

Inside Front cover - Mary MacMillan at Ben Eoin ISSUE : Issue 39 Published by Ronald Caplan on 1985/6/1

Mary MacMillan at Ben Eoin They came from Scotland, the MacDougalls. And my great-great-grandfather was Jain Al? Jan MacDougall. And he settled in P.E.I, for a period of time, him and another bro? ther. Then they moved over to Ben Eoin, and he granted 200 acres of land--that's where I'm at today--MacDougall Hill--al- ways will be. The other side, my mother's side--MacIs- aacs. They came from Uist as well. And they landed out on the rear of East Bay. My grandmother was 5 years old--and you can imagine how long ago is that!--and I am an old woman. And they walked. They had friends out on the back of East Bay. So, it was a hot, hot day in July. It was 5 children, and the father and the mother. So I guess the children were just going crazy. They were thirsty, and I suppose, hungry. So--I cannot tell it to you, this, in Gaelic, you don't know what I'll be say? ing- -the father, he says, "I am going to stop at this house at Sydney Forks." Which he did. And he said, "Could I get a drink of water," he said, "for my children?" Hot day in July--and we had heat. This is 200 years ago--honest, it is, dear. She said, "You wait." And she was a col? oured lady. And I remember, we had one here--I'm old--a place called a "dairy." No fridge. And milk and what-have-you was kept there. She said, "You just wait." And she went out, and she got a thing called a "keeler." I saw a keeler--great big thing, full of--not the milk that we get today-- it's poison. Great big keeler. It was a big, big, big dish, full of the best of milk. And she said, "Just wait." And she had all kinds of strawberries--you know, wild strawberries? And she poured all the strawberries in the milk, and that milk was rich then, my dear. She walked up to the road. And when the children saw the dark woman, they started to bawl and cry. They came from Scotland, and they never saw dark people before. She said, "Sit down, I'm not going to hurt you," God love her heart. She put them sitting down on the side of the road, and gave them the strawberries and this beautiful milk-- rich--better than the cream that we buy to? day. So. And she said, "Don't be a-scared, I'm not going to hurt you." The father and mother were there, and 5 kids. She gave them the whole business that was in this great big keeler--strawberries and the best of milk! They started. They had walked from Sydney Forks. You know the fire hall at East Bay-you know. They walked out there 3 more miles. Didn't know where they were going. But they had friends there. Everybody was so good to each other then. They were real? ly good. They built a log cabin for them. They were sleeping outside, of course. They had a bite to eat of com meal, bread, and what-have-you. So. Oh, this is true. It's a true story, dear. So they built a place. They knocked the woods down, and built a log cabin. And there was another nice person. She had two cows. And she came over, and she brought one of the cows over to Mom's grandfather. And she said, "Look, You've got nothing here. Here is a cow with milk." So, they lived there. But they were really poor. They were very, very poor. So anyway. But they were good workers. And in the spring, they planted potatoes. Not a bite in the house. And he went to North Sydney, lain--Mum's grandfather--he says, "I'm going looking for flour." The chil? dren were so hungry that she went out and dug up the seed from the ground. This is the Almighty God's truth. They were stary? ing with hunger. And



he came back from North Sydney with a bag of flour on his back. He walked from North Sydney to the rear of East Bay. He said, "Put that down." They had milk, and she made pan? cakes. You know, fast as they could get. Poor kids were starving. He said, "You put that seed back in the ground." Listen, you cannot believe it, but it's true. They were poor. They had nothing. Not a thing. Only they were great workers. I was told this when I was this high. (When you were a little girl.) That was not yesterday, dear! So, I'll put the teapot on before I'll tell you any more. ... The rear of East Bay, where my moth? er's people came--nothing there but tall timber. They had to make a living. Anyway, they got along. They had sheep, cows, horses, and what-have-you. The only prob? lem they had--the bears were there--it was all tall timber out there. This is on the rear, between East Bay and Ben Eoin. So they were losing their sheep, which they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 Front Cover: View down Charlotte Street, Sydney, before The Boom. The Great Seal of Cape Breton, 1785; City of Sydney Bicentennial Logo; Village of Cheticamp Bicentennial Logo; Town of North Sydney Centennial Logo,