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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1991/1/1

Stephen W. MacNeil: A Little Story Stephen W. MacNeil. Big Pond: I was trying to tell the hardships the first settlers suffered and did in this country, you know, how they stuck it out and lived here. In the wilderness with nothing much to live on. There's a story regarding that, regarding this man that found the spring. (MacIntyre, who found the Glengarry mineral spring--Issue 28. CAPE BRETON'S MAGAZINE.) My grandfather, MacIsaacs, they lived down here, you can see them from the main road. That's where they landed and that's where they lived. Well, this man (MacIntyre) came from Scotland afterwards and all the land was taken up, but he went right back there, about 7 miles from here (7 miles inland from the main road), right out to the mineral spring. And it seems this fall that the potatoes failed for everybody, there was a blight or something struck and killed the crops and there wasn't too much for them to eat more than hemp, I guess. Well anyway, his wife was a weaver from Scotland. She weaved cloth. And she weaved what they call a bolt--40 yards, you know --and she weaved that and he tied it on his back and he started in and he stopped at my great-grandfather's--on his way to North Sydney to sell this warp of cloth for to get something to eat. a late fall and the freeze-up was after coming in, and all this cloth that was weaved by the first settlers around here went to Newfoundland to make clothes for fishermen, you know. And when he got to North Sydney, the freeze-up came and there was no travel, no way of sending the stuff to Newfoundland. He couldn't sell it, couldn't get a nickel for it. Had to walk back to my grandfather's place down here and not a bite to eat, only they kept him while he was there, I guess. But he told my grandfather or told them all, I guess, to go out and tell his wife --take something with them, too, I guess (to feed them)--that he was going to Arichat the next day. It was an open port then, Arichat--it wouldn't freeze up--and he thought that there'd be a possibility of selling the cloth in Arichat. And so he went to North Sydney. And it was So & OI RENT-A-CAR OPEN DAILY: 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Sat. 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. PRICE US FIRST! (902)562-1155 501 ESPLANADE - SYDNEY Halifax (902) 455-5926 • New Minas (902) 679-6919 • Dartmouth (902) 468-2864 Moncton (506) 853-1113 • Bathurst (506) 548-4882 • Sussex (506) 432-6868 SaintJohn (506) 634-1125 • Douglstown (506) 778-8080 . my grandfather went out and told (MacIntyre's) wife the story. Well anyway, he walked to Arichat. When he got to Arichat, same story verbatim: he couldn't sell it, couldn't give it away. So he walked back and went to my grandfather's place down there. And my grandfather's brother was after in--and he was working in Halifax at something --and he came home during while all this was going on, you know. I guess he came home for Christmas, that he'd be home for Christmas, the young fellow? My grandfather then would be only about 16 when he was travelling back and forth. So he pitied the old fellow, he pitied MacIntyre. And he had a little money and he bought the cloth, bought this roll from MacIntyre there, and (MacIntyre) was happy as a clam. He told my grandfather to go out again and tell his wife that he was going to North Sydney again. 'Course he went with the money this time, and got 50 pounds of meal, flour, whatever made it



up of 50 pounds of something to eat, anjrway, tied it on his back and came back there with it and a bottle of gin. And the next day he went home.