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sent, she said, "May God bless you in all your undertakings and help you in all your need," and then gave me \$20 in gold. Because of my age, Father had to go before a notary to sign my travel papers. He signed them with tears in his eyes. He said, "Boy, you are leaving me all alone." I felt sorry for him, but I repeated, "I'll earn lots of money, and I will send it to you." Although delighted that my papers were now signed, I left my father broken-hearted, weeping over me, still trying to dissuade me, saying he feared something might happen to me. But I was full of courage and looked forward to my new adventure. I went to Naples with ten other men from my area. There I called to see an old Auntie of mine, and told her of my plans. She thought it was foolish, and could not understand why my father had signed the papers. When she realized I was telling the truth, she said, "Son, may God bless and protect you on your long journey, and keep you pure in mind and heart; don't forget your religion wherever you are." She then kissed me and gave me \$80 in gold. We left Naples by steamer that evening, the first of December 1880. We went to Genoa, then to Nice, and on to Marseilles in France. Our steamer was a freighter so we went to every port to load and unload merchandise. We remained in Marseilles for two days, then travelled by train to Bordeaux where we stayed for another two days. From there we caught a small steamer which was to take us to New York in six days time, but it took us all of 16 days to make it. The sea was rough, and we had engine trouble. For three days we drifted any? where the wind would take us. I began to fear that I would never see land again, and I re? membered my father's words: "When you see only sky and water you will be sorry." It was true; every port? hole had to be closed, and we were all locked downstairs for four days. Rita's Tea Room Big Pond, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia (Approx. 25 Miles West of Sydney on Hwy. #4) Origiially a one room school house, the Tea Room was purchased by singer/songwriter Rita MacNeil in the early '80s where she lived with her family for several years. As Rita's popularity grew, her supporters would come to the small village of Big Pond to have a cup of Tea with Rita (Rita's favourite beverage). Eventually, it became so popular that Rita decided to convert her house into the Tea Room. Come visit the Tea Room and enjoy:

- Baked goods. Sandwiches and Rita's Tea Room Blend Tea
- Display room of Rita's awards and photographs
- Gift shop

Open: June 1st - October 15th 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. (7 days a week) Phone: (902) 828-2667 I, however, put my trust in God and at once felt better. I asked the cook if he could use some help in the kitchen. I was willing to do anything • wash dishes, peel po? tatoes. I had a difficult time to make him un? derstand me, but he understood and kept me in the kitchen with three others to help with the work. I was glad not to be locked downstairs. But believe me the sea was very rough. After getting our en? gine going again, we encountered a heavy fog for three days. We could not see anything; the whistle was going day and night. On the 26th of December, 1880, at night, we arrived in New York. The first thing I did was thank God for my safe passage. I was glad to be near land again. I was thrilled at the sight



of all the electric lights; the harbour was beautiful. The next morning we landed at Castle Garden. As we had no friends to meet us, we remained there and slept on the floor for over 20 days. I still had about \$80, but I helped others to get something to eat and the money went fast. After ten days I was broke. To get something to eat, I had to sell some of my gold rings for hardly anything. I began to miss home; I was afraid of starving, especially when it started to snow. The winter was setting in. It was very cold, and I was not used to such cold weather. I had never seen snow before. I had a pair of light shoes, and they soon got wet. I had a very light overcoat. This is the way I was accustomed to dress for school in Italy. We were in Castle Garden for 20 days, but I thought it was more like two months. One day a man came and said he wanted 300 men to work on the West Shore Railway, at a place called the Catskill Mountains, New York. We told him we were willing to work, but we did not have the money to travel there. He said, "I will pay your fare, and you can pay me back so much per month from your wages." So early next morning, it was the 16th day of January, 1881, we started out. It was awful cold. We arrived at the Catskill Mountains at about 10 a.m., and had to walk about ten miles through the snow. None of us were accustomed to such cold and snow. We all had light shoes, no rubbers; in no time my feet got all wet. I had no woolen socks, but I kept on with the crowd. We arrived at the construction camp toward the evening of the same day. We were pretty tired. The next morning, we went to work. As I had never done any work before, I was made water boy. After a few weeks they placed me in a "big rock cut"; the weather was so cold I could not stand it. I had a pair of mitts a woman had made for me out of some old pieces of clothes. My fingers were freezing. As an excuse to get home, I took a stone and cut my finger; I told the boss I was hurt and I was going back to the camp. In those days, no one was allowed to remain in the camp. The "walking boss" would come in every morning and get I

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