

Author, historian dies in PE County

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PICTON — Historian and author Willis Metcalfe, 66, died Wednesday in Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital.

Mr. Metcalfe, who resided for most of his life in the county, was admitted to hospital on Sunday after suffering a heart attack at his Black Creek home.

An ardent marine historian and collector of historical items, Mr. Metcalfe authored three books in his lifetime, *Canvas and Steam on Quinte Waters*, *Marine Memories* and *Memories of Yesteryear*.

Phil Dodds, former editor of the *Picton Gazette*, said he had known Mr. Metcalfe since the young man first began collecting items of historical interest.

"He saved everything since he was a boy," said Mr. Dodds. "He got items from all around the world."

One point that distinguished Mr. Metcalfe's extensive collection, housed at his Black Creek home, was that he never had to buy any of the items.

He once told an interviewer, "I get far more donated to me than others because people know that their contribution is safe with me."

Mr. Metcalfe's collection began when, at 16 years of age, a friend gave him an old war helmet and a few Indian arrowheads.

It grew over the years to include such a variety of items that he was often approached by museum representatives. Mr. Metcalfe steadfastly refused to hand over any items.

He once said, "I had a man from the museum call me a hoarder because I wouldn't let him have certain things, but I figure I have as much right to keep stuff around me as the Royal Ontario Museum has."

He was instrumental in having the old lighthouse from False Ducks Island removed and restored at Mariner's Memorial Lighthouse Park in South



WILLIS METCALFE (1911-1977)
Historian, author, gentleman

Marysburgh Township in 1967.

Mr. Metcalfe was a member of the Prince Edward Marine Society and Historical Society.

Long-time friend and neighbor Jim Plomer described Mr. Metcalfe as a "great gentleman" and the kind of man "you really miss."

Over the years Mr. Metcalfe worked as a market gardener, house painter, roads superintendent and operated a small summer resort at Black Creek.

Born in Cherry Valley, Mr. Metcalfe lived at Black Creek since 1939. Except for a few years of public schooling in Dearborn, Mich., he was a lifelong resident of Prince Edward County.

He is survived by his wife, the former Ruth Margaret Cole, daughters, Mrs. Paul (Betty Anne) Elms, Hamilton; Rose Marie, Black Creek; sons Jimmy, Bowmanville and Lincoln, of Alberta.

Also surviving are a twin brother, Willard of Cherry Valley and sisters Mrs. Cecil (Maxine) Bongard of Milford and Mrs. E. (Marguerite) Burgoyne, Belleville.

Funeral services will be held Friday at 10 a.m. The body is resting at the Hicks Funeral Home, 2 Centre Street, Picton.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be sent to the heart fund.

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