

MINISTER'S ISLAND



Miss Addie

LAC E007914036

Chapter Three

**ADDIE, BENNY, BILLY AND
BEVERLEY ANN**

Sir William Van Horne was so charmed with the summer beauties of St. Andrews and its adjacent regions that he instantly hastened across to Minister's Island, purchased the southern end of this great island and at once started upon building a beautiful summer home and improving all sections of his island property. His family spend practically all their summers on this lovely island and they have many visitors. Those visitors cross from the mainland over the Bar at low tide, and stroll or motor alongside Sir William's beautiful home, flower gardens, orchards and other attractions. This island opportunity has proved a great source of delight to tourists who visit St. Andrews by rail and steamboat and by the international motor gateway at St. Stephen.—From "Charlotte County: The Tourists' Opening Door." R. E. Armstrong, April 5, 1926

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SIR WILLIAM'S will ratified and confirmed the transferral of Minister's Island to his daughter Adaline, which had been deeded to her in 1904. In 1917 there was an ancillary probate of this will which finalized the transfer. The value of the Minister's Island Estate was listed at \$20,000, not including furniture, livestock and art collections which were listed at \$13,545. In 1926 Addie secured complete possession of the Island, picking up the remaining 100 acres from Edwin Andrews.

Addie returned to the Island every summer, along with her mother, and would often be joined there by Benny, his wife Edith and son Billy. The general consensus is that Addie was in some ways her father's true heir, in as much as she seemed to be most like him in some basic ways. Her size aside—for she was no small woman—she loved art. Even in later years, when almost blind, she could give a visitor to the Montreal home a detailed tour of her father's art collection, and in 1937 she was elected Governor of the Art Association of Montreal. She loved cattle, too, carefully maintaining Covenhoven farm at its peak. Like Sir William she had an interest in botany, especially fungi, a hobby she shared with her Aunt Mary and continued after Mary's death in 1904.

Recollections of Addie's time on the Island, from Sir William's death in 1915 to Addie's own in 1941, are rather dim, reaching back beyond living memory, for the most part, but still give a good sense of Addie and the state of Minister's Island under her stewardship. In one respect Addie was quite different from her father. Where Sir William could be either the perfect gentleman or the tough-as-nails businessman, Addie was generally affable and easy going. According to local stonemason John Gibson, "She was an awful nice woman. Everybody loved her, and she loved everybody too." John O'Neill, a descendant of the O'Neill family that ran a local farm and supermarket, remembered her through his father's uncle, a local doctor, as "the kindest kind of person you would ever meet." A genuine person, always smiling, often rather sternly, but in a pleasing way at the same time. "When they would drive in with the horses on their buckboard, Miss Van Horne would always make a point of greeting my great uncle, Henry O'Neill, who was usually sitting on the front of the grocery store. She always had a conversation with him. They were delightful people to deal with."

She had a sense of humour as well. There were always visitors touring the Island, and on rainy days they would lower their heads as they passed under the *porte-cochère* so as to avoid having water drip on their faces. "The townspeople are so polite," Addie remarked to her gardener Bill Clarke on one such occasion. "They always bow their heads when

OPPOSITE

*Coachman Fred Dreyer crossing
the bar. A fantastical scene from
Benny Van Horne's "Covenhoven
Follies of 1919"*

COURTESY HENRY CLARKE



they pass by.” Benny produced a comical portrait of Addie in a little illustrated series of fantastical misadventures titled “The Covenhoven Follies of 1919,” featuring Addie and her Model-T Ford. In this rather droll production, Addie is referred to as “Cherub,” an affectionate dig at her genial good nature, and comes under the ironic gaze of her somewhat cynical younger brother. After Addie, in an access of frugality, decides on a cheap Model-T instead of something more fitting to her station, like a Bentley or Rolls, she custom orders an especially large door for the vehicle so she can get in and out with greater ease. After she leaves, the salesman calls the mechanic aside and tells him to throw in an extra leaf spring or two, for good measure. On another occasion Addie and her reluctant driver, old Fred Dreyer, find themselves submerged on the bar,



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*Miss Addie, front center, at the
dedication of the Boy Scout Club
House, 1922*

CHARLOTTE COUNTY ARCHIVES

P 46-8

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with just enough car showing for an annoyed Addie to stick her head out the vehicle window. “When I seen the bar and how close it was,” protests Dreyer from his perch on the roof, “I just remembered that we could get home for your lunch time. So I says to myself, remembering how much you thought of your meals, we’ll have to chance it and get Miss Addie home to her lunch at any cost.” Since Benny produced this booklet as gifts for friends and family, Addie would have been well aware of these digs and must have been understood to be of sufficiently good nature to take them in the proper spirit.