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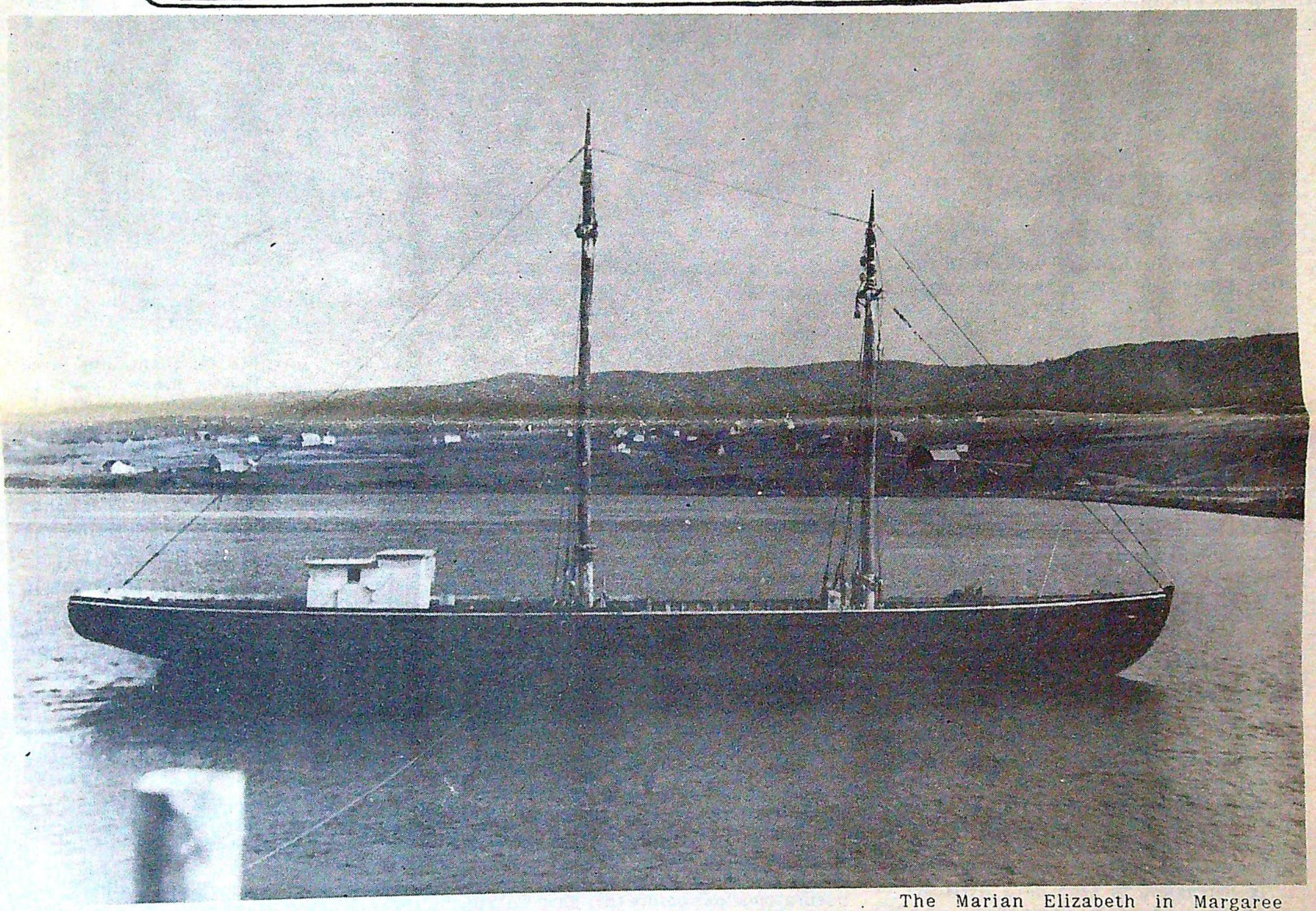
Partici~Paper
Covering culture, heritage, recreation, physical fitness, tourism, and community activities in Inverness County since 1979.



The Marian Elizabeth in Margaree Harbour, 1958. This was her final voyage prior to being beached where she still rests today.

Historic Ship at Margaree

by Kevin MacDonell

MARGAREE HARBOUR - Jeffery May says that his family wanted to establish a museum in the old schooner Marian Elizabeth, beached here almost thirty years ago, because "she deserved it." The family of John May, Jeffery's father, bought the ship in 1974 and set up the museum four years later. In restoring the hulk, Jeffery and his mother, Stephanie, ripped up planking below decks, where a previous owner had operated a coffee shop. Besides uncovering the old interior, they were laying bare a fascinating piece of Maritime history.

They were driven to restore the crew's quarters in the old fishing boat after discovering the painted rectangles where sailors' bunks once lined the walls. Doing research, Stephanie talked with old Grand Banks fishermen and took measurements aboard the schooner Theresa E. Conner. Theresa E. is the floating exhibit at the Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic in Lunenburg, birthplace of the Marian Elizabeth.

The Marian Elizabeth was built and launched there in 1918 by Smith and Rhuland, who would build the Bluenose three years later. Although twice as large, Marian was similar to the famous racing schooner in most respects. She is the last remaining Grand Banks fishing schooner to be built in Lunenburg. Even the much-touted

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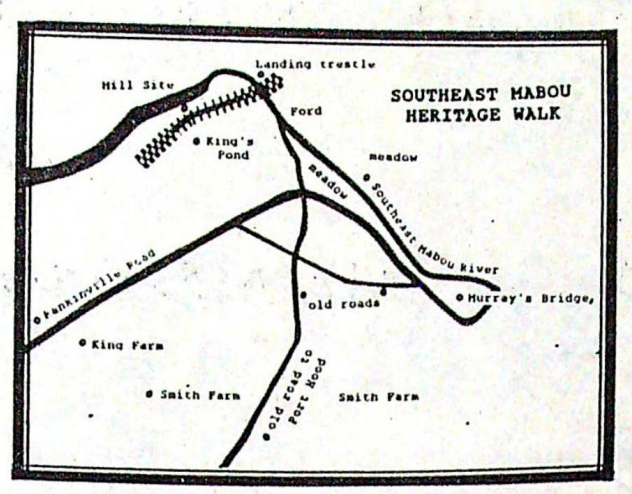
The Southeast Mabou Heritage Walk

by Jim St.Clair

Along the Southeast branch of the Mabou River are a number of sites associated with the earliest days of Mabou History. Part of the Rankinville Road in Southeast Mabou was laid out in the 1820's and came to be called the Queen's Highway. It intersected very near the present "Pioneer Cemetery" sign, a major road from Port Hood. This road started near the present Court House, went across Rocky Ridge, across Mabou Ridge and had a major division which went to the first place where the Mabou River could be forded on foot or horseback. The road which goes through the hay field is part of the old highway which was much used before Murray's Bridge was built in the 1830's and before the first bridge at Mabou Bridge was built in the 1840's.

The Heritage Walk begins at the Pioneer Cemetery sign. It proceeds down the hill to the Pioneer Cemetery. This cemetery is the place where the earliest identifiable settlers of Mabou are buried -- including Capt. Benjamin Worth and members of his family: Capt. Matthew Hawley and members of the Smith Family. Legend says that the first burial was that of a black woman who came with the Loyalists as a servant. The walk takes the participant through the gate and follows around a little hill in the cemetery to the site of the First Church of Mabou: the Presbyterian *Church built for the Protestants of Mabou and Port Hood in 1822.* The first minister, Rev William Millar, is buried beneath the pulpit from which he preached so often. The building was approximately 30 feet by 45 feet. The oldest marked grace in the cemetery is that of Benjamin Worth. It is located just beyond Mr. Millar's grave towards the fence. On the way back to the gate, on the left is a monument to Hon. William MacKeen, one of Mabou's most prominent early citizens and benefactors. The low lying land near the gate is the place where a number of children who died in infancy are buried. Within the graveyard are the remains o the women and men who came to Mabou as settlers from 1787 to 1795. Many of the first pioneers, like Capt. Matthew Hawley and Robert Brownly are lying in unmarked graves. It is important to stop on a heritage walk for a few moments and contemplate, reflecting on the joys and the hardships of these early people, and on the many ethnic backgrounds represented:



English, Scottish, Irish, Black, Channel Islanders, etc.

The walk then proceeds down the hill-- a fairly steep decline, but a good path; but not suitable of those who would have trouble climbing the hill on return. In this quiet wooded spot, it is now difficult to visualize the traffic of horses and vehicles which once used this road: farm wagons loaded with meadow hay, itinerant peddlers,mail-carriers, people on their way to church, mourners on their slow way to the cemetery, land speculators, cattle buyers -- all coming and going. After four hundred feet or so, the walker arrives at the river, within sight of the railroad trestle. Here the river was forded as early travellers went on their way to Margaree or Whycocomagh or Lake Ainslie. The Heritage Walk now goes up the road bed of the railroad, an embankment placed there over eighty years ago. Looking beyond the trestle, downstream, is the "landing" were two hundred years ago, before the r iver silted in, small ocean-going vessels anchored. Two hundred feet along the railroad bed brings the walker to a smaller bridge. On the left is King's Pond, named for an early settler, Edward King, who drowned in the 1820's. He came from a distinguished Boston Family and belonged to an unusual religious sect which featured long, but joyful church services. The meadow adjacent was also part of his farm. In bygone years, the meadows were carefully diked to prevent the river from spoiling the hay. Indeed, tradition has it that the Smiths of Port Hood Island pastured their cattle on these meadows which were natural meadows before they themselves began to settle in the area. In recent years, the meadows have been neglected so that now they are more marshy and cattle are rarely pastured on them.

It is important to look at the hills above and the fertile ground around in order to gain an understanding of what attracted early settlers to this region. Indeed, legend says that the Micmacs frequently camped on these meadows for months at a time: while it is also reported that the French built vessels along the banks of the river at the time of Louisbourg. Much history may be felt --although no boats, canoes, sailing vessels or much sight of human habitation may now be seen.

Across the small railroad, the walk proceeds for about two hundred and fifty feet to where there is a high bank on the left and the railroad road bed begins to turn. On the right is a low-lying shelf along the river with a height of ground to the left, as one faces the river. This is the location of the largest grist and drying mill of the earliest days of Mabou. Allan Cameron, a native of Lochaber, and a purchaser of half of the King farm, was the miller. Known as "Red Allen," he was a leading citizen and prominent member of the Presbyterian Church. In 1848, his mill was badly damaged by a flood on the river and he applied for aid from the Nova Scotia government. In this document the mill is described. About 1870, after sending two of his Mabou born children, Red Allan Cameron left his farm and his large mill on the Mabou River to go to *Australia where his brother was ill.* Both the brother and Allan died about the same time in Australia. The first wife of Red Allan, and the mother of his children was a Hawley: his second wife, Christina MacPherson MacDonald, a widow, was born in Kingussie,Lochaber, Scotland.

The mill site gradually is returning to woods and brush, and part of the site was disturbed when the railroad was built. But in the mid-1800's, it was an important and busy place as a water wheel turned to grind grain, to fan it and dry it. Some people brought their grain by the river while others brought it down the mill road from the Rankinville Road -- a path which may still be followed.

The heritage walker then listens to the river, the birds, observes the work of the beaver.

And then turns back on the path and retraces his steps up the hill, past the church site and cemetery.

It is a two hour walk back in time to feel and appreciate the contributions of the past to the present.

Partici-Paper

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