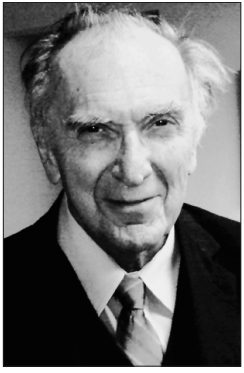


In Those Days in Victoria County

Humeses - they came, they saw and they left



by Jim St. Clair
Humes River

A sign identifies the stream; a bridge carries traffic quickly across as people hasten to appointments or to work or as transports convey goods to Newfoundland.

Little time for most people to stop. Now and then a walker stands on the bridge or person with a fishing rod moves along the stream as it rushes to the Lake and then to the sea through the Big Bras d'Or channel.

Near the brook which drains the hills between Middle River and Lake Ainslie a clump of dancing daffodils recall the efforts of people of years ago. Indeed, several ancient apple trees remind us of the individuals who hoped for a home site, a productive farm near the rushing, chattering waters.

Where did the people go? Why did they come to this location? Why did they leave? Settlers did come; some did stay; and others rode off on horseback or sailed away by boat into the sunset.

Eli Dawson Hume

What brought him here? Was he a searcher for the ideal spot? Did he like the quiet of the glen and the promise of water power for a mill in the river? According to his own words in his 1814 petition for this land next to the stream on the shore of the Bras d'Or Lake, he was a native of Manchester, England. According to church records, he was born and baptized there on 4th of December 1757, a son of Sherman Hulme (variant of the name Hume) and Ann Dawson (hence Eli's middle name).

Did he leave this busy market town to better his prospects? Did he leave a large number of kin folk behind in the expectation he would return one day? Was it emotional to leave the small nearby hamlet called Hulme, from which no doubt his family took its name? When he left in 1773 at age 16 did he know that war was imminent?

His 1814 request was penned in Sydney where he had a small grant of land. In recognition of his place of origin, he wished to call the area "Manchester" and he hoped "to bring other settlers to the area and establish a community."

Where had he been between 1773 and his arrival in Sydney? His petition fills in some of the blanks - he landed in Philadelphia where "by his own free will he bound himself as an apprentice to learn 'the art and mystery of a tanner and currier.'" But the war intervened. He found his way to New Jersey where he joined the New Jersey Volunteers, a Loyalist group.

Humes Family in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island & Cape Breton

Land near St. John as a reward for

his service; a marriage to a widow; and the birth of children - lots of activity for this native of the uplands of England, one of whose brothers arrived in Halifax as a settler. But either he had restless feet or he was searching for better land than the rocks of New Brunswick soil. Or perhaps he had met others who were going to Cape Breton where large tracts of fertile land might be gained.

One son remained in New Brunswick where he lumbered and made barrels. Another found his way to Prince Edward Island where farming attracted him - descendants remain there to this day.

But the son Peter seems to have accompanied his father and in his own petition for land confirms the wish to build a water-powered grist and saw mill on the site "three miles west of Wagamatcook." And it would seem as though for some years, the work of miller occu-

ried him and his father.

Humes Family Away

Although one of the sons, of Peter and Sarah Hume, Earl, and his wife Christy MacDonald (formerly of Middle River), remained on the farm/mill site until the late 1800s, by the 1901 census no people of that name remained along the shore of the energetic brook/river. A sister of Earl, Ann, came to be the wife of David Ross, once of Washabuck and later of Margaree. Descendants remain in Cape Breton.

Itchy feet, a wanderlust seen perhaps in the attitudes of Eli Dawson Hume, may perhaps have been inherited for descendants are now in many places in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and Maine and Massachusetts.

Humes River

The waters still hasten past the places where once members of the family lived and laboured. Similar to many

other immigrant families, they came, they saw, they stayed for a time and then moved on.

The name, however, remains, and may one day be assigned as well to an area of protected land where old growth trees grow, along the hill sides up from the rapidly moving water. The proposed Humes River Protected Site also has quite a large stand of hemlock trees- it is said to be able to offer "excellent eco-based tourism opportunities" for people of our day who have itchy feet to see new places.

But it is well to stop for a few moments one day and listen to the stream and think of those generations of people whose name remains and whose activities were among those of pioneers who had a wish to find the right location. In Victoria County in those days, there were indeed such people.

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

syncopated reel

Howie Paul's

Otis Tomas

This tune was written earlier this year to celebrate the birth of Howie Paul Sanderson, son of Scottish fiddler Sarah McFadyen. Sarah was one of the musicians who came in 2009 to play in the Celtic Colours concert that was put on to commemorate Otis Tomas' Fiddletree.

The Fiddletree was a giant sugar maple that had grown for hundreds of years on a hillside above St Anns Bay. Violin maker Otis Tomas cut the Fiddletree down in October of 1994, and in the ensuing years, transformed it into a special set of musical instruments, including violins, viola, cello, guitar, mandolin and harp. These instruments were first publicly featured in this concert held in St. Andrew's Church in Sydney Mines. I play a Fiddletree Fiddle and it is unquestionably my favourite violin.

Otis has now combined text, stunning photographs and original music to tell the story of the Fiddletree in a new beautiful hardcover book and CD set that will be officially launched on June 18th, 3:00 to 6:00 PM, at Wildfire Pottery and Books. All the instruments on the CD were made by Otis using wood from the Fiddletree and all of the music was composed by Otis. The musicians on the CD include the same international cast of instrumentalists who were featured in the Celtic Colours Concert; including Sarah McFadyen. The book will be available at in selected shops, and from Otis' website -- www.fiddletree.com.

Saturday June 18, 3PM-6PM - Wildfire Pottery and Books, 44556 Cabot Trail, 20 minutes north of the Englishtown Ferry, North Shore
The Fiddletree - Book Launch & Music with Otis Tomas and Friends.

Victoria County's Residential Curbside Organics Collection

Garbage Shipped to Guysborough

For the month of May, 2011, 320.87 Tonnes of garbage were shipped bringing the total to 15,182.18 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 May, 2011, 10.02 Tonnes of organics were collected bringing the total to 860.05 Tonnes