COUNTY of INVERNESS

Partici~Paper

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Elwood Hart

Elwood Hart in his furniture workshop. The newer chair is made from the same trade pattern as the old one made by his father.

master of many trades

"No man's work is hard if you know and like what you're doing," says Elwood Hart of North East Margaree. "And I don't like to hear people complaining about no work. There's plenty of work. You just have to make your own job."

Elwood, dressed in jeans and a plaid shirt, with black rubber boots folded down at the top, sat on one of the many chairs he had made through the years, sipping his tea. He is vigorous, his mind a Pandora's Box of people, events, a long telescoping of years of history spanning horse and cart to the space age. He is a man of endless interests and ethusiasms, as reflected in the furnishings and the wealth of artifacts, letters, pictures, books -- virtually a museum in the making right in his own home.

At 13, he was working seven days a week at the carding mill in North East Margaree (the new mill built after the old one burned in 1919)

"Then what happened?" he asked me rhetorically. "People quit raising sheep, and pretty soon the shearings, after the sheep storm in April and May, were not enough to keep the mill going . So that was the end of that.

"So I worked as a wheelwright. Then one day an International Harvester dealer came around , with a steel wagon with rubber wheels. That was the end for wheelwrights.

"The next thing I did was work a thrasher, but folks got so they didn't grow oats anymore.

"In Baddeck I worked at shipbuilding during the war, bringing home $24.00 a week, I would be a rich man now if I had been able to buy the land offered to me at that time. A nice big plot right near where Victoria County Hospital now. But I didn't have the $200.00 they were asking.

"I'm just glad I never was a cobbler," he said, showing me a picture of a cobbler. He pointed out how the man's thumbs were curved sharply back, a consequence of pressing down on leather over many years. "North Star sneakers took away that man's business," he laughed.

"Building homes was a good stable livlihood," he continued, "always somebody who wanted things all done for them.

"But I got too old for the heavy stuff and got to doing more of what my father did: making furniture.

"Work was a natural easy thing in the old days, with trades passed down through several generations. People thought their work was fun."

He then related an anecdote about a farmer he once knew, a man who tended to be rather abrupt and sassy, even with the minister.

Minister: You must find the farm work awful hard. So much to do all the time.

Farmer: Ain't hard at all. It's fun if you know your business.

Minister: Well, I'm finding my work mighty difficult, teaching gospel to these backwards folks around here.

Farmer: That's what happens when you don't know your business.

Elwood then showed me chairs he had made by hand from a trade pattern brought from England by Mark Hart. This is a Windsor Chair," he explained. "Somebody told me once they sell for big money in some places."

Then he showed me a cane-bottom chair from a design made by his father, and a beautiful pine hutch.

"Rural people maybe don"t have lots of money, but they sure are happier than urban people," he concluded. "We work harder for less money, but we enjoy life more."

Mary Anne Ducharme

Letter to the editor

Dear Ms. Ducharme:

Judique's Postmistress Kay Mac Donald sent us a copy of April 86 Partici-Paper, because it had a picture of her brother Kenny Gillis. He saved the life of my wife Annie Laurie on 11 Sept.1984 with his prompt action as a volunteer medic and ambulance driver. In your paper I noticed you are looking for some information on the Old Farmer's Mine in Harbourview.

Just a little background:

In 1935 I married Annie Laurie Graham of Harbourview in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Her brother Alex D. Graham now resides in the Senior Citizen Complex in Judique. In 1936 we drove to Cape Breton and I became a member of the Order of Good Time in Nova Scotia. This year is the 50th Anniversary of same.

Some of the first things I discovered on the shores of the Old Farmer's Mine were huge logs and pieces of petrified wood.

On one of our visits to Cape Breton in 1964 our son and I were beachcombing in the same area, picking up choice pieces of petrified wood when we noticed in a large sandstone bolder, a piece of fossilated bamboo.

In 1973, visiting with our granddaughter again in the same area, she was having fun sliding down on the rocks of Black Sandies Brook. Looking around I saw the same *bolder with the bamboo fossil* sticking about 3/4 from the bolder. Ripe to be plucked.

I borrowed a hammer from Annie Laurie's cousin Buddy Mac Millan whose father was Big Jack Mac Millan and the grandfather John the Wharf.

We fly to Sydney on 6 Sept. and will go thru Whycocomagh on the 7th in the afternoon. There we pick up Rt 252 to drive thru the beautiful glens to Mabou on to Port Hood where we stay at the Hebridan Motel for 2 weeks

During this time the Graham Bash will take place in Judique. It will be Judique on the floor for sure.

Looking forward for our visit to Cape Breton.

Sincerely,
Annie Laurie
Anton & Zenns

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

Viewpoint

Caper in Toronto

I am a country woman with an active aversion to small towns, big towns, and especially cities. I find shopping boring after two hours and rather listen to a recording than go to a live concert. I like looking at trees and hills and think silence is golden. I like to choose my society and then be left alone when I choose. I like a slow pace, contemplation, and my idea of a good time is a glorious read in a new book while sitting quietly at a fireside. High adventure I leave to Rambos of the world while I prefer keeping me in a safe place.

However, my son decided to get married in Toronto.

My scrapes with big cities had been infrequent and mercifully brief in my forty-three years: New York, Montreal, Chicago, Halifax. I wasn't at all prepared for Toronto. Toronto is an entirely different planet than the one we live on in Cape Breton ---- a distant galaxy, light-years away, in a time-warp.

How could anyone imagine that Toronto and Cape Breton both exist in Canada?

The trouble with Toronto is that it is too much a shock to the sensitive nervous system of Capers.

You first get a suspicion that it is coming up when you notice the thickening canopy of power lines near the Trans-Canada, and the whizzing of apparently suicidal Cadillacs and Lincoln Continentals. Then there are vast fields of mushrooming housing developments -- all absolutely new, luxury-class. I won't attempt to convince non-believers about what I saw; I scarcely credit it myself. If one of those housing developments were in Cape Breton it would be the most exciting stimulus to our economy since our bedrock drifted over from Africa. Yet outside Toronto new housing never seems to end, mile after mile after mile after mile . . .

Who will live in these huge houses? Where do they work? Where does the money come from? Why is all the population and wealth of Canada so concentrated?

By the time I had formulated a thousand or so of such questions, my husband and daughter and I were propelled by the traffic at a high rate of speed into the outskirts of the city. We found immediately that our mapped-out course was useless, that road - signs were decipherable only after you've passed them, and that lightning - like reflexes are essential to the surival of tourists surrounded by maniacal hordes of city - bred drivers. They blithely weave across lanes almost as if they knew where they were going. Like ants swarming.

Of course, we became lost almost at once, despite my husband's keen sense of direction that had once gotten us off the Chicago Loop with our bodies and souls still united.

Once we nearly disappeared forever down a trolly-tunnel that whooped up in front of us with its maw open before we realized what it was. By then, my husband was perspering, using language unbecoming to a gentleman, and I had frozen into a permanent cringe with my eyes shielded with clenched hands.

When we were forced by near-suffocation to breathe again, we were hurtled into the bowels of downtown Toronto with its six lanes-of bumper - to - bumper and no apparent provision to park anything larger than a single roller skate. We drove for miles trying to find the street we needed that somehow would lead us to the safety of my son's apartment.

After the joyous reunion, a long rest, and a skirmish with a parking ticket, we were ready for a more rational view of The City The Toronto - phenomenon that most impressed us was the intermingling of races and cultures. True, other cities are cosmopolitan, but Toronto was different. New York has its ghettos and its millionaire's mansions, wherein racial lines are rather severely drawn; in Chicago there are bus stops for blacks, and bus stops for whites and restaurants where no blacks are found, except among waiters and cooks. In Toronto, there seems to be a relative lack of racial prejudice for blacks and whites and all colors besides are seen on nearly every street and mutual respect and tolerance appears to be the rule rather than exception.

I saw an astonishing variety of national costumes, and heard snatches of exotic music and conversation in many foreign tongues. We broused at outdoor fruit and vegetable markets, with produce from all over the world in remarkable variety. Specialty restaurants and shops abounded in United Nations profusion. I caught myself absorbing it, enjoying it. Especially because Toronto is clean, and attractive And the people are fascinating.

The wedding was late of course. The Toronto natives, not us, were the guilty ones. It seems that once a Torontonian is outside his own neighbourhood, he is as lost in the City as us Capers. I couldn't help but smile smugly. However, my smugness soon evaporated when we left the church to search for the city park where the pictures were to be taken, and then the place where the reception was to be held.

Promptly at the first intersection, the several cars of our party were separated in traffic and I was convinced that I'd never see my family in this world again. The park was beautiful, once we found it, with more bumper - to - bumper and no place to park, with hundreds (it seemed) of sleek, long limousines containing brides, all vying for the curved bridge for those perfect pictures of the wedding party

I thought wistfully of several quiet glens and hillsides just as pretty in Cape Breton. Sigh. Who said that city life is soft and easy?

Like a miracle, all of us found each other at the reception, which was quite Canadian- Cosmopolitan, too. Jamaicans, Chinese, Italians, Germans, Anglo- Saxon Americans, French. Many first - generation immigrants. And, (the cliche not withstanding) "a good time was had by all."

I left the city with mingled regret and relief, for it had been exciting, even if over-stimulating, and I couldn't help but wish that just a little bit of Toronto could be transplanted in Cape Breton.

It would be fun to watch the fireworks.

Mary Anne Ducharme

Geographer's Fair

August 22nd-24th- GEOGRAPHER'S Fair- "The World and All That's In It" A weekend devoted to taking a look at the changes since the time of Alexander Graham Bell. The event will focus on the geography of the world. There will be special guests films and slide shows.

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Send all contributions to:
Mary Anne Ducharme
R. R. # 2, Whycocomagh or
Cape Breton, N. S.
B0E 3M0

Recreation/Tourism Dept.
P. O. Box 179, Mun. Bldg.
Port Hood, N.S. B0E 2W0

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Typist: Adeline Mac Donald

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