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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Early Herd History Proves Interesting

By NEIL A. MATHESON
Provincial - Farm Editor

MANY STORIES came to mind this week as I talked to some of the people attending the annual meeting of the Canadian Guernsey Breeders Association, and shared with them in a delicious lobster dinner at the farm home of Mr. And Mrs. Eric Hurry, West Royalty.

One of the stories concerns Eric's herd, but first I want to tell you one about E. R. Brow, a Charlottetown businessman who imported the first Guernsey cattle to this province three-quarters of a century ago.

A friend of the Brow family suggests it must have been in the early 1890's when Mr. Brow imported one bull and several females direct from Guernsey Island, the home of the Golden dairy breed. But a note in the brochure prepared for the annual meeting by the national Guernsey office indicates that a bull "Gypsy Boy of Eastview No. 550 was imported in September 8, 1866 by E. R. Brow" which shoves the date back much farther.

THE ANIMALS must have been good ones, for the herd which he built up followed the big show circuit successfully for years.

May I suggest to any readers who are not interested in farming, that you stay with me, for I have several unusual stories to tell you about these animals.

The Brow herd was under the direction of John B. Roper, an older brother of Livestock Director L. W. Roper, and another brother, Jim, was also associated in the operation as assistant, I am told by someone close to the Brow family. The location was Eastview Farm which is now just about the middle of the present Charlottetown airport site.

The show circuit in those days followed through the chief Maritime centers and continued into the Eastern Townships of Quebec. The Brow cattle also showed with distinction at Toronto on several occasions.

Several Unusual Events

ONE OF the unusual stories concerns one of the shows on the big circuit when a Brow cow that was a threat for the grand championship was "milked out" by a rival on the day of the show.

As most people know, dairy cows in milk are filled out in body on show day, and their udders are also allowed to fill completely for their appearance in the show ring.

And the cows are judged on their appearance, which includes a full udder of milk. So it would be a tremendous handicap to have a cow appear with her udder hanging loosely because it was empty.

The people in charge of the Brow cattle went to the judge and explained what had happened. But the judge replied that his duty was to judge the cattle as they appeared in the ring, so nothing could be done. And the trick to beat the top-quality Brow cow was successful.

On a later occasion Mr. Brow who was a Charlottetown business man, got an urgent call one morning to go out to the pasture in the Sherwood area. When he arrived he found that eight or nine of his best cows were dead in the pasture field. They had died from eating poisoned food which had been thrown across the road fence, apparently. That, I was told was the development that played the greatest part in having Mr. Brow dispose of his herd "about 1900 or 1901". And he had been the pioneer Guernsey breeder in this province.

Only One Female Brought In

THE ERIC Hurry herd goes back to a lone female, "Golden Rhoda of Oakhurst" that was one of a bunch of heifers purchased in Ontario in 1927 by a committee comprising Walter Shaw, now premier, who was then director of livestock, John B. Roper and James Roper.

The Premier recalled the incident at the Guernsey dinner Tuesday, and particularly the last heifer they bought which was not up to the others in type. They were drawn by lots by the purchaser and Eric Hurry naturally feels he drew the best heifer in the lot, for she's the cow that started him on the way to one of Canada's best known Guernsey herds.

"I have never brought in a single drop of female blood to my farm since, and I've bought very few males", Eric Hurry told me this week after he had completed his term as Canadian Guernsey president.

One of the bright spots of the early years was the purchase of Colchester Prince, an 11-month old bull that he purchased from a retire businessman, Albert Falconer, Great Village, N. S. As Eric recalls it, Mr. Falconer had turned down some fancy prices for the young sire, but he sold him to Mr. Hurry, a young man at that time, for \$133 landed at the Hurry farm.

FROM THAT sire the news was all good. Some of it was mighty good. He sired Patosie Patricia which became one of Canada's best known cows. She was the second highest cow on the 305-day honor roll for many years, and still holds the distinction of being the highest producer ever bred in the Maritimes though she has been dead many years.

And of 27 calves sired by Colchester Prince, 25 of them were heifers "and every one of them was a really good milk cow, many of them class leaders in the monthly record of production reports".

Getting back to Patricia for a minute, she first attained fame by producing 18,046 pounds milk, 877 fat in 1945 and she bettered the effort two years later with a record of 19,342 milk, 928 fat.

Patosie Rosie was the other top producer in the Hurry herd. She was awarded the Fair Lady trophy in 1959 for being the highest lifetime producer of butterfat that finished her production that year. She is still numbered among the top ten cows in Canada, I

was told this week.

Splendid Girls Choir Heard

I HEARD last week at Kensington one of the most pleasing renditions of ladies choral music to which I have ever listened. The 12 young ladies - several are high school girls of 16 or 17, and most of the rest are in their early twenties - thrilled those who heard them last Saturday night in the High School auditorium.

I was even more impressed by the performance when I learned in a talk with Rev. L. M. Murray, who has trained and is directing them, of some of the difficulties under which they have been working.

The group started their choral training in late June of 1963. They meet each Saturday afternoon for a couple of hours, and they have been faithful in their attendance when possible, but two of the girls live in Nova Scotia, and necessarily miss many practice sessions. One attends Prince of Wales College, one is a nurse who often works outside of Kensington. One is taking voice at Mt. Allison which means that she misses many practices. Another is a music teacher.

They sing their secular and sacred music beautifully. Mr. Murray suggested "we choose tuneful music", and what a difference that makes. How often have I listened to efficiently trained choirs singing test pieces with almost flawless perfection, and have failed to enjoy a minute of the experience.

THE BLENDING of voices, the effective shading, the tuneful beauty of the inspiring lyrics, set to music that is as pleasing as it is demanding, produces a composite effect that adds up to one of the most pleasing performances to which I have ever had the pleasure of listening.

This choir has a wide range of music which they can offer the public. The Saturday selections carried a range from the majestic Finlandia to the plaintively appealing Negro spirituals. But they have many others, I am told, for the choir was only filling in when only four Male Quartets turned up when at least 10 had been expected and more had been hoped for.

To Rev. Mr. Murray, to his talented young son, Gordon Murray, who does a tremendous job as choir accompanist, and to each and every one of his girls, my congratulations and appreciation for a splendid job. I only hope this group can stay together for sometime so that we shall hear more from them.

I HAVE seen many examples of Mr. Murray's musical training and direction over the years, but surely this must rank as his finest product. He modestly admits that he is "very pleased" at the progress they are making.

Incidentally, I have often wondered - I still do - just how this busy United Church minister can find the time, and the energy, to give so much effort to musical training and direction. Remember I am not talking of a professional music director. This man is doing it as a hobby, as a labor of love.

He tells me that his love for music compensates him for the effort and energy the work requires.

What a tremendous job he is doing!

Old Cemetery Is Interesting

I TALKED last week to Lester Cairns, Stanchel who is one of a committee renovating the old cemetery at Springton. The committee has done a good deal of work already, and they are seeking the names of hundreds of people across the continent who have loved ones buried there. There is no record of names.

The old cemetery is interesting in that Lady Fanning deeded the 10 acres of land in the long ago, on condition that plots be given free in it to residents of Lot 67. Charges for care were permitted.

The cemetery was incorporated in a bill assented to on May 19, 1899 and I find my late uncle, Hugh McClure was listed as one of the trustees. There are many old headstones. The oldest the committee has found is that of Murdock MacLeod dated 1839.