

Buried Forest in Little Dyke



By Linda Giddens

Last May 6, I asked Wayne MacDougall, an excavator owner/operator, if he would dig an exploratory hole on what my family calls the Home Marsh (the marsh closest to farm). He had dug one hole and filled it in before I came along with my camera to see how the digging was going. He asked me when had my father had cut down the trees on the bank and buried them? I said that there had never been any trees there to cut down. In digging, he had cut through trees that looked as if they had been knocked down yesterday, but they were five to seven feet down and smothered in ocean mud. Neither of us thought to bring up part of a tree before refilling the hole.

We asked Everett McCully and Cliff Graham about our find, and they said they had seen similar trees in excavating marshes, but didn't know how old they were. I contacted Kerr Canning, a former Physics professor in Montreal, who studies dikes and marshes, who wrote the following explanation:

Three thousand to four thousand year-old in situ tree stumps may be found on the mudflats at various locations along the Gulf of Maine, a body of water that includes the Bay of Fundy. Several of these mudflats have been discovered in the Upper Bay of Fundy region. These well-rooted stumps are believed to extend under the present day Bay of Fundy salt marshes, located between the mud flats and the upland. Post-glacial geologists believe that forests once grew in the regions where these mud



flats and salt marshes now exist and that these forests were drowned due to the submergence of these sites. As a result of the rising sea level, the trees were killed.

He went on to say: To date, post-glacial geologists have not discovered remains of submerged forests in the Cobequid Bay region of the Upper Bay of Fundy. However, a recent dig on the property of Linda Giddens located at Little Dyke, may represent such a discovery as it shows the remains of trees at the bottom of a newly dug trench on a marsh that has been cut off from the salt water by a dyke that was probably initially constructed approximately 300 years ago by the Acadians. Further exploratory work and carbon dating should be carried out on this former salt marsh.

And so I wondered if there really might be trees that old on my property, and tried to obtain help in having someone there who would be able to recognize what it was we had found. I felt like the hen in "The Little Red Hen" story, as I invited people to help me, who expressed an interest in knowing the results, but not in coming to Little Dyke to see for themselves. I persevered, and lined up the excavator for Friday, November 18, at 11 AM (on Tuesday, it had looked as if Friday were going to be the sunniest day of the week). On Thursday, Philip Finck, geologist, said he could come by and take samples, so I was tremendously relieved to have an authority present.

The day was not sunny; in fact, it threatened to snow, while the wind blew. Besides Wayne with the excavator, present were Philip Finck, the geologist; Murray Giddens, who brought his tractor, wagon, and power saw; Richard Giddens, who was our photographer; Harry Sullivan, who was writing a story for the Truro Daily News; Robert Glencross, interested engineer; and I. To say that we all received chills would be an understatement.

The geologist instructed the excavator to the first spot for digging, which was some distance away from the two spots where we had dug in the spring. Philip encouraged the excavator to go deeper, and he was thrilled when river gravel came up; there was also some ocean sand.

In Spot 2, a small insitu root was removed, a lot of grey sand, beach grass, some driftwood, and lots of mud were removed. Samples of each layer were taken by Philip, and I helped wrap and label them.

Fortunately, Spot 3 was closer to where we had dug our second hole May 6, and we hit pay dirt: trees, that had grown there were hauled up. It was impossible to remove all the roots or branches. We selected a large tree, and Murray used the power saw to cut three cross sections; the rings were very 'tight' and the samples rather heavy. We left the tree parts that had been removed beside where the digging had taken place.

Spot 4 was similar, showing trees growing at a similar level - five to seven feet down. A cross section of soil/mud/beach grass was removed and left by the side of the hole for further examination and possible study of pollen.

All the holes were filled in carefully by Wayne, and we identified each with a stake saying which spot it was, and how deep we had gone. We collected the samples and placed them in Philip's truck, and Murray took two of the cross sections for me to take to Mount Allison University the next day.

I met Dr. Colin Laroque at Mt. A. Saturday morning at 10:30 AM. He said that he wouldn't have time to work on identifying the wood until the term ended in December, but in the meantime, they would be drying out. At some point, he would package a sample for carbon dating that would likely be mailed to a Florida lab which completes the test for the smallest cost (approximately \$165).

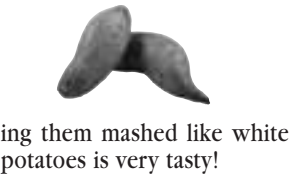
Yes, we do indeed have a buried or drowned forest on our property; we don't know how old it is. You can be sure that this is not the only buried forest, but that similar drowned trees may be found all along both sides of the Bay. This may not be so much a great discovery as it is a confirmation of what is located in the salt marshes, and proof that the Bay of Fundy is not as old a body of water as I had formerly thought. Perhaps in the spring, funding will be in place for Philip Finck to return with a team and study the buried forest.

Sweet potatoes: COLOUR YOURSELF HEALTHY!

By Christine Urquhart

Why eat sweet potatoes? The deep orange-yellow colour of sweet potatoes tells you that they're high in the antioxidant beta carotene. Food sources of beta carotene, which your body converts to vitamin A, may help slow the aging process and reduce the risk of some cancers.

Sweet potatoes are also good sources of fiber, vitamins B-6, C and E, folate and potassium. They're fat-free and relatively low in calories. There are a number of wonderful recipes that call for sweet potatoes, and just eat-



ing them mashed like white potatoes is very tasty!

As sweet potatoes are usually large, you do not need to buy as many as you do of the smaller types of potatoes. Try them as sweet potato fries, baked sweet potatoes or add them to your soups or stews.

Whatever way you eat them, remember they are good for you! With Christmas coming, here's your chance to try something different at the dinner table.

Great Village Fire News

By Kathy Simpson-Giles

The members of the Great Village & District Fire Brigade, The Ladies of the Auxiliary and the Fire Commission wish to take a moment to

thank you all for your support during the past year and send a wish to everyone for a Very Safe, Merry and Joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bass River Baptist Church Christmas Service December 17TH

Service starts at 7:00 p.m.
Carol Singing, Special Music

Everyone Welcome
Refreshments Served

Pastor Larry Tirrell
of Bass River United Baptist Church



Wheel chair accessible

For more information contact:
Pastor Larry Tirrell
Church: 902-647-2567 Home: 902-843-5941

Masstown Lighthouse

is featuring an Art Show
"For the Love Our Lighthouses"

Dec 3 to Dec 31
artist Lyndia Baird-Wellwood

Opening reception will be
Dec 3 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Please come and view
22 of Nova Scotia Lighthouses
in an unique setting of a lighthouse.

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT
Lyndia Baird-Wellwood
893-0375

You're invited to a

Coffee House for Brian Esau

Free will offering admission

- Ticket raffles
- 50/50 draw
- Desserts for purchase
- Coffee, tea, and punch for purchase
- Entertainers: Tim Bowers, Kyle Miller, Dean Murphy

This fundraiser

is for the rehabilitation of Brian Esau, who sustained a C5 spinal cord injury in August 2011.

All proceeds

will go towards equipment and expenses associated with Brian's recovery.

Friday, December 9, 2011
Debert Firehall
7 pm - 11 pm

Check out the Facebook group "Brian Esau's Recovery Group" for updates and more information on Brian's progress!

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