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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Memory Lane Spans 100 Yrs.

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A FARM woodsleigh that sells for \$55 now, as Roy Bruce told me at North River a few days ago, cost \$5 or less 80 to 90 years ago, I was told yesterday by C. W. Judson, a man who remembers those days for he is in his 101st year.

Mr. Bruce recalled that the sleighs sold for \$12 sometime prior to World War Two, but the shoeing costs more than that now, he told me. Mr. Judson said "you could buy all the iron" for the sleighs for \$2.50 then, and many people did their own wood work. I was surprised to find the sleighs are still made in quantity, as horses are used so little and horse stables are empty on many farms, but Roy sold 16 sleighs last year and I imagine many others are sold elsewhere in the province.

MY CHAT with Mr. Judson took us back to the days "when a farmer in P. E. I could feed and clothe himself from his own farm - he might have to buy tea and sugar - and never be cold or hungry". But now, he told me, "our livestock and other produce are shipped out and we buy them back in manufactured form at many times their original value."

We're going to celebrate next year the 100th anniversary of the Confederation conference here, but Mr. Judson insists "Confederation was a mistake. This little Island was nestled in the sea with everything it needed, its people were independent. Great promises were made at the time, we were promised everything", he said "but they were never carried out," he protested vigorously.

Vigorous And Witty

AND THIS man is vigorous. You probably get the idea that a Centenarian would naturally be shrivelled and decrepit looking, as you have seen many men look who were 10 to 20 years younger. But this man is different.

Powerfully built - he weighed up to 210 in his prime and runs close to 190 now - he has a grip in his hand like a wrestler, his carriage is erect and proud, and he is full of spirit and wit. In fact one of his yarns about the original Ford car is so good I want to share it with you.

A MAN who had lived a good life was amazed to find that Saint Peter, stern guardian of the Pearly Gates, was turning down ruthlessly everyone who had owned a car. Though he was trembling with fear as his turn came, he decided it would be better to tell the truth than be caught in a lie, so he admitted he also had had a car. The stern face hardened noticeably, but there was still a faint ray of hope as Heaven's Guardian asked "what kind of a car did you have?" And on being told it was a Ford said heartily "Come right in my friend, you only thought you had a car".

I have heard many jokes on Henry Ford's original wagons, but this is the first time I ever heard that one.

There were scarcely any taxes in his early days and farm machinery was simple, but now taxes and markups make machinery too dear for the farmer to buy, he observed.

Several Unusual Machines

MR. JUDSON told me about several machines I had never heard, or read about previously. There was a "shear harrow" - it came before the springtooth - that had a number of shear-like units, with a mould board on either side, that broke up the land effectively".

Mr. Judson also recalls in his very early youth - it could be 90 years ago or even more - that some people used a four-horse horsepower that was used to provide power for threshing and other chores.

But this wasn't the treadmill machine which most of the older people have seen in operation. Many will recall the old stumping machine with the capstan in the center, and a long shaft or arm, radiating out from it, to which a horse was attached. The machine Mr. Judson speaks about also had the capstan in the center but it had four shafts or arms radiating out from it, and a horse was attached to each of them.

THE POWER was transmitted to a threshing machine, for example, by a series of cog wheels and shafts, or spindles. It's so long ago that his description is a bit hazy. He was very young when he saw it in operation.

He recalls that his son Finley, who has spent most of his life in the Alberta oilfields, once threshed 600 measured bushels of grain in one day with 9 horse power and a Hall's Thresher. The Hall people at Summerside made wonderful machines, he told me.

Carts No Good For Courting

A BIT of humor crept in when his grand-daughter, Mrs. Lamont - he lives with Mr and Mrs. Daniel Lamont - asked "Did you have to court your girl in a cart too?" He had been telling me that the two wheeled cart - it had no springs - was used for all kinds of summer transportation then, as it was the only conveyance. People went in carts to Church, to town and everywhere else, unless they walked. The four-wheeled truck wagons were an improvement, "but they were no good for courting either," he assured us.

Travel was slow with the old carts but people compensated. "Grandfather would get up in the middle of the night to go to Morell for a load of birch bark", Mr. Jordan recalled. The bark was put under shingles - there was no tar paper then - it would turn water and it wouldn't rot, he said.

A SHOEMAKER at Ten Mile House - that's almost across the road from Ed Nelson's Service Station at the intersection of the Trans-Canada Highway and the road to Montague at Cherry Valley - used to make shoes, but they were made to fit his last, and you had to make your feet fit the shoe", he quipped on one of the journeys he took me down memory lane.

Oil-Bearing Core On His Farm

THE MAN who farmed in Cherry Valley for many years insists that oil bearing core was brought from a 1,700 foot hole drilled on his farm in 1911. It was eight to nine feet long and would burn readily when a match was applied, he recalls, although nothing was ever made of it.

The holes were drilled for coal by the department of mines and technical surveys. There was one on the Tweedy farm, Earnscliff on the shore nearby, another at Ebbsfleet in western Prince County, one at Glencoe, just back of Uigg station, and another at Wood Islands, according to old records, I am told by Graham Rogers. "You can still see the pipe sticking out of the ground on the Harry Tweedy property", Mr. Judson told me. The drill team from the United States struck a seam of 13 feet of salt in their work, Mr. Judson recalled.

Was Talented Rifleman

A TALENTED rifleman, Mr. Judson competed with distinction in many a provincial match. He recalls J. M. "Bisley" Jones and Jim Henry Judson, his cousin, against whom he often competed. They used the old Ross rifle which was discarded as a battle weapon after an unfortunate experience at Ypres in the First Great War, where they seized up and would not fire. They were excellent for accuracy and snipers continued to use them, a veteran of that conflict told me yesterday.

A year of his youth when he and a sister dug potatoes "in the hottest weather I can remember, it was hotter than midsummer" is another of the unusual and interesting memories this fine old gentleman shared with me.

He voted as usual in the December 10 election, saw the old year out and the new one in, and maintains an active interest in developments in general. He has lived with the Lamonts now for eight years "the best years of my whole life" his grand-daughter told me.

Province Building Is Oldest

THE PROVINCE Building is the oldest of the three government buildings on Queen Square. Lieut-Gov. Sir Henry Vere Huntley laid the cornerstone on May 16, 1843. The Court House was started in 1874 and the first court session was held January 11, 1876. The first stone post office building was built in 1871, was burned in the Cameron Block fire in 1884, and the Cabot Building, which is now being destroyed, was completed in January 1887.

This information was received from T. E. MacNutt, Charlottetown after I had several requests for it from readers.