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needles. I and a friend made an excavation there • a cross-section through the bank of this so-called pond. And I was proven right • it was man-made. Inside of it were beautifully preserved planks and timbers. The planks were about four inches thick. The boards were about a foot and a half wide. And they were spaced with thick timbers inside, just like you would build a ship. And planked on the inside as well. So you had a layer of planks, ribs, planks. And in between these two layers of planks was beautiful white clay, not native to this area, packed tight. Just like the clay you make clay pipes out of. And then it was built up of earth like a dike, and the pond was inside of that. We went ahead and drained this pond • an immense task and all done very secret and very quietly, with shovels and picks. And once we had drained the pond we found little sluices that we could have opened if we had known where they were. Little sluices built out of planks about a foot by a foot, planked in • and they led through this dike. I guess that pond has been there for so long that the bottom of it filled with sediment, branches, everything • a fairly big pond. The mud in it was so deep that we waded in hip waders. We sort of gave up. Just to get that far had taken all the good out of us. (Did you let it fill?) Oh no, it's all grown up. Now it's even harder to find. But the earth structures are still there. The mud has dried out a little and there's tall grass growing in it. What we did before we abandoned it, we went to the edge of that pond and removed quite a bit of the muck • just to see what would be at the bottom • perhaps like Oak Island there were chambers underneath. And there could very well be because under the muck and mud we found about six inches of crushed fine white gravel, spread out over the whole area of that lake. Picked up handfuls of it and wondered, what the hell, who went to that much trouble, in the woods, that much technical know-how to build that. There, I think?? is a real good lead to a possible vault of the French after the second siege. And so help me I'll go back to it. And there is an historical account that tends to substantiate the vault. Outside the fortress during one of the sieges, the British captured about 30 French soldiers. They had sailed around the harbour in a longboat in the middle of the night, during the siege, and had landed and apparently were doing something in the woods • when they were surprised. They were surprised in the area I'm talking about. The British shot a whole bunch of them; some of them managed to scramble back into their longboat and row back to the fortress • there was one fellow that they captured, an officer. And the officer was mortally wounded'. And he told his captors to please get a French priest at the fortress to administer the last rites. The soldiers just laughed at him. He was so desperate to get a priest, that he promised them 10,000 livres in silver and gold as a reward for getting the priest to him. He died and never got his priest. But the important thing is that French officers didn't make that kind of money. Where could he spring 10,000 livres in silver and gold just like that? To me that is a little more of a curious hint, which ties into what were the 30 French soldiers doing ashore in a longboat in the middle of the night in the woods? The pond vault is the way the French would do those things. There is a true story of a fort on the



mainland • the French had a pond. Granted, it was not constructed, it was a natural pond. When the time came for the British to lay siege, the people of the community actually got together and put what they regarded as very valuable porce? lain and china and pottery and silver and whatever • irregardless of who owned it • and they sank the whole thing where the thunder of the cannons and ravages of war wouldn't break their pottery. The place fell. The pottery was left there and act? ually found just a number of years back. And when the Old French Road was still funtioning • we've recently restored it • it leads 12 miles through the woods • you can walk it now. Apparently at some point it crosses lakes or goes near lakes. The story goes that the French had put treasure from the fort in one big ox-cart and they drove off the French Road to try and hide' it in around the Mira. Presumably they could get a ship there to secret it out of the coun? try. The point of the story is that this cart was heavily laden and the oxen were pulling it until they came to this lake. They thought the British irregulars were close on their heels and they were going to back the cart into the lake. And while do? ing so they completely forgot how heavy the wagon was. And when they got onto where the land slopes into the lake the cart went out of control, went straight to the bottom of the lake with the two oxen • and they are there to this day. Our thanks to Tamara Rasmusson. Bay St. Lawrence, for her help in gathering stories. CAPE BRETON SHOPPING PLAZA STDNBY RIVBR • OBBN DAILY 'TIL 10 P, N, HNftfUINr SfOSES A Division of the F.W.Woolworth Co. Limited BUYWITHCONRDBiCE SATISFACTiON . eUARiINTEED Cape Breton's Magazine/19