



NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND 1969-1989

by Margaret E. Mallett

THE BEGINNING

A nature walk on a trail in the Dalvay - Stanhope area of the Prince Edward Island National Park in the autumn of 1969 brought together several persons who unwittingly were about to create a bit of history.

It happened thus: Park naturalist Bob Gray was leading the walk. Ruth I. Ross of Charlottetown and friends (former Islanders) Marion and Verna Newson of Vancouver were among those present. In her delight when Bob Gray pointed out a Cedar Waxwing Verna Newson exclaimed, "Ruth, you should start a Natural History Society on the Island"!

This was the spark that would touch off the Natural History Society of Prince Edward Island. Bob Gray was enthusiastically supportive of the idea. Ruth promptly sought guidance from Professor Thomas M. Lothian, an instructor at the former Prince of Wales College and a director of the Canadian Audubon Society. Mr. Lothian assured her that the way was all clear and gave her his blessing. Ruth arranged for a meeting room at the Y.M.C.A. and put a notice in the newspaper inviting "persons interested in Nature and the out-of-doors to meet in Room "B" at the Y.M.C.A., Prince Street, Charlottetown at 8 p.m. October 23, 1969 for the purpose of reactivating a Natural History Society."

Right from the start the Society appeared to be a project whose time had come. A report of the organization meeting appeared in the Charlottetown Guardian of October 27, 1969 and is quoted here verbatim.

NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY REACTIVATED

More than 25 nature-oriented persons met at the Y.M.C.A., Charlottetown, on Thursday evening October 23, 1969 for the purpose of reactivating the Natural History Society. Miss Ruth Ross chaired the meeting.

Highlighting the meeting was a set of color slides photographed and narrated by Bob Gray, naturalist at Prince Edward Island National Park. The series was