of the pirate's treasures were many and amusing.