

The County's history through its buildings



Former Rice House - Baddeck Forks

by Joan MacInnes

The old dwelling depicted in the photograph had been located at Baddeck Forks. It is no longer extant as it was razed last month.

The original owners were Theophilus and Armenia Rice. Mr. Rice, a merchant, had acquired a two hundred acre land grant at Baddeck Forks in 1880. The house was built in the mid-1800's (circa) which would put its age in the vicinity of one hundred and twenty-five years old at the time it was torn down.

The property remained in possession of the Rice family for a period of seventy-two years until 1952. For the ensuing twenty-one years it was occupied as a family dwelling until 1973 when the house and property were purchased by two local business people who established a nine hole golf course which they successfully operated for a period of thirty-seven years. Dur-

ing that time, the house served as the club house for the golf course. They sold the property last summer and the new owners will carry on operating the existing golf course which will have a new club house and facilities.

Architecturally, it had been built in the style which is known as Modified Gothic. It was one and one-half storey of wood construction with a steeply pitched gable roof. There had been a single storey addition to the original structure.

Although no longer standing, fortunately, the old Rice house has been documented in the built heritage inventory of Victoria County.

The Book Nook

by Kate Oland

At some time around 1800, the German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote that, "Letters are among the most significant memorial a person can leave behind them." During Goethe's time, I suppose that was true. Even until quite recently, one's grandchildren could reasonably expect to unearth a treasure-trove of faded ancestral correspondence, tied in a ribbon, and stored in the attic.

A lifetime of letters supplies information about the writer in a way that nothing else does. Between the lines of reminiscence, gossip, and the simple chronicle of day-to-day events lies a deeper narrative. A letter's tone, the writer's habits of grammar and syntax, what the writer chooses to say (and to leave unsaid) - even the curls and loops of the handwriting and the style of paper it's written on - all help the reader to form an impression of the letter writer.

Baddeck Library's current book display, "Letters", presents collections of letters that open a window into the lives and times of human beings both famous and ordinary. Fifty-four letters written by Albert Einstein to his first wife, Mileva Maric, offers a fascinating lens through which to understand the development of Einstein's genius. A powerful collection of letters penned by researcher Dian Fossey chronicles her passionate, stubborn, and often heart-breaking attempts to protect the mountain gorillas of central Africa. Letters from advice columnist Ann Landers to her daughter allow us a glimpse into the life of someone who answered letters for a living.

The display also contains the letters

of ordinary folks in extraordinary circumstances, like those of William St. Clair, a stretcher-bearer during the First World War, who chronicled his daily experiences in the trenches; and Krystyna Wituska, a young woman arrested by the German Gestapo for supporting the Polish Underground, whose letters from prison are a testimony to human dignity and courage.

Even the more mundane letters of average people provide us with valuable information about our history and culture. Take, for example, the sea letters of Grace F. Ladd, a Yarmouth woman who, in 1885, married a sea captain and spent the next 25 years sailing around the world with him. Her letters shatter the impression that Victorian women were fragile, subservient creatures. In them we meet a brave, enquiring woman who enjoyed a respectful partnership with her husband.

Nowadays, we have a myriad of ways to communicate with one another about our lives. We text, tweet, blog, and phone. We Facebook, MySpace, and Skype. The ability to travel quickly around the world means that long, handwritten letters have lost their role in binding us together with loved ones. All of this is, undoubtedly, a beneficial thing. But I have to wonder - will we leave our "tweets" collected in the attic for our grandchildren to discover? And what will those brief, strangely-spelled missives tell them about us? It kind of makes me want to start writing letters...

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FIDDLER'S CORNER by Paul S. Cranford.

If you have a tune you would like to share with other Cape Breton fiddlers or a musical event that could be promoted in this column contact The Victoria Standard or Cranford Publications (www.cranfordpub.com). Email psc@cranfordpub.com

Maggie's Jig

jig

Rannie MacLellan



Over the years, Margaree fiddler Rannie MacLellan has been a regular contributor to this column. He composed *Maggie's Jig* last fall.

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Victoria County's Residential Curbside Organics Collection

Garbage Shipped to Guysborough

For the month of February, 2011, 121.90 Tonnes of garbage were shipped bringing the total to 14,498.77 Tonnes

Residents can now put organic material such as vegetable peelings, table scraps, meat, fish, poultry, dairy, bones and soiled paper in transparent green bags to be collected weekly along with recyclables and garbage. Special transparent green bags for compost are now available in grocery & hardware stores in Victoria County.

For more information on Recycling or Composting Programs, call Cape Breton's Recycling Hotline at 1-877-567-1337 or see "Recycling" in the Aliant Yellow Pages.

Organic Materials Collected

For the month of February, 2011, 5.06 Tonnes of organics were collected bringing the total to 835.85 Tonnes