

[Page 50 - Joe Neil MacNeil: A Talk About Tales](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 71](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1996/12/1

Well then, the oldtimer that gave us the story--I was a youngster listening to him telling the story--he claimed that the landlord, or the owner, or the father of the family, or whatever--that they were going by that name. He said, "Your descendants will be MacDonalds." And the other man's descendants will be MacNeils--sons of Neil. And the others will be Johnson, or John's son. And that's the way he had it--But now MacDonald had it--now whether he added this, or whether it was given to him, who knows? Maybe he added this to it himself, about the MacNeils and the MacDonalds and all. It's hard to say, I wouldn't know that. But they didn't have it (in Scotland) anyway. They never mentioned that. But they mentioned the two in the boat. Each in a boat. (But you heard it as three.) Three of them going over. Well now, they only had it over there (in Scotland) that Donald won the island. Now, whether that was lost in between or not, I don't know. (Donald won the island, but....) They didn't mention anything about the names coming up. I told them that I heard it in Cape Breton, more than 60 years ago I heard it in Cape Breton. (Do you remember who told it to you?) Yes, I did remember. MacDonald was his name. He was from Irish Vale.... (Joe is referring to the storyteller Finlay MacDonald.) Now, his father was supposed to be reading. He had books, his father. Must have been a man that could--well, he'd have to read Gaelic. More than likely that would be about all he could read, perhaps. There were people that could read Gaelic, that couldn't read English, long ago.... (Finlay MacDonald) was in his 80s when I knew him, in his late 80s.... CONGRATULATIONS! Irving Oil is proud to have been a longtime supporter of Cape Breton's Magazine. You have preserved important local stories that would have been lost • important history, and good entertainment! We can think of nothing nicer than to have Cape Breton's Magazine and Irving Oil in your home. (902) 567-3000 Now, he had that story. Naturally, that came over (to Cape Breton). Who knows whether it was told by coming down from one to the other. Maybe this John MacDonald, Finlay MacDonald's father, never saw this in a book. Maybe it was traditional. Maybe it was handed down from generation to generation. God knows where he got the story. It might be from his grandfather. It might be from somebody that was good at gathering stories. And who knows? (And whether it was something that was forgotten in Scotland, or added in Cape Breton....) Yes. See, that's the question. I heard it 60 years ago. Did they lose that much in between? (My memory is that you yourself, Joe, you don't like to change the stories that you've heard.) Well no, I'd like to leave them the way that I heard them. Sometimes I feel that maybe somebody else had them just as good as I had them, originally, as I got them originally. And why make a change in them? Somebody would discover that that's not the way the story used to go at all. They had it different than that.... I don't feel like changing it around from the way that I heard it.... I heard (Finlay MacDonald) telling some good stories. But I only heard them once. And it was at a time that, well, I wasn't in so much, into that line, because people were giving that up, more or less. The stories weren't much good to you unless you had a chance to repeat them. A story'd be no good to you, to me, way



back, we'll say, well, 40 years ago or 45 years ago. A BUS. 625-5135 FAX 62&3851
, HOME 787-2988 //ygusicsTOPj' ijJOHN DONALD CAMERON y MANAGER
CAMERON IVIUSIC SALES 307 GRANVILLE ST. PORT HAWKESBURY, N.S. BOE 2V0
GUITARS, VIOLINS MUSIC BOOKS, DRUMS SOUND EQUIPMENT BAGPIPE SUPPLIES
INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS • 50