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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Interesting Stories Heard In W. Prince

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PAT AND Harris Callaghan gave me an interesting story about the drilling for coal that was done on the Callaghan farm at Miminegash, when I called on them during my most recent trip to West Prince. The drilling, in 1909, was authorized by the responsible federal government department, and the actual drilling was done by an American outfit.

The 18-inch casing was hauled from St. Louis - the casing is still there after 54 years - and they had a big steam boiler to generate power. They even had a dynamo to provide electric lights for the around-the-clock drilling, and that certainly must have been the first time for electric lights in that area of the country.

A tower was built 75 feet in height for the drill rig and the men worked two 12-hour shifts.

The outfit had its own forge to keep the drills sharp, and Pat recalled they had used coke fuel to get enough heat to temper the drills. Two men with huge sledge hammers would pound out the heavy steel for the needed cutting edge.

THE FINAL shift went on at 12 o'clock midnight and the men came back to the house - they boarded at Callaghan's home - and said the hole had plugged up. Apparently it caved in somewhere below the casing, which only went down part of the way. The drill and the drill stem are still in the hole, which went down 1,670 feet.

I recall that at 210 feet the government inspector said indications of coal were better than any other he had ever seen, Harris Callaghan told me. And Pat added that the drill team had hit a vein of slate at 1,000 feet and had struck a seam of coal - a poor quality coal apparently, a little later on.

The last of the rigging was hauled away on the last sleigh roads that spring, I was told, after the hole had been abandoned. The drillers prepared or purchased a steel ball, just slightly smaller than the 18-inch casing, and dropped it into the hole, thus sealing it off from anyone else who might be tempted to dig, and have a free ride more than 1,600 feet down.

Another Treasure Chest Story

THERE ARE many treasure chest stories told around the Island. Pat Callaghan, Miminegash recalled that a Mrs. John Wedge had told a Gordon man many years ago about an iron chest she had seen on the shore near Deadman's Point, perhaps a mile away. She had tried to open it without success, and it was too heavy to lift and carry away.

Gordon left his fishing boat and gear at Miminegash harbor and never returned for them. The suggestion is that he got the chest and a treasure, for "he never worked again and he always had plenty of money", I was told.

People often dug holes for treasure on the shore near Deadman's Point, Mr. Callaghan and Ernie Myers told me. Mr. Callaghan recalls seeing people dig there and he is only a comparatively young man. Divining rods were used and as is so often the case, the diggers had to keep strict silence, and often the work had to be done after midnight.

I recall that Keith Matheson, O'Leary told me a group of men were said to have uncovered a treasure chest once in the West Point or Cape Wolfe area. They had lifted it and had just started to carry it away when one of them exclaimed "My God, it's heavy" and the thing plunged back into the hole and they lost it. If the old yarn sounds fantastic today, so are many others told of treasure hunts around the Island's shores.

Moving Stock 60 Years Ago

A TALK with Allan Clark, Alma - I was attending the 50th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Clark while I was hunting stories in mid-October - proved interesting for he told me about his stock from Malpeque 60 years ago. And he drove them, of course. There was no other way to transport cattle then.

They came to Miscouche the first night, to the end of O'Leary road the next night, and they were on the new location at Alma by noon of the third day. They drove seven milk cows, and led one horse, and one foal, behind the wagon which was drawn by a team of horses.

The Clarks shipped machinery by train, and it cost them only \$18 to ship the entire carload from Kensington. "You wouldn't get it moved far now for that money", the bridegroom of 50 years told me. They also brought along some oats, they sold the rest for 27 cents a bushel. Allan - he was a young man then - and a companion handled the job of looking after the cattle and horses. "We had no trouble", he told me.

There were no disc harrows then and no gang plows, he told me. Binders were in use but they had lost theirs by fire. They did have a sectional seeder, though, among other things.

"The Six Senses" Seen At O'Leary

I SAW an unusually attractive antique at Lloyd Gorrill's home in O'Leary when I visited there several months ago. Mrs. Gorrill is the former Helen Gladys MacGregor, O'Leary and the antique belonged originally, she told me, to "my grandmother's great grandmother."

Called "The Six Senses", it illustrates in interesting fashion six of the steps that lead through courtship, marriage and the first child.

No.1 is called the "sense of sight" and it pictures the first meeting of a man and a maid.

No. 2, "sense of smell" has to do with "falling in love" and the young lady has the suitor in a rose-scented flower garden and the temptress is reclining in a hammock under the spreading branches of an attractive shade tree.

No. 3 is the "sense of taste" and progress is noted in the love making as the girl adds chocolates to her repertoire as she continues to lure her suitor.

No. 4 is the "sense of hearing" and this time the girl is listening rather anxiously at the keyhole as her lover is asking her father for permission to marry his daughter.

No. 5 is the "sense of touch" as the pair enfold each other in an ardent embrace after they have promised "to love and cherish" in the marriage ceremony, and the final one is entitled "common sense" as the pair experience "the greatest joy" as they enthuse over their first child.

Incidentally Mr. Gorrill showed me an old mud-digger that was used several years ago by the West Prince Fish and Game Association to clear out a trout stream at Little Pierre Jacques, not far from O'Leary. The frame of the digger is still on the spot; the capstan part is stored at Clarence MacWilliam's farm.

Also at the Gorrill home I saw an old double-barrelled, flint lock hun rifle that he bought at Major Boulter's sale in Milburn and which he believes is approximately 150 years old.