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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Pleasant View Hotel At Hampton Recalled

By NEIL A. MATHESON

MY THANKS to Florence J. Inman, Hillcrest Avenue for a description of the Pleasant View Hotel which was located in Hampton.

I heard about this tourist spot from my cousin Donald McLure who went to drive a team of handsome black horses from the hotel at Hampton to meet guests at Breadalbane which would probably be fifteen miles away.

Miss Inman suggests the Pleasant View Hotel was probably one of the first, if not the first summer hotel on the south side of the Island. And she's probably right, though my knowledge of that particular thing is hazy.

As she tells it the hotel was situated in the beautiful Hampton Beach area near the mouth of the DeSable River, overlooking the Northumberland Strait.

The hotel was owned and operated by Hon. Matthew Smith and his wife, Mrs. Sarah Lea Smith.

The resort was opened late in the last century, she believes, though she has no definite date in mind. Mr. Smith passed away in March 1909 after catching cold at the session of the Provincial Legislature in Charlottetown.

Hotel Of Colonial Design

THE HOTEL was a two-storey farm house of Colonial design. Built on to it for the enterprise were two large ells, one for bedrooms, the other for a large kitchen where two ranges, possibly Home Comforts, a popular range of that day and age, which would burn either hardwood or coal and would turn out sizzling heat.

Even in the hottest days of summer, and that was the time when tourist visitors were at their peak, Mrs. Smith and her staff would work over the stoves, despite the heat.

As my informant observes, there were no electric fans to cool the place in those far-off days.

The large farm ran from the main road, as it was called then to the shore, now the Trans Canada Highway.

My informant agrees the distance from the Pleasant View Hotel site was about 15 miles. She described the beautiful pair of horses, to which my cousin so often referred.

They hauled the passengers, or 'boarders' as they were called at that time, Miss Inman reports, in a large double-seated coach.

Another man followed with an express wagon to transport the luggage of the guests, many of whom came from the United States.

Trips To Victoria

THERE WERE also two or three trips a week made to Victoria, she recalls. At that time Victoria was a thriving village, an active trading place – the old Wright Brothers

store is the one I recall best, though that would be several years after the above reference.

The trips to Victoria were to meet the Harland on her tri-weekly trips, she recalls, with a cargo of goods for the merchants of that thriving village, which at that time boasted five stores, all doing a thriving business, now, sad to say has dwindled down to one small store.

Many Charlottetown folk took advantage of the opportunity to spend their vacations at this fine hotel, returning at vacation's end, by the Harland.

"There was always a flag at the top of the mast at the Hotel, during the summer, which was quite a novelty for us youngsters, who would rush to an upstairs lookout through the window on hearing the steamer's whistle, when it got opposite the hotel, and see the flag dipped three times in reply, which meant 'we are ready to meet you in Victoria' when there were boarders aboard."

Old Fashioned Radar

THIS WAS the type of "radar" they had in those days of tourist catering, Miss Inman suggests.

Later at Pleasant View, she writes, a more up-to-date coach was purchased, one with a fringe on top; a large coach house was built, with stalls for the horses, and sleeping quarters on the second floor for the coachmen.

"Also in the building was a beautiful rubber-tired driving carriage with a large umbrella with a fringe around, drawn by a real beauty of a carriage horse."

This was for the convenience of Mr. and Mrs. Smith's eldest daughter and her family, she having married a wealthy American and who spent the summer at Pleasant View.

Following Mr. Smith's death, the hotel was taken over by their son-in-law Lewis Taylor and his wife, who operated the Pleasant View until it was destroyed by fire – the year she does not recall.

The hotel had attracted many notable people, in her view, amongst which were some wonderful musicians and entertainers.

Concerts In Dining Room

THOSE KINDLY folks, Miss Inman recalls, gave generously of their talents to hold concerts in the large dining room at the hotel and also in the public hall at Hampton Corner, thus adding to the enjoyment of the people of that community.

Fished In Large Quantities

JOHN ARCHIE MacDonald, Nine Mile Creek died in 1962 at the age of 96 years, but some of his thoughts and stories have come to me through the kindness of his daughter, Mary Margaret – Mrs. Bruce Smith, New Dominion.

"I started fishing with my father when I couldn't see over the top of his boat. First I fished herring, sold them at the Market Square in Charlottetown. What was not sold we used for fertilizer. One year they were so plentiful we could scoop them up by the basket full."

Mr. MacDonald continued “after I fished lobsters; they were so plentiful we couldn’t go out in the gullies on our bare feet, as they would bite us.”

Lobsters Plentiful, 40 Cts. A Cwt.

“WE MADE traps with large hoops and net fastened all around this, hung down like a bag. We would put it out and wait until it would fill with lobsters, then haul it up and take out the fish, then put it back again.

“We would do this until we had enough for the day. We used sail boats at the time – the price of lobsters was 40 cents a hundred pounds.

The children would come and say “Please, Give me a cent lobster, mister!”

The first factory to which I sold fish was owned by Charlie Lyons of Charlottetown. His factory was at St. Peter’s Island.

Later Ralph and Baxter came. I drove them to buy the land on which they built the factory. I helped them to build it. They were known as the Portland Packing Company.”

W. Tidmarsh ran the factory for years. There were many factories along the shore in later years. There were Lunds, MacInnis, Taylor Brothers, Henneberrys, Lyons, Hughes and the Portland Packing Company, all along the shore.