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ACROSS THE ISLAND

Old Court Notebook Says Liquor Main Sin

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A COURT note book dated 1888 was made available to Across The Island, by Miss Rae Barbour, Alma. It belonged to her grandfather, Henry Gordon, who was a magistrate for his area before and after the turn of the century. Gordon Barbour, who was named for his uncle, and Sophie Barbour are other grandchildren.

Most of the offenses were those against the Canada Temperance Act and the standard fine was \$50 and costs or two months in jail.

And I noticed that most of the liquor charges, dozens of them in fact, were based on information laid by one John McCaull. The jail sentences were to be served in Summerside in each case. Peter Broderick was another who often laid information. They were constables, or law officers in the area.

I was particularly interested in the court costs assessed in those early years. A common charge for a witness was 40 cents. The same amount was assessed for "information". The fees for witnesses were slightly higher, though, when they had to come from a distance.

Often there was a second Justice of the Peace in attendance and his fee was 50 cents. Mr. Gordon apparently received 40 cents for each case.

THROUGH the book I noted that the costs were always carefully estimated, so that the odd cents often came into the total. In one case the costs assessed ran to \$5.69 – that would be one of the lower totals – one was \$11.03. One was \$8.96. Another ran to \$5.77. An amount of \$17.78 was one of the larger costs totals. That was on August 15, 1898.

An assault case drew a fine of \$2.00 and costs of \$12.60. Another assault case drew a fine of \$3.00 and costs of \$8.40. One summons to a witness was listed at 20 cents.

A fine of three dollars was imposed for "assault and carrying an offensive weapon". The alternative was two months in jail.

I got a kick out of noting that the penalty under the Canada Temperance Act was so much more severe than it was for such grievous charges as those of assault and causing bodily harm.

An unusual case was the one where trustees of the Norway school district – that's a bit west of Tignish – sought damages against a man who "took the trustee book out of the school at Norway on July 10, 1902."

The fine was five dollars, or one month in jail. Costs were \$5.90.

The heaviest fine in the book was one of \$150 for a man charged with "seduction". The costs were a comparatively modest \$7.24. They included one item, unspecified, of 14 cents.

Assaults Drew Lesser Fines

ONE MAN charged with “assault with violent, abusive and threatening language” was fined \$10 and costs of \$3.40.

Another case had the defendant charged with assault and striking a man with stones. The fine was four dollars. Costs were \$4.45.

A man charged with threatening to burn a woman’s house was fined \$5.00 and required to give security “to keep the peace” for a 12-month period. The costs were \$12.57.

Another case featured a man who was charged with beating a boy, stripping off all of his clothes, and chasing him through a field. That was in 1889.

Another case of beating and abusing a child was dismissed with costs to the plaintiff.

One man charged a neighbour had been milking his cows. The fine was \$3.00.

One man was charged with burning two barns, a granary, with the contents, and four stacks of grain in the barn yard. The total costs were \$68.08. That included the fine. But any liquor case drew an automatic fine of \$50, together with costs.

Glen Ramsay Is Retiring

GLEN RAMSAY, District Seed Potato Inspector, is retiring on Oct.9. Next week’s Farm Column in this paper will carry an interesting review of some of the highlights of the seed potato industry here, which was learned in a talk with Mr. Ramsay this week. It will trace the development of the industry from 1918 when the first carload of seed potatoes was sold to southern Ontario.

Across the Island will not appear next week as I am taking a week’s holidays I have coming to me. But I might see a few of you, as there are some ghost stories I want to collect in the near future.

Relatives Live In New Zealand

I’VE HAD a number of calls from Island people who have relatives in New Zealand. Mrs. Harold Muise, for example – she is a daughter of the late Val MacDonald, Winsloe – tells me that Mr. and Mrs. Roy Wyatt, who live in Remuera, Auckland, New Zealand are descendants of Islanders who went to New Zealand from the Island in the long ago during that country’s colonization effort. The Wyatts were here last year on the Island. They also attended the Lions convention in Toronto.

I’ve had several other calls re New Zealanders who are former Islanders, but some of them need some research before I can get them into shape for this column.

That Wyatt address, incidentally, is 189 Victoria Avenue in Remuera, Auckland.

Readers will recall that I said some weeks ago that J. David Stewart, former Provincial Secretary, etc. is going to New Zealand late in October to attend a session of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Mr. Stewart would appreciate hearing from anyone who has relatives in New Zealand, or who knows of persons who are there who are descendants of former Island people. Of course Mr. Stewart would have to know the addresses as well as the names, as he plans on getting in contact with as many of those people as possible.

If any of you prefer to let me know, I’ll pass on the information to Mr. Stewart.

Model T Ford Demanded Ingenuity

FELLOWS like Allison MacLeod, Charlottetown car dealer who has given me so many tips on old automobile stories, should get a kick out of this story. I picked it up recently and liked it so much I want to tell you about it, before I forget.

The old Model-T Ford cars did not have a fuel pump; they didn't need one, for they had a gravity feed. The gasoline tank was under the front seat and the gasoline fed from there to the carburetor, which was slightly below it. The difference in elevation between the tank and the carburetor was enough to make the fuel pour satisfactorily on the level, and on slight grades, or even moderate hills.

But the gasoline wouldn't feed into the carburetor when the car tackled an unusually steep hill. My friend was driving one day in the Hope River–Millvale area when his car stalled on a hill so steep that it frightened him when he looked back on the bottom.

The trouble was that the car was elevated so sharply the fuel wouldn't run from the tank to the engine. I've heard of drivers turning the Model-T around and backing up hill. But my friend was different.

There was a small hole in the cap of the gas tank, to let air in as the fuel was used up by the engine. My friend took a piece of hose he cut from his tire pump – older motorists will recall when we used them – placed one end of the hose firmly over the hole in the cap, and blew with all of his might. He had a small stick trimmed down to make a tight fit in the hole. The pressure of the air blew enough gasoline into the carburetor to get him up the 50 yards or more of the steep hill that remained in front of him.

"I used that same idea several times again," he recalled for me, as he thought of the first automobile he drove on the Island and that was back about 1924, so nearly as I can estimate from other things he told me.

Sorry I can't tell you his name. Many of you would know him, but he swore me to secrecy on that part of the tale.